ANDREW JOHNSON IN THE WHITE HOUSE

BEING THE REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM H. CROOK

WRITTEN BY MARGARITA SPALDING GERRY

FIRST PAPER

WHEN I left Washington to accompany Mrs. Lincoln and Tad on their journey back to Illinois, the new President was occupying temporary offices in the west front of the Treasury Building. On my return, I found that he had moved into the White House. He did not, however, take Mr. Lincoln's old office for his own use. Because of the larger office force, a change in the arrangement was necessary, and Mr. Lincoln's room was used by clerks. The President had his desk in the former anteroom, which had been enlarged by taking away the partition used by Mr. Lincoln to give him private access to the library. Mr. Johnson's secretaries worked in the corner room which we had become accustomed to associate with Mr. Nicolay and Mr. Hay.

I must admit that it was a relief to me not to see Mr. Johnson in the familiar corner of the office from which for so many days Mr. Lincoln's deep eyes had smiled a kindly good morning. The new President was different from the dead President, whom we missed every day. Even in his appearance he was as great a contrast to Mr. Lincoln as was possible where two men are of the same country, the same period and of somewhat the same class. He was short, while Mr. Lincoln was remarkably tall; he was burly, while Mr. Lincoln was gaunt. With his black hair and eyes and Indian-like swarthiness, he had an Indian-like impassiveness of expression. There was none of the lines in his face which, with Mr. Lincoln, showed just how many times he had laughed and how many times he had grieved. Instead of these, there were two lines of decision drawn from the corners of his mouth, and two from his nose. A strong nose and a square chin jutted toward each other from obstinate angles. Very few persons got beyond these things, and saw that he had a cleft in his chin. I know I did not for a long time; I imagine the women and children were quicker.

Even at that time Mr. Johnson was an unpopular man, and I shared in the common prejudice against him. Even before that April day when, in gloomy haste, he had taken the oath of office, circumstances determined that his position would be a difficult one. He had been thrust into responsibilities and honors to which no man had dreamed of his succeeding; his nomination to the Vice-Presidency had been a political accident. He was from the South, and had profited by the crime of a Southerner—a crime which had destroyed the one who, at the time of his death, was the best-loved man in the country. His origin and early conditions had been sordid, and of this sordidness he was entirely unashamed. Neither thing helped his position with a narrow circle of New England theorists who, with their inheritance of inflated ideals and incomplete sympathies, had come to replace, by way of aristocracy, the social traditions of colonial times.

In addition, there were certain drawbacks of a more personal nature. The unfortunate circumstances of his inaugu-

ration as Vice-President were fresh in people's minds. It had been currently reported that on that occasion Mr. Johnson was intoxicated. He had certainly acted in a manner to offend the men who were about him and to lower the Vice-President before his subordinates. Since then the matter has been explained. We all know now that he was then recovering from a severe attack of typhoid fever. He was not in a condition to go through even the simple ceremonial which marked Mr. Lincoln's second inauguration. In order that he might be able to perform his part in the exercises of the day, he had taken a stimulant. The effect of alcohol upon typhoid convalescents is well known, the smallest amount being intoxicating. This incident brought about a reputation for drunkenness which clung to the President throughout his administration. The slander was used by Mr. Johnson's enemies for their own purposes. To offset these disadvantages, there was nothing in Mr. Johnson's self-contained, almost somber manner to take possession of the hearts of those about him, as did the man with whom we were forced to compare him.

But I had not been many days about the White House before I began to change my opinion of Andrew Johnson. My prejudices against him began to die away. I grew to follow his directions with alacrity and to welcome his rare and laconic remarks. I was not alone in this change: all of the employees began to feel his influence. He was a man who, through association, swayed insensibly the men who were with him. I very soon began to realize that the reports of his drinking to excess were, like many other slanders, entirely without foundation. I will state here that during the years he was in the White House there never was any foundation for it. Except in the time of his absence in the autumn of 1865, I saw him probably every day, from the time of my return until he left, and I never once saw him under the influence of liquor. With regard to his life before and after this period, of course I can offer no direct testimony; but I have heard the indignant denials of the men who were associated with him. For my part, the record of his energetic and forceful life would be proof enough for me, even if I did not know from my own observation. No man whose wits were fuddled with alcohol could have done what he did in Tennessee and Washington. He drank, as did virtually most public men of the time, a notable exception being Mr. Lincoln. The White House cellars were well stocked with wines and whiskies, which he offered to his guests at dinner or luncheon, but in my experience he never drank to excess.

I learned another thing, too, and that was that the President was destined to conflict. He was a man who found it impossible to conciliate or temporize. As uncompromising as the terms of his speech, as straight as the challenge of his eye, Andrew Johnson's opinions and policies did not change. His goal being ahead of him, and seen in clear light, he neither saw nor considered possible an indirect path to that goal. It was inevitable, when other men were going in opposite ways, that there should be collision.

There was nothing of this conflict apparent at first, however; for there were practical details to absorb him. Mr. Johnson was a hard-working and business-like man. Except for an hour or so in the afternoon and at meal-times, he rarely left his desk until midnight. He immediately went to work to organize an executive office, which had never been done before. This was imperative, because of the mass of details caused by the end of the war. The numerous exceptions to the Amnesty Proclamation, embracing the cases of the men who had been the leaders of the Confederacy and all men possessing $20,000 or more of property, made it necessary to grant a great many pardons. At the beginning of his administration the President was prejudiced against the natural leaders, who, he considered, had led the South astray. The $20,000 exception to the first Amnesty Proclamation was his own idea, introduced because of his prejudice against aristocrats and in favor of the "plain people." It was generally expected that he would prove severe in his attitude toward the excepted classes; but he merely wished to make their probation long enough to enforce the lesson of loyalty upon them. Therefore the granting of pardons became part of the routine of office. From April 15, 1865, to June 15, 1866, I have been told that 1963 pardons

were granted. It is easy to see how much clerical work this matter alone entailed.

Mr. Johnson employed six secretaries, instead of two, as Mr. Lincoln had done. They were classified as one secretary and one assistant secretary, with the others detailed from the War Department. At the beginning, William H. Browning was the secretary, and Robert Morrow the assistant. Mr. Browning did not serve long, however. When he died, the President's son, Colonel Robert Johnson, took his place. For a time Mr. Cooper, representative-elect from Tennessee, while waiting the decision of Congress relative to the re-admission of Tennessee, served as secretary. Colonel Long, Colonel Wright Reeves, Major William C. Moore, and General Mussey were detailed from the War Department. For a long time Colonel Long had charge of the business of pardons.

Besides the private secretaries, Mr. Johnson had six clerks detailed from the departments to assist in the work of the office. These, as I said, were stationed in Mr. Lincoln's old room. For the first time in the history of the White House, records of the office were kept. There had never been anything before but lists of appointments. The books would repay any one's study. A small one which I have chanced to retain contains the first records of the case against the conspirators implicated with Booth in the murder of President Lincoln. In it Mr. Johnson submitted this question to the Secretary of War: Should the trial be delegated to a military tribunal? There are references to manuscripts in the case. Everything shows a painstaking desire to understand thoroughly the details. There is evidence, too, of a wish to consider the authority of the Secretary of War. One amusing entry is the plea of an Episcopalian minister who, too evidently disapproving, desired to be released from his obligation to pray for the President of the United States.

Mr. Johnson not only kept this official account of his actions, but preserved every letter of his correspondence. He had scrap-books of newspaper clippings compiled. After a time these were my special charge. All this material—records, correspondence, scrap-books—is now in the Manuscript Division of the Congressional Library at Washington. It is possible to see there, side by side with receipts for hats and shoes, and pink leaflets containing the Sunday School lessons of small grandchildren, the gravest political documents.

It was August, and the routine of the office was fairly under way, when the White House finally became the home of all the President's family. There were Mrs. Johnson, Colonel Robert Johnson, the President's son; Senator Patterson and his wife, who was the eldest daughter, with her children, Belle and Andrew; Mrs. Stover, a widow, with her three children, Lillie, Sarah, and Andrew. There was also a young son of the President, Andrew, who was sometimes called Frank, to lessen the confusion arising from the other two young Andrews. The eldest son, Charles, who had been a surgeon in the army, had died before this time. The White House has never been so full of children. They were an important interest in the President's life.

Mrs. Johnson was so much of an invalid that outside of intimate family friends very few knew her. She appeared only twice in public during her husband's administration: Still, her influence was a strong one, and it was exerted in the direction of toleration and gentleness. A slight movement of her hands, a touch on her husband's arm, a "Now, Andrew," made it easy to see that the woman who had helped him through his struggling youth and given her health to his service, who had taught him to write and had read to him through long winter evenings in the little tailor shop that his active mind might be fed while he was practising his trade, still held her place in his life. She was a sweet-faced woman who showed traces of beauty through the sharpened lines caused by the old-fashioned consumption which was wearing her out. Her face was not unlike that of the late Mrs. McKinley. The death of her eldest son was a blow from which she never fully recovered. The life in Washington was not a happy time for her. She told me herself that she was far more content when her husband was an industrious young tailor.

Mrs. Stover was not at the White House during all of her father's term,

and Mrs. Patterson was the real mistress of the establishment. No woman could have acted with greater sense or discretion. She had passed her girlhood days in Washington, had been educated at a school in Georgetown, and during the Polk administration had been a frequent guest at the White House, so she was not entirely unfamiliar with official life in the capital. She made no pretenses of any sort, but was always honest and direct. She said to a lady who called upon her soon after she came to the White House: "You must n't expect too much of us; we are only plain people from Tennessee." The very modesty of this statement is misleading. It is true that the Johnsons did not pretend to be leaders in the social life of Washington, and in their régime there was no joyousness, no special grace, in the White House festivities; there was, however, exactness in the discharge of social duties, and a homely dignity, equally free from ostentation and undue humility. The dinners and public receptions were more numerous than under Johnson's successors, and they were not lacking in brilliancy. Mr. Johnson quite understood the value and place of social functions.

The first public duty that confronted Mr. Johnson was the punishment of those who, together with Booth, had conspired to murder the late President and his cabinet. The question of the tribunal had first to be decided. Attorney-General Speed gave it as his opinion that it would be proper to confide the trial to a military court. The President submitted the matter to the Secretary of War, together with the opinion of the Attorney-General, and it was determined that the conspirators should be tried by a military tribunal. It was desired, because of the state of public feeling, to have the matter over as early as possible.

The punishment of Booth was taken out of the hands of the law when he shot himself. The trial of the others took place immediately. From the first there was no doubt of the guilt of Payne, who had attempted to murder Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State; of Herold, who failed to kill Mr. Johnson only through fear or lack of opportunity; or of Atzerodt, who was to have aided Herold. But there was doubt as to the degree of guilt of Mrs. Surratt. To this day, there are those who consider her guiltless of the worst. The haste with which it was felt necessary to conduct the affair may have prevented full justice being done her. However that may have been, the fact that it was a woman who was condemned to die made a large faction view her hanging with the greatest repugnance. There was a great deal of feeling on both sides.

On the morning of the day on which the execution was to take place, the daughter of the condemned woman, Miss Annie Surratt, attempted to see the President to make a personal appeal for her mother. When she arrived, she was met by Secretary Seward, who was coming out of the President's office. He told her that it was useless for her to see the President; nothing could be done for her. The President had given orders that no one was to be admitted. When Miss Surratt was quite convinced of the hopelessness of any further attempt, she went home. The poor girl's grief was pitiful. Herold's two sisters also came fruitlessly to the White House to plead for their brother.

Because of the false light in which the President stood, a great deal of criticism grew out of these circumstances. He was blamed because he did not pardon Mrs. Surratt, or have the verdict commuted to imprisonment for life. He was blamed more when it was learned that there had been a recommendation to mercy among the papers submitted to him by the court. The fact is, that Secretary Stanton, when he sent the papers to the President, kept back the note; Mr. Johnson did not know of it until afterward. When he did know of it, and of the fact that he was being blamed for not having interfered in the execution of Mrs. Surratt, he made a statement of his ignorance of the letter. Of course very few of those who had been condemning him ever heard the denial. The incident increased the President's unpopularity. I believe that, had he seen the judge's recommendation to mercy, he would have been only too glad to save the woman. It is difficult to understand Mr. Stanton's motive in the matter.

Even his refusal to give an interview to Miss Surratt and the Herold girls was the source of scandal. It was reported by the



Drawn by Harry Fenn, from a photograph

ANDREW JOHNSON'S TAILOR SHOP, GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE

President's enemies that he was intoxicated on the day they called. This was absolutely false. I denied the story indignantly at the time, but a denial does very little good when a slander has started on its way. The President was hard at work all day, closeted most of the time with Secretary Seward. He had taken every means to understand the case. The records show his conscientious desire to investigate. He had come to the conclusion that he could not interfere. Therefore, he did not think it wise to have an unnecessary and painful interview.

In all my experience there never has been an administration, unless it be the later one of Mr. Cleveland, where there has been such complete misunderstanding between the mass of the people and the executive as in that of Andrew Johnson. In my recollection it stands out as a feverish time, when events occurred without reason, without sequence, and larger than life. The war had been a time of great emotions—of suffering, heroism, and the many virtues of hardihood and tenderness that war brings out. Afterward the reverse side was the one in evidence. The spectacle of sudden loss and sudden elevation to wealth and prominence was equally demoralizing to the mass of those fitted to do nothing but plod. One result of all this was that at Washington we saw everywhere a very fury for office-holding, an egotistical thrusting of small men into the affairs of state, avalanches of advice and blame, equally stupid, from men without the slightest claim to be heard, but accustomed, during the years of the war, to consider national affairs their own.

Only the President and his secretaries know how many thousands of requests for favors came from women. They seemed to regard Mr. Johnson as their appointed guardian. It is probable that there was some reason for the confidence with which these feminine ambassadors made their wishes known. Mr. Johnson had an amiable weakness for women, particularly for pretty women. Those of us who were on duty in corridors and in anterooms saw many evidences of this fact. It seemed to be a purely unconscious tendency. He found it hard to believe that anything but merit and need could lurk behind a pair of beseeching woman's eyes.

The masculine specialty of the time

was the crank. Every administration has them, of course, but they were particularly active during Mr. Johnson's administration. We learned how to handle them—with gloves, but effectually. One man named Grapevine I remember very distinctly. He came to see the President several times. Finally, one day, when he was told that the President would not see him, he became furious. He raved like a madman, and threatened to kill Mr. Johnson. He said:

"What are you all doing here? I am the President, and that man is an impostor." Then he tried to force his way in to the President. At that stage, of course, I took him in hand and put him under arrest. When he was examined, it was discovered that he was armed with a large bowie-knife. He was sent to the insane asylum.

Another day a brother of a Union General came to the White House. He said his business was of great importance; it could not be postponed. It was impossible for the President to see him at that time, and the man became very angry. We talked to him, and thought we had persuaded him to go away and try again another time. I saw that he was not quite sane, so I walked quietly downstairs with him and down the walk that led to the Treasury Department. About fifty paces from the White House I left him, thinking he would make no further trouble. As I turned my back, one of the doorkeepers called out:

"Look out! He is going to shoot you!" I turned, and saw him struggling with a soldier who happened to be passing just in time to knock up his arm as he aimed a pistol at me. There can be no doubt that, since he was armed with a perfectly new pistol, and since he tried to shoot the man who kept him from the President, he had intended to shoot Mr. Johnson. Episodes of that kind were of frequent occurrence in the White House. We dealt with them quietly, and they rarely got into the newspapers. It is usually a simple thing to manage cranks of both sexes: I have often had men and women refuse to leave the anteroom when they were told they could not see the President.



From a photograph by Giers, Nashville, Tenn.

ANDREW JOHNSON IN MASONIC REGALIA

"All right," I would say; "make yourself perfectly comfortable, madam. Try this chair." After the lady had waited long enough to be thoroughly tired and the President had left his office by another door, I would inform her that the President had left his office for that day and invite her to return to-morrow. They rarely came back, and there was never any disturbance.

It is perhaps not surprising that there should have begun, just at this time, an epidemic of dishonesty among those who wanted to make money out of the Government, to be matched, if the furor of disclosures and investigation through which we are now passing is any evidence, only by the one just ended. Then, however, it was the petty office-holders and a host of unprincipled hangers-on. The peculiar opportunities for easily made money offered by the times were a great temptation.

Before Mr. Johnson had been in office many months, it was discovered that a doorkeeper who stood at the entrance to the President's office had been charging an admission fee to those who wanted to approach the President with any of the thousands of requests that were made to him. The man had



ELIZA McCARDLE JOHNSON, WIFE OF ANDREW JOHNSON

the contention in which Mr. Johnson, yielding to what he believed to be Mr. Lincoln's policy toward the defeated South, and influenced by his own comprehension of conditions in the Confederate States, was moved to lay aside his own animosity toward the greater part of the Southern leaders. Toward some of them, —those whom he considered responsible for leading their region into rebellion,— he never softened.

The truth is that Mr. Johnson was not moved very much in his estimate of men by the way in which they had treated him personally. If they had failed in what he considered their public duty, he could be severe enough; but, except in two cases, I believe he felt no personal enmity to them. Of "Parson" Brownlow, his bitterest enemy in his own State, I heard Mr. Johnson speak most pleasantly. This is all the more remarkable when we remember that, having left nothing undone to defeat the President's wishes with regard to Tennessee, Brownlow telegraphed to Congress the news of the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment with the insulting message, "Tell this to the dead dog of the White House!" In his public addresses he inveighed against Sumner and Stevens and Wendell Phillips, but when he met them he seemed wholly unprejudiced. One of his bitterest political enemies related that on the day following the vote on impeachment, when he had voted to impeach, he met Andrew Johnson, who smiled and held out his hand. In the same manner, in spite of his fierceness toward the rebellion, he was now made to believe in the loyalty of the South.

One thing that specially moved Mr. Johnson to this latter belief was the optimistic report made by General Grant after a tour through the heart of the Confederacy. He stated that he saw everywhere an intention to return to full allegiance to the Union as soon as the conditions of that return were established. When the report was sent to Congress, where it was pointedly ignored, Senator Sumner pronounced it a whitewashing message.

These are some of the motives that influenced the President's message to Congress when it assembled in December, 1865. I remember how great was the surprise at the tenor of the message, and how general the admiration at the dignity and clearness with which it was expressed. In the newspapers and in the conversation



COLONEL ROBERT JOHNSON, SON OF ANDREW JOHNSON

of men there was scarcely a dissenting voice; the President at once took a position as statesman which he had never occupied before. Men like George Bancroft cordially indorsed his attitude. The South felt that a champion had arisen. The only dissenting voice was from the extreme Northern element in Congress—the Radicals, as they were called.

While any discussion of President Johnson's public acts does not come strictly within the limits of my field of personal reminiscence, I feel that it is necessary to touch upon some features of the President's long contention with Congress.

I believe firmly that President Johnson wished to carry out the policy which had been advocated by Mr. Lincoln before he died. I believe, moreover, that it was substantially the policy which President Lincoln would have attempted to carry through, if he had lived. There is, however, this one point of difference: meeting the fierce opposition which the Radical element in Congress displayed, President Lincoln, who knew how to manage men and to compromise, would have yielded in minor points, where he could have done so and still carry out his policy of immediate and practical help for the South. It was in this one feature that President Johnson failed to meet the requirements of his position.

In President Lincoln's last speech he expressed, so far as he had been able to see his way, his plan of reconstruction. There should be a general amnesty, with a few exceptions. For the rest, when the South had banished slavery, it should be allowed to reorganize its State governments under the "Louisiana plan." The Louisiana plan was to allow the loyal minority in each State to form a government. Congress would recognize any republican form of government which should be established by insurgents who should have taken the amnesty oath and were regularly qualified voters in 1860, provided the votes cast were not less than one tenth in number of the votes cast that year. This plan of reconstruction rested upon the theory that the Southern States, having no right under the Constitution to withdraw from the Union, were still members of the Union. While rebels were present in each State, the loyal minority were still citizens of the United States, and had a right to representation in Congress.

Now, the war having been fought by the Federal authority upon just this principle, that the Southern States had no right to withdraw from the Union, President Lincoln's plan was merely the logical consequence of the theory. It presented difficulties and inconsistencies, no doubt, and it was hard to conceive seriously of States which, during the war, had been at the same time in and out of the Union; but, then, there was not a single theory prevalent at the time which did not present inconsistencies. Those who, with Thaddeus Stevens, had been most fierce in declaring that the Southern States had no constitutional right to secede, were most vehement, when the war was over, in maintaining that the Confederacy was a conquered power beyond the pale of consideration from good Republicans, and not to be restored to the Union until she had been soundly punished for her sins. The abolitionists who, with Charles Sumner, were most vehement in advocating the equal rights of man, were determined to foist upon the Southern States, without their consent, the franchise for the lately emancipated slaves, and to disfranchise the ruling element.

In his eagerly expected message President Johnson expressed the principle which had animated President Lincoln: the Southern States were still in the Union, their functions had been suspended, not destroyed. The Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, having been passed, and the amnesty oath having been taken, the next step was for their representatives to resume their seats in Congress. Congress had the right to determine on the eligibility of members. The question of negro suffrage was to be left to the States, as had been the matter of suffrage from the beginning. Before Congress had met, and pending their action, Mr. Johnson had begun the work of restoring the governments of those States which were ready to convene loyal assemblies, after the plan followed in Louisiana. There had been some dissension in the cabinet over the matter. Under the influence of the extreme Radicals, Secretary Stanton had endeavored to introduce a requirement as to negro suffrage, while Speed and Har-



MRS. MARTHA J. PATTERSON, DAUGHTER OF ANDREW JOHNSON

She was the wife of Judge David T. Patterson. The portrait is from a photograph taken in 1867, when she was mistress of the White House. These three portraits were taken during her residence there.

lan were in opposition. The latter two soon withdrew, as was



ANDREW J. PATTERSON

proper in the circumstances, while Stanton, apparently restored to sympathy, remained in office.

From the principles laid down in his message President Johnson never swerved. Every act passed by Congress that violated these principles he consistently vetoed. That the Freedman's Bureau Act and the Civil Rights Act would receive his condemnation was a foregone conclusion. From the comments of the press throughout the country there was no doubt that the mass of the people were with the President.

With the veto of the Freedman's Bureau



MARY BELLE PATTERSON

Act, which made no uncertain declaration of the President's intentions, began a most amazing chapter in the history of our Congress. Since a struggle was imminent, it was necessary to be sure of a two thirds Republican majority in order to pass acts over the veto. Every expedient was resorted to: a senator was rejected on a reëxamination of credentials, before approved; a would-be honorable senator was forced to break his pair. In order that another pair might not be broken, a dying man hurried to the Senate, only to find that the vote had been taken in haste to exclude his. It was by such means that

the bill was passed over the veto. But the majority was too small. It was proposed to admit two States, below the requirement of numbers, on an abolition platform dictated by the Radicals, in order to swell the number. One such State was actually admitted. An examination of the speeches in both House and Senate of those months shows them filled with a wild alarm, not for the country, but for the Republican party.

"We need their votes," said Charles Sumner of the negroes.

"If the Southern States are readmitted on equal terms, what of our majority?" was on every Radical tongue.

It is necessary to observe, moreover, that this opposition to any but the most radical and severe measures toward the South did not result from the action of President Johnson. Before the President's message had been sent to Congress the opposition had been thoroughly organized; the principle had been laid down that only Congress should preside over reconstruction. It had, moreover, been organized and powerful enough to oppose President Lincoln most bitterly in his efforts to restore the South without punitive measures. It had been in abeyance for a short time because the triumphant end of the war had made Mr. Lincoln virtually a dictator. But his death saved Abraham Lincoln from the bitterest struggle of his life.

Mr. Ward Lamon, who was one of the most intimate of Mr. Lincoln's friends evidently believed this. He said to Mr. Johnson (the letter can be produced):

> I had many and free conversations with him [Lincoln] on this very subject of reconstruction. I was made entirely certain by his own repeated declarations to me that he would exert all his authority to bring about an immediate and perfect reconciliation between the two sections of the country. As far as depended upon him, he would have had the Southern States represented in both houses of Congress within the shortest possible time. . . . He knew the base designs of the Radicals to keep up the strife for their own advantage. There can be no doubt that the Northern Disunionists would now be as loud in their denunciation of his policy as they are of yours. . . . If there be any insult upon his reputation which we should resent more than another, it is the assertion that he would have been a tool and an instrument in the hands of such men as those who now lead the heartless and unprincipled contest against you.

At the time that all these things were happening we saw at the White House no evidence that they affected the President in any personal way. He was such a reticent man that I was surprised at a speech he made on the 22d of February, 1866. A great crowd had assembled in the White House grounds. They wanted a speech. By reason of his unexpected championship of the Southern States, President Johnson had become a figure in the public eye. He began to speak to the crowd calmly and dispassionately. He spoke of the question at issue before the country. He said that there had been two extreme elements in the national life—that of the South, which, having asserted itself for slavery, had been suppressed; that of the North, which, now beginning to show itself, was just as intolerant. For himself he belonged to neither class. He was for the Union, slavery or no slavery. The "conscious intelligent traitors" should be punished; there should be amnesty for the multitude. . . . To admit that a State was out of the Union was the very thing the nation had been fighting against, insisting that this was something a State could not do.

The crowd became enthusiastic; the President began to speak more warmly. I know he must have been sore because of the revenge which Congress had taken for his veto of the Freedman's Bureau Act. For they had retaliated by refusing to admit the representatives of his own State, of whose record he was so proud and which he had done so much to keep loyal. He said that Congress was governed by "an irresponsible central directory" which did not represent the people—was no Congress. Some one in the crowd shouted:

"Name them!"

The President hesitated a moment, then he said:

"Yes, I will name them."—at this there was great excitement.—"Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner."

From this time on there was a great change in the way people regarded him. One man said to him:

"Your speech made me feel mortified." And I think this would express the feeling that most of Andrew Johnson's friends



From photographs taken while at the White House

MRS. STOVER, DAUGHTER OF ANDREW JOHNSON, AND HER THREE CHILDREN

Mary Johnson married first Daniel Stover, who died in 1862. In 1869 she became the wife of William R. Bacon.

had about this most unfortunate matter. Still, he showed no feeling, but went on with the program he had made for himself. On the 18th of April a delegation of sailors and soldiers came to see him. He spoke to them in much the same tone as that of his speech of the twenty-second of February. He assured them of his unalterable determination to "stick to his position." He spoke contemptuously of men who, when he was battling for the Union in the Senate and in his own State, were "lolling in ease and comfort. . . ." Now they were attacking him, " . . . the whole pack, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, little dogs and all, snapping at my heels." I suppose this was very undignified and bad policy, but the crowd enjoyed it, and nothing could have been a better description of the attacks made upon the President by certain men in Congress.

There is one thing which must be understood. These addresses of the President's seemed much more undignified to the country at large than to those who heard them. In the first place, the newspaper man, then as now, was on the outlook for a sensation. In fact, there was less regard for the truth then, even with

the better class of journals, than there is to-day. Party feeling and interests ran high, and editors were violently partizan.

More than this, Mr. Johnson's manner in delivering public speeches was one which could not be translated into newspaper language. I realized this when I stood near him on the portico while he talked to the soldiers and sailors. He had a calm, assured way of talking which gave the most startling remarks authority. His bearing was quiet and dignified, his voice low and sympathetic. He had one of the best voices for public speaking that I have ever heard. It was singularly penetrating; he could make it carry to the edge of the largest gathering without effort. Yet it was always a pleasant voice. I have been startled myself to read the same speech in the paper that I had heard the day before. One would think, from what was written, that a violent demagogue was brandishing his arms and shrieking at the top of his lungs. Mr. Johnson was an orator; half of what was said was in the personal relation between the audience and himself, and, being an orator, he was often swayed by the emotion of the crowd. Had he been sympathetically reported, the country would have had a different impression of him.

There is a story I have heard which illustrates both this magnetic quality of the man and his fearlessness. It was in the early days of the struggle in Tennessee, when he was hated by the whole secession element. He was to address a meeting in the town hall. He had been informed on good authority that half a dozen men were ready to shoot him as soon as he appeared before the audience. When he appeared on the platform, he advanced to the speaker's stand. Something held the crowd to silence while he deliberately pulled a pistol out of his pocket. He laid it on the table while a spellbound crowd hung on his movements. Then at last he spoke:

"I understand," he said in his placid way, "that the first business before the meeting is to shoot me. I move that the meeting proceed to business." During the few minutes that he scanned the audience there was breathless silence. At last, when no one moved, he began his address in rather a disappointed manner.

Except when the excitement of a crowd stirred him to intemperance, the President possessed the dignity of reticence.

As the summer came on, my drive with Mr. Johnson became a daily occurrence, and often lasted the greater part of the afternoon. We often took the children with us, and had a picnic. I think the greatest source of recreation the President had was in his grandchildren. His own youngest son was about thirteen at this time and had his own pursuits; but the grandchildren were always ready.

With a carriage full of children we would drive to some place by Rock Creek, Pierce's Mill, or elsewhere. There was one retired little meadow by the stream of which we were all fond. There the children would fish, wade, or pick flowers, and the President would watch them and reflect. We would drive home with the carriage filled with flowers.

When we were alone, we always stopped at some quiet and beautiful spot, where Mr. Johnson could walk for an hour or more, almost always in silence. He often went to Glenwood Cemetery. There was something in the peace of such a place that appealed to him. One day he had been wandering about in Glenwood reading the inscriptions on the tombstones when I heard him laughing. I went up to him. He did not laugh very often.

"Look there, Crook," he said, pointing to two graves side by side. On the first was, "Sacred to the Memory of my Wife —By her disconsolate husband." The other grave, dated two years later, was that of the second wife.

"It did n't take that fellow long to get over his first affliction, did it?" said the President.

I fully believe that, had the elections occurred immediately after the adjournment of Congress in the summer of 1866, the Radicals would have been defeated. It was not that the President had not made many enemies by his unwise speech on the 22d of February. It was because, even in New England, there was a general distrust of the Radical program. In April "Harper's Weekly" and "The Nation" had commented on the mischievous effects of the leadership of Thad Stevens. There was a strong sentiment against further punishment of the South. There was an abhorrence of negro suf-

frage; every measure to introduce it into the Northern States had been rejected. All of the efforts of the Radicals during the summer—Wendell Phillips making campaign speeches everywhere and proposing to impeach the President, Ben Butler touring the country denouncing the President, Sumner instructing large audiences in Massachusetts—would probably have been fruitless had Mr. Johnson himself not made his second great mistake.

As I have said before, the President was accustomed in making public speeches to come into personal relations with his audiences. In his career in Tennessee this method had been largely a factor in his success. Now, in his anxiety over the great questions at stake,—the issue to be determined by the fall elections,—he determined to make a direct appeal to the voters. There was to be a great ceremony at the unveiling of the Douglas monument at Chicago. Mr. Johnson made attendance on this the occasion for a partial tour of the country. Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Chicago were to be visited. Secretaries Welles and Randall, with Secretary Seward, General Grant, and Admiral Farragut, were of the party.

Mr. Johnson had an unfortunate propensity for coining phrases which could be used to ridicule him. On one occasion he had referred to himself as the Moses who offered himself to lead the country out of bondage. He figured as "Moses" in street songs for months. On another occasion he had talked of "swinging round the circle" of political conviction from North to South. This projected trip was immediately labled "swinging round the circle," and the newspaper men of the country took out their writing pads prepared to have a thoroughly enjoyable time.

The President had always been a popular figure with newspaper correspondents. Whether he was to be admired or blamed, he was always an energetic and vivid personality. There was sure to be something to report. Again, the journals were yellow beyond possibility of emulation by the papers of to-day. The following is a specimen of the type in many of the news sheets throughout the country. "Andy, Andy, you are terribly popular with the rabble! Everything that smells, but does not perfume; everything rotten and mouldering, whatever is corrupt and putrifying, sticks to thee! Toads and owls howl to thee! Jackals and hyenas snuffle after thee. . . ." There were newspaper correspondents accompanying the party, but, as will be seen later, they were entirely unable to stem the tide of sensationalism. The tour was immediately pronounced an undignified departure from the custom of former Presidents. The unfortunate reputation for drunkenness which had fastened upon Mr. Johnson was made to do duty again, with rumors of immense stores of liquors which made the special cars traveling barrooms. The country prepared to be shocked.

The country was disappointed in the earlier stages of the journey. There was a moderate amount of enthusiasm in the reception of the party in Philadelphia and New York. In Albany the atmosphere was chilling; in Auburn there was a remarkable speech from Ex-President Fillmore against the Republican Party. At Cleveland the crowd was disorderly. The President was interrupted again and again; there was evidently an organized movement to prevent his speaking. He attempted to reply to insulting interruptions, lost his temper, was baited by the crowd, and for a time all semblance of dignity was lost. Ultimately he pulled himself together, silenced his tormentors, and closed triumphantly. At Chicago there was the same disorderly crowd, and undoubtedly preconcerted interruptions. The President was provoked into intemperance and a declaration that he would "kick the Radicals out." These unfortunate scenes were immediately telegraphed over the country, with every embellishment possible. They lost the President the elections; gave the Radicals an overwhelming majority; made possible the horrors of congressional reconstruction.

After this there was no possibility of stemming the tide of unpopularity. The President figured in the popular mind as almost a monster. "The Atlantic Monthly," which had always stood for all that was most conservative and careful in the country, published a series of studies, advertised widely by the magazine as "Remarkable articles on President Johnson," in which Mr. Johnson was

studied as though he were some abnormal product of an alien race. His traits are analyzed thus:

. . . his gross inconsistencies of opinion and policy, his shameless betrayal of party, incapacity to hold himself to his word, his hatred of a cause the moment its defenders cease to flatter him, *his habit of administering laws he has vetoed* on the principle that they do not mean what he vetoed them for meaning, his delight in little tricks of low cunning. . . . It would seem that in dealing with such a man as Andrew Johnson, it is the part of wisdom to suspect the worst . . . a spiteful, inflated, and unprincipled egotist.

I watched him after he returned from this disastrous trip, when he was the most unpopular man in the country, and threats of impeachment were a matter of daily occurrence. His manner was absolutely as when he first took upon himself the cares of office. In our daily drives there was never a reference to what was passing. He spoke, when he spoke at all, about indifferent things. There was not an added line in his face. And yet there was evidence, from that time on, that he had learned his lesson; that, as he once said to me, when he was convinced that he had been wrong, he was ready to change. For never after this, so far as I remember, was he betrayed by the warmth of his feeling into an unwise public utterance. During the whole of the impeachment trial, when the temptation to appeal from his enemies to the "plain people" on whose final judgment he relied must have been almost overpowering, he refrained altogether from public speaking. His habit of bandying words with the mob was overcome.

The legislators came back to the second half of the Thirty-Ninth Congress elated over their victory at the polls, and convinced that it was in their power to carry their whole reconstruction program. There was the greatest dissatisfaction expressed with the constitutions of the Southern States, now largely reorganized. The new governments had passed repressive measures against the negroes. The Abolitionists considered that these measures virtually reënslaved the emancipated.

An incident which the Radicals seized upon as an evidence of the absolute failure of the President's reconstruction policy was an unfortunate riot over elections in New Orleans. He was accused of not having responded to the call of the Governor for Federal aid. Again the President explained that the telegram of the Governor had been withheld from him by Secretary Stanton. And again the country heard the charge, and not the refutation. And again it is hard to understand Secretary Stanton's action in this matter.

The activities of Congress of the winter and spring of 1866–67 were in two directions. A series of acts embodying the congressional theories of reconstruction were passed and a long investigation of the President's conduct was undertaken with a view to discovering grounds for impeachment. The first was tragic, culminating as it did in negro suffrage, the disfranchisement of the majority of the better class of Southerners, the dominion of carpet-baggers, terror and suffering for eleven States. The second was pure comedy, exhibiting the congressional species in farcical specialties. In their reconstruction acts Congress worsted the President, depriving him of control over the eleven States, over the army, and at last, in the Tenure of Office Act, over his own cabinet. In their attempts to prove him worthy of impeachment, the President's record worsted Congress. Even the two houses, full of enemies, could find no blot in it.

As fast as the reconstruction measures were passed, Mr. Johnson executed them. He held, with the Constitution, that his control over legislation ended with his veto. With relation to the matter of negro suffrage, Mr. Johnson's attitude was fully expressed in an interview which had taken place the year before. A deputation of leading negroes, headed by Frederick Douglas, called upon the President to plead for their right to the suffrage. Mr. Johnson's manner to them was quiet, even gentle. It was interesting to see how deftly he prevented the interview from becoming a discussion and utilized it to state his own position. He suggested emigration to them. He asserted that each community was better prepared to settle questions of suffrage than was Congress. He said that he opposed negro suffrage on the ground that, carried out, it would inevitably lead to a race war. He ended, "God knows I have no desire but the welfare of the whole human race."

With regard to the Impeachment Investigation,—there had been, since the President's veto of the first Freedman's Bureau Act, a continual rumble of threats of impeachment in both Houses of Congress. At last, in January, 1867, Mr. Ashley of Ohio, one of Mr. Johnson's most bitter enemies, introduced a resolution to investigate the course of the President with a view to impeachment. The Judiciary Committee was empowered to conduct the investigation, to summon witnesses, and to sit during the summer recess if necessary.

Throughout the investigation the President was calm and untroubled. When a bank employee went with embarrassment to inform him that his accounts were demanded, he laughed.

"Let them have them, if they want them. All of my business affairs are open to the world. I have nothing to be ashamed of."

It must not be considered that either the proceedings of the Judiciary Committee or the severity of congressional reconstruction was approved by the country at large. Mr. Ashley's virulence was so great that he had been reproved by the Speaker of the House. Many Radical newspapers throughout the nation disapproved of the measures passed by Congress. Even Senator Wilson, Charles Sumner's colleague from Massachusetts, who had been most vehement in his pleadings for the "poor, lowly, downtrodden freedmen," said of the white men on his return from a tour of the Southern States:

"For myself, I want no more punishments than have already been inflicted on these men. They have suffered and have been disappointed more than any body of men in the history of the world."

It seems hard to understand the hysteria which swept over both houses of Congress during these abnormal years. It has been very generally stated that the opposition aroused by the President's stubborn resistance to congressional control was responsible for it, that each antagonist pushed the other into extremes. In one case this is undoubtedly true. The measures passed by Congress at the end of the struggle could not have been possible at the beginning. It was not that they were new, but that the President's action had aroused so much opposition that the element which had advocated these measures from the beginning came into control. The significant fact is that, while, on the part of the President, the contest goaded him into unwise public utterances, his policy was not altered by the bitterness of his feeling in one particular. The principles expressed in the first message, so generally applauded by the country at the time, were the same that dictated the last protest to Congress when he had failed to prevent the intemperate legislation that had disgraced it. The fault, if it were a fault, lay not in his having been hurried into inconsidered action, but in his not having compromised where he might have done so, with a yielding of theory, but not of practical kindliness, toward the South.

The long-brewing contention with Secretary Stanton came to a head during the summer of 1867. Mr. Stanton's career in Mr. Johnson's cabinet had been a curious one. It was generally known that, during Mr. Lincoln's administration, Mr. Stanton had frequently assumed that he alone was responsible for the maintenance of the government. Mr. Lincoln, who knew how to utilize every element that was presented to him, and was entirely without personal feeling, had very little difficulty in managing Stanton. He knew how to make use of his secretary's undoubted patriotism, his force, his earnestness; he knew how to harness his unruly temper. Lincoln was impervious to offense because of his humorous acceptance of conditions.

Mr. Johnson was not skilful in managing men—men whom he could not influence. From the first Mr. Stanton was an element of discord. A number of the Radicals had influenced him to introduce a negro-suffrage clause into the first reconstruction measures discussed by the cabinet. His natural harshness of nature led him to desire a severe policy toward the South. And yet, when it became apparent that the President and three members of the cabinet were in favor of carrying out the policy of Mr. Lincoln, he apparently acquiesced. At all events, he remained in the cabinet, while the other members who were in opposition resigned. Each of the President's messages, each of the vetoes, Stanton apparently approved. He was so strong in

pronouncing the Tenure of Office Act unconstitutional that he was asked to write the message accompanying the veto. He pleaded some indisposition, however, and avoided doing it.

The constant friction over the administration of the War Department became unbearable. Two instances have been given already where Mr. Stanton had withheld information from the President which he should have had—the note for mercy in the case of Mrs. Surratt and the telegram of the Governor of New Orleans asking for Federal aid. In both of these cases Mr Johnson's position before the country had been very much injured by the Secretary's action. What was left to the President of executive powers over the Southern States was nullified by Mr. Stanton's disposition to balk him at every turn. There can be no doubt that Mr. Stanton was sincere in his idea that it was necessary, in order to prevent the country from disintegration, that he remain in Mr. Johnson's cabinet. This delusion, fostered by years of autocratic power over his own department, was responsible for the lack of taste in Mr. Stanton's remaining in the cabinet of a man whose enemy he was. It is another example of the lack of balance in the public life of the period.

The President had born this irritating defiance with what was, in a man of his type, remarkable patience.

In August, 1867, the President suspended Secretary Stanton from office, appointing General Grant in his place. It was during the recess of Congress. Under the Tenure of Office Act he had the right to suspend a member of his cabinet during the recess of Congress, so he was strictly within his rights. The contest would come later, when the removal was reported to Congress for approval. Mr. Stanton had no course but to yield, and General Grant performed the duties of the office. Up to this point there had been, on the whole, pleasant relations between Mr. Johnson and General Grant. Grant was the popular idol; his friendship was an important item.

It was in the same summer that the President and I were on our way home one evening in what is now Rock Creek Park. A summer storm came up, and it began to rain in torrents. We were well outside the limits of the present city when we came upon a poor woman struggling along the road. She had a heavy baby in her arms, and her shabby clothes were already soaked through with the rain. Mr. Johnson ordered the driver to stop and take her in. She climbed up, trying not to soil the cushions with her dripping clothes. The President sat opposite her, when the carriage was rolling on again, saying nothing, as was his habit, but looking at the mother and baby with very kind eyes. She lived on what is now Florida Avenue—which we called Boundary Street then, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets. When we stopped opposite her little two-story frame house, Mr. Johnson got out and helped her out and up the steps. She never knew that it was the President who had taken her home. When we got back to the White House, Mr. Johnson told Slade, the steward, to give the driver a hot toddy. He had been sitting on the box through all the storm, and did not have his oilskins to protect him. Mr. Johnson, although he never seemed to be taking much notice of what was going on about him, always saw things like that.

(To be continued)