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Our National Affairs.

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT JOHNSON TO GENERAL EWING.

The National Expenditures and the Public Debt.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 25.—The President of the United States has addressed the following letter to General Ewing:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.,
October 24, 1868.

Dear Sir:—In a recent conversation upon the subject of the finances, you expressed a desire to be furnished with some of the leading facts then mentioned, touching the national expenditures and the public debt. I now comply with your request, regretting, however, that other and more pressing matters have prevented me from more clearly illustrating the absolute necessity for immediate reform in the financial operations of the government.

In 1776 our national independence was proclaimed, and after an exhaustive, bloody struggle of seven years was, in 1783, acknowledged by the parent government. In 1787 the Federal Constitution was framed, and in 1789 the government went into operation under its provisions, burdened with a debt of seventy-five millions of dollars created during the war of the revolution. Immediately upon the organization of Congress, measures were devised for the payment of the national obligations and the restoration of the public credit, and when, in 1812, war was declared against Great Britain, the debt had already been reduced to forty-five millions dollars. It was then largely increased by the three years' struggle that ensued between the two nations until, in 1816, it had reached the sum of one hundred and twenty-seven millions.

Peace again established, provision was made for the earliest practicable liquidation of this indebtedness, in order that it might not become a permanent incumbrance upon the people. Under wise and economical legislation the entire amount was paid in a period of twenty years, and the extinguishment of the national debt filled the land with rejoicing, and was one of the great events of President Jackson's administration. Even after its payment a large fund remained in the treasury, which, for safe keeping, was deposited with the several States, on condition that it should be returned when required by the public wants.

In 1849, the year after the termination of an expensive war with Mexico, we found ourselves involved in a debt of sixty-four millions of dollars, and this was the amount owed by the government in 1860, just prior to the outbreak of the rebellion.

In the spring of 1861 the war of the rebellion commenced. Each year of its continuance made an enormous addition to the debt, so that when, in the spring of 1865, the nation successfully emerged from the dreadful conflict, the obligations of the government had reached the vast amount of twenty-six hundred millions. They had not yet, however, attained their highest point for when the army and navy had been paid, the volunteer forces disbanded and the navy largely reduced, it was found in February, 1866, that our indebtedness exceeded twenty-eight hundred millions of dollars.

Having thus referred to the indebtedness of the government at various periods of its existence, it may be well to call attention to a brief statement of facts connected with its expenditures. From the fourth day of March, 1789 to the thirtieth of June, 1861, the entire public expenditures were seventeen hundred millions of dollars. Although covering a period of seventy-two years, this amount seems small when compared with the expenses of the government during the rebellion, a period of four years' duration; for, from the first of July, 1861, to the thirtieth of June, 1865, they reached the enormous aggregate of thirty-three hundred millions of dollars.

An investigation into the disbursements since the first day of July, 1865, further shows that by adding to the expenditures of the last three years the estimated cost of administering the government for the year ending the thirtieth June, 1869, we [illegible] the sum of sixteen hundred millions [illegible] as the amount required for the [illegible] immediately following the cessation of hostilities—or nearly as much as [illegible] expended during the seventy-two [illegible] preceded the war.

[illegible] been, from this brief review, [illegible] to 1861 our public debt [illegible] more than one hundred [illegible] millions of dollars, while [illegible] four years of civil war exceeded twenty-seven hundred millions. It will also be perceived that while, prior to 1861, the largest annual disbursements were not quite seventy-four millions [illegible] 1858, the expenditures during [illegible] three years of peace have successively been five hundred and twenty millions, three hundred and forty-six millions, [illegible] three hundred and ninety-three millions, [illegible] three hundred and seventy-two millions [illegible] the amount which it is estimated will be necessary for the year ending the thirtieth of June next.

In making this comparison, we should remember that during the long interval between 1789 and 1861 the government was frequently required to make expenditures of an extraordinary character.—Large sums were paid to Indians as annuities and for the purchase of their lands, and expensive wars were waged against powerful tribes. Louisiana was acquired from France at a cost of $15,000,000; Florida, in consideration of five millions, was ceded to us by Spain; California became a part of our possessions on payment to Mexico of fifteen millions; while for ten millions our government secured from Texas the territory of New Mexico. During these periods of our history we were also engaged in wars with Great Britain and Mexico—the first waged against one of the most powerful nations of the world—the other made additionally expensive by the prosecution of military operations in the enemy's territory.

The startling facts, thus concisely stated, suggest an inquiry as to the cause of the immense increase in the expenditures and indebtedness of the country. During the civil war the maintenance of the Federal Government was the one great purpose that animated our people, and that economy which should always characterize our financial operations was overlooked in the great effort of the nation to preserve its existence. Many abuses, which had their origin in the war, continued to exist long after it had been brought to a triumphant conclusion, and the people, having become accustomed to a lavish expenditure of the public money for an object so dear to them as the preservation of the integrity of their free institutions, have patiently tolerated taxation of the most oppressive character. Large sums of money continue to be extorted from them, and squandered in useless and extravagant appropriations. Enormous expenditures are demanded for purposes the accomplishment of which requires a large standing army, perversion of the Constitution, and subjugation of States to negro domination.

With a military establishment costing in time of peace not less than one hundred millions annually, and a debt the interest upon which draws from the treasury each year nearly one hundred and fifty millions—making a total of two hundred and [illegible] millions of dollars for these two items of expenditure alone—retrenchment has become an absolute necessity, or bankruptcy must soon overtake us and involve the country in its paralyzing and disastrous results. If, however, a wise economy be adopted, the taxes may soon be materially reduced, not merely for the benefit of a few, but in the interest of all. A revenue would yet remain sufficient for the administration of the government, as well as for such a reduction of the public debt as would in a few years relieve the people from millions of interest now annually drawn from their resources.

The idea that the debt is to become permanent should be at all times discountenanced, as involving taxation too heavy to be borne, and payment of an amount in interest every sixteen years equal to the original sum. The gradual liquidation of the public debt would by degrees realize the large capital invested in the securities of the government, which, seeking remuneration in other sources of income, would add to the wealth of the nation, upon which it is now so great a drain. This immense debt, if permitted to become permanent and increasing, must eventually be gathered into the hands of the few and enable them to exert a dangerous and controlling power in the affairs of the government. The debtors would become the servants of the lenders—the creditors the masters of the people. It is now our boast that we have given freedom to three million of slaves; it will then be our shame that by their own toleration of usurpation and profligacy forty millions of people have enslaved themselves, and exchanged slaveholders for new taskmasters in the shape of bondholders and taxgatherers. Hence the vital issue whether Congress and its arbitrary assumptions of authority shall supersede the supreme law of the land—whether in time of peace the country shall be controlled by a multitude of tax-collectors and a standing army—the one almost as numerous as the other, and making the debt a permanent burden upon the productive industry of the people; or whether the Constitution, with each and all of its guaranties, shall be sacredly preserved—whether now, as in 1789 and 1816, provision shall be made for the payment of our obligations at as early a period as practicable, that the fruits of their labors may be enjoyed by our citizens, rather than used to build up and sustain a moneyed monopoly at home and abroad. The contest is not merely who shall occupy the principal offices in the people's gift, but whether the high behests of the Federal Constitution shall be observed and maintained, in order that our liberties may be preserved; the union of the States restored, that our federal system may be unimpaired; fraternal feeling reestablished; the expenditures diminished, that taxation might be lightened; and the public debt once more extinguished, that it may not injuriously affect the life and energy, the prosperity and morals of the nation.

Believing that for the redress of the greas wrongs and the correction of the many abuses under which the country is now laboring, we must look to the American people, and that in them is our hope.

I am, very truly, your friend,
ANDREW JOHNSON.

General THOMAS EWING.

Selected Poetry.

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

"Are they not all ministeriag spirits?"

I leaned upon a burial urn,
And thought how life is but a day,
And how the nations each in turn,
Have lived and passed away.

The earth is peopled with the dead,
Who live again in deathless hosts,
And come and go with noiseless tread—
A universe of ghosts.

They follow after flying ships,
They flicker through the city's marts,
They hear the cry of human lips—
The beat of human hearts.

They linger not around their tombs,
But far from churchyards keep aloof,
To dwell in old familiar rooms
Beneath the household roof.

They waken men at morning light,
They cheer them in their daily care,
They bring a weary world at night
To bend the knee in prayer.

Their errand is of God assigned
To comfort sorrow till it cease,
And in the dark and troubled mind
To light the lamp of peace.

There is a language whispered low,
Whereby to mortal ears they speak,
To which we answer by a glow
That kindles in the cheek.

Dear shadows, fairer than the day,
With heavenly light they wrap us round,
Wherein we walk a gilded way,
And over holy ground.

O, what a wondrous life is theirs!—
To fling away the mortal frame,
Yet keep the human loves, and cares,
And yearnings still the same!

O, what a wondrous life is ours!—
To dwell within this earthly range,
Yet parley with the heavenly powers—
Two worlds in interchange!

O, balm of grief!—to understand
That whom our eyes behold no more
Still clasp us with as true a hand
As in the flesh before!

No longer in a gloom profound
Let memory, like a mourner craped,
Sit weeping by an empty mound
Whose captive hath escaped!

So, turning from the burial urn,
I thought how life has double worth,
If men be only wise to learn
That heaven is on the earth.

An Interesting Story.

From Colburn's New Monthly.

IN DIFFICULTIES.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

About two years since, a very intimate friend of mine, some years my senior, related the following story to me. I think I cannot do better than give it in his own words, for while it amused, it at the same time made such an impression on me, that I paid off divers small debts I had hitherto neglected, and have since never allowed myself any luxury I could not pay for.

I trust this tale may prove as amusing, and perhaps as profitable to some of my readers as it was to me.

When I was about twenty-two years of age I was in the army; although I was not rich I was very well off, as my friends gave me an allowance of two hundred pounds a year; but as I was very thoughtless and very extravagant, I spent considerably more than this, allowing my half-yearly bills to remain unpaid. In a short time, however, some of my tradesmen applied to me for payment, threatening to apply to my relations if I did not comply with their demands. In order to avoid the remonstrances of my family, and because it was far easier, trusting also, perhaps, in a lucky hit on the Derby, I borrowed money at a high interest on my commission—in short, in about eighteen months I found I owed about a thousand pounds. The money-lenders were clamorous for payment, threatening to arrest me, so I was at last compelled to apply to my friends; they, however, firmly refused to help me in any way, telling me that as I had involved myself so deeply, notwithstanding the liberal allowance I received, it was clear the army was too expensive for me, and that I had better give it up. I was obliged to sell my commission, which realized about eight hundred pounds, but as it was assigned or mortgaged for that amount to some of those who had advanced me money, they were paid, and my unfortunate tradesmen received nothing. My friends declined paying them—their claim being about two hundred pounds—reduced my allowance to fifty pounds a year, and alllowed me to reside with them until I could obtain some appointment which would enable me to pay my debts. They also told me that until I had done this and so redeemed my character, they could place no confidence in my promises.

You see I was already beginning to reap some of the fruits of my extravagance. I had left the army, which was the only profession I then thought I could ever like, and my means were diminished; but I was not yet sufficiently punished to induce me to set to work in earnest.

So I remained in London, living in a luxurious home, frequenting many of my former haunts, associating with my friends, going to my club—in fact, doing nothing, and trying to persuade my friends and myself that I was endeavoring to obtain some sort of an appointment. This went on for about six months, until my creditors, losing all patience, informed me they would actually arrest me if I did not pay them. This gave me considerable anxiety, although I did not think they would proceed to such extremities. However, I took the precaution to give orders to my aunt's servants to say, if any one called for me, that I was out of town. I meditated going away, but knew not where to go. I had no friends out of London, and of course it was absurd to try and live on my allowance. I spent that in cigars and gloves alone.

One evening, at about seven o'clock, just as I had come down dressed for dinner, and was crossing the hall to go into [illegible] the street-door, and, not having yet had time to close the drawing-room door, overheard the following dialogue:

"Is Mr. ——— at home?"

"No. He has just gone abroad."

"Can you forward this letter to him?"

"No. He did not leave his address; he never does."

"Come, that's nonsense," said the man, passing the footman and walking into the hall. "I know he is in London, and that he lives here; and if you won't undertake to deliver this letter to him, I'll sit here and wait until he comes in."

All remonstrance on the part of the footman was quite useless; the man was told he was not in my house, that he had no right to remain there, all in vain; so one of the servants was eventually obliged to call a policeman, who, when he found the house was the private residence of a lady, who refused to give my address, ordered my obnoxious friend out. He went at once, not forgetting to express the opinion he had formed of my humble self, and which was anything but flattering.

Although it is now some years since this occurrence took place, the feelings I experienced on the occasion recur to me as vividly as though it had only happened yesterday. I was perfectly stunned, deprived almost of the power of collecting my ideas, and I scarcely think it is possible for any one, no matter what they may have done, to feel more ashamed than I did on that eventful day. No one spoke to me, but my relations were talking to each other; and I heard, as in a dream, such words or parts of sentences as the following: "Disgrace," "Subject to insult in one's own house," "Scandal in the neighborhood," "Servants," etc. I mechanically went into dinner, where I fancied I saw the butler, who was usually a very grave man, actually smiling at me. However, this must have been mere imagination on my part—he never could have presumed so to forget himself.

Although nothing was said on the subject, I knew I must leave my aunt's house at once, so I resolved to proceed to Paris the next day, and there to seek some sort of employment which should enable me to pay my debts, or, at any rate, maintain myself, until my relations should relent, and perhaps come to my aid; so I packed my portmanteau and prepared for my departure. I, however, foresaw great difficulties in my way, which my imagination increased; I began to think every one conspired to impede my escape; I was not certain whether some of my creditors, or their agents, might not be standing at the very door, or a little way off, to intercept me as soon as I appeared. In order, therefore, to attract as little notice as possible, I sent a man servant with my baggage to the railway station, and directed him to take my ticket, register my baggage, and, in fact, make all arrangements, so that I might arrive just in time, and jump on, as it were, from the cab into the train. About five minutes before the appointed time I drove up to the station, carefully muffled up in overcoats and divers wraps, with my travelling cap closely pulled down over my face, which gave people the idea I was suffering from a violent cold, and, casting a hurried glance around as I arrived, I hastily jumped out of the cab, and was rapidly entering the station, already congratulating myself on the good luck I had met with, when I suddenly heard some one running after me, and calling out something, which I was too agitated to hear; despair gave me courage, and I walked on even faster, hoping, I scarcely know what, but determined at any rate not to appear to notice that any one called me, or show that I had anything to fear, when I suddenly heard the voice of my pursuer, who by this time had caught me up, saying, "Please, sir, you have forgotten to pay your cab." I stopped, turned round, and saw a railway porter, closely followed by the cabman. I was so pleased with this discovery, that I immediately proceeded to pay the cabman double his fare, and gave the porter a shilling, doubtless for having caused me so much anxiety. I felt a man again, a free-born British subject, and moved forward with a feeling of great independence, assuming a graver and more becoming step—even venturing to look those I passed straight in the face. I reached the platform received my ticket from my servant, and, having summoned the guard, I was [illegible] first-class carriage, when a hand was laid upon my arm, and a man, who was evidently out of breath, and must have followed me, said, "Excuse me, sir," (oh! I thought, no doubt this time, and the idea made me feel so faint, I was obliged to lay my hand for support on the door of the carriage,) "but I presume you are going to Paris, and if you would be so kind as to post this letter for me when you arrive, you will do me a great service. It is of importance to me it should be delivered in Paris in the course of the day, and I was just too late for the post." My heart beat once more. I could breathe again. I was delighted; of course I would take the letter, I said; why nothing would give me greater pleasure than to oblige him. It was no trouble at all; should be sure to post it myself, etc. I believe if he had asked me, I should willingly have taken several boxes.

So I at last got into the carriage, an elderly gentleman, who was rather late, getting in at the same time, and sitting down opposite to me. The signal was given, the train started, and in a few minutes we were some distance from the great city. "Well," I said to myself, "I am lucky; at any rate I have got my freedom; it won't be very pleasant working in Paris but I shall be free, and have no stain on my character *there*—no exposure before the world." I drank some brandy from a travelling flask, as the emotions I had experienced made me feel very shaky, lighted a cigar, and feeling at peace with all my fellow-passengers, commenced inspecting their various countenances—in fact, I considered my escape to be accomplished, for, of course, even supposing they got an idea of the route I was taking, they would never send to Dover after me, so I smoked on and thoroughly enjoyed my cigar, which, by the way, was a very good one.

I was not destined, however, to remain long undisturbed, for on looking at my fellow-passengers, I was suddenly startled by noticing that my opposite neighbor was looking at me very intently, and appeared to be watching me carefully. I turned my eyes away, and determined neither to think of or even notice the gentleman's scrutiny, which I thought, at any rate, very impolite, and again applied myself with renewed vigor to my cigar; but somehow it seemed to have lost all flavor, and I could not help glancing at my opposite neighbor. This time I thought I detected a sort of self-satisfied expression on his countenance, as though he had just discovered something in me of a pleasant nature. Presently catching my eye, he addressed me.

"A cold evening."

"Yes, very."

"You are so well covered, I suppose you don't feel it much?"

"Well, it is perhaps better to be careful."

"It is; but I am surprised you should have arrived at this conclusion. Young men are generally so reckless, particularly in your profession."

"They are sometimes." ("What can he mean?" I thought. "He surely does not know me.")

"You are in the army, I believe?"

"No, I am not."

"True, I forgot. You have been."

"Yes, I have."

But imagine my consternation when, bending towards me in a confidential way, and speaking in a low voice, my companion said:

"I believe I am addressing Mr. ——?"

I felt the blood rushing to my cheeks, and for one moment debated whether I should own my name or assume another; but reflecting, if he was following me, it would be quite useless trying to deceive him, I mustered all my courage, and, steadying my voice as well as I could, answered:

"Ye-s, you are."

"Ah, I thought I could not be mistaken. I seldom am; and," he added with a knowing smile, "to tell you the truth, I have seen one of those photographs you had taken at Meyer's, and they are really capital."

What wonderful means they employ, I thought. How could he find out I went there to be photographed? But he continued:

"Yes, I have been watching you some time, young man."

[illegible] I said. ("[illegible] I thought, giving up all hope, and feeling a cold perspiration all over my neck and forehead.)

"Where are you going to?" he said.

"Well, I was going to Paris." I replied, wishing to make him understand I quite saw his meaning.

"Oh, I can't allow you to do that now we have met. I must insist on carrying you off for a short time. I'll see you're comfortably put up. You shall stay with me. I don't suppose your business is so very important as to prevent your accepting my invitation?"

Well, I thought, at any rate he is very polite, and even kind, for he evidently spares me, and does not expose me before the other passengers. As he is chafing, I'll try and answer him in the same spirit; so I replied I should be very glad to accept his kind invitation.

"That's right, I don't like people who make a fuss. They always come to the end."

"No doubt," I said to myself. "They have not much choice."

"Now, I dare say you'd like to know who I am, and what sort of a place you are going to stay at?"

"Oh, not at all, thank you. I am not curious." I'll make the best of it when I get there."

"Eh?—what?" said my friend, evidently rather astonished. "Make the best of it? Why, as for that, it is a place where many a duke has been glad enough to live in before now."

"Really you surprise me," I said, at the same time sincerely pitying such unfortunate dukes.

"Well, you shall judge for yourself when we get home."

My new friend then, to my great astonishment and relief, told me his name was X., that he had been intimate with my father when they were both young men, and that he was at first much struck with the resemblance I bore to my father; he also informed me he had made a large fortune and bought a large estate within some miles of Dover, where he was now living, and that his greatest friend was my uncle, an old bachelor, who resided close to him; it was in his house he had seen my photograph, and from him he had heard of my leaving the army. I ought perhaps tell you my uncle held no communication whatever with any of the family, having very peculiar ideas; he had quarrelled with most of them. But, although he never saw any of the members of his family, I found on arrival that he made it his special business to watch and follow, unknown to them, the careers of his nephews and nieces. I went to stay with Mr. X. (having given the letter I had promised to post to Paris to a gentleman, who kindly undertook to do it for me). He introduced me to my uncle, whom I had never seen before, and I made them both laugh very heartily by telling them how I had at first taken Mr. X. for a bailiff. My uncle lent me two hundred pounds to pay my debts, and also got me an appointment of two hundred and fifty pounds a year, which, as my other relations again increased my allowance to one hundred pounds per annum, enabled me in a short time to repay him. I am well off now, and can only add that I had experienced so many disagreeables, had been so nearly forced to fly the country, and altogether felt so ashamed of myself, that the lesson proved a good one. I have never since exceeded my income, nor have I ever run into debt, resolutely, whenever I felt a little inclined to be a little extravagant, the events connected with my memorable journey to Dover.

Selected Miscellany.

A Machine to Husk Corn.

At the New York State Agricultural Fair, a machine to husk corn was exhibited, which is thus described by the New York *Express*:

"At this fair, for the first time, we find a perfect practical machine for picking and husking corn; operations which, it has ever been thought, were beyond human ingenuity and forethought to perform in any other way than by the primitive, yet still continued, hand process. But the apparatus here alluded to does the whole work, not only ten times more expeditiously, but much more effectively than it is usually done by hand, and at the same time leaves the fodder [illegible] in a much more [illegible] would be valuable, if only [illegible] points mentioned were [illegible]

In outward appearance the machine is not unlike an old fashioned flax dressing mill. At one end, above the top, is a pair of rollers revolved by gear wheels, to which is attached the pully for the power. At the inner side of the rollers are two knives, between which the ears must pass. The latter, just as cut from the hill, are laid on the feeding table, and the butt ends are received between the knives and are drawn through the rollers. As the ears come in contact with the knives they are wrenched off, and falling into the hopper are passed down an inclined plane, furnished with rubbers, which revolve as they pass down, and they remove every vestige of husk and silk, leaving the shelled ears ready for the crib. There are no drawbacks in the whole operation, no incompleteness in the machine in any particulars, and no improvements wanted; it seems perfection throughout. It husks small ears and large ears, green or ripe corn, even the smallest nubbins, and always does the work well; never fails in removing stalk, husk and silk, never shells, scratches or injures the grains. But this is not all; as the stalk passes down the rollers every joint and hard spot is crushed, and the fodder which passes out in front will be consumed up as clean by the cattle as if it was clover or timothy hay. Still again—when the ear is wrenched off by the knives all the outside or weather-beaten husk goes through the rollers with the fodder; the clean, white, inside husks being removed by the rubbers, fall by themselves in a pile under the machine, while the clean ears at the rear of the machine, while the clean ears are discharged at the rear of the machine. The last named husks for upholstering purposes in the market of all our principal cities usually command about $15 per ton.

This great practical aid to agriculture for the year 1868, was invented by a gentleman of intelligence and more than ordinary constructive ability, Silas R. Kenyon, Esq., of Greenville, Rhode Island.

Dewdrops of Wisdom.

Habit is a cable. We weave a thread of it every day, and at last we cannot break it.

He who is false to present duty breaks a thread in the loom, and will find the flaw when he may have forgotten its cause.

Our minds are as our faces; we are travelling to one destination—Happiness; but few are going by the same road.

The proudest triumph in a man's life is when he makes a friend of an enemy.—The joy is then akin to that which angels feel as they rejoice over a sinner that repenteth.

Do not heighten your present sorrows by a morbid imagination. You know not what a day may bring forth. The future is likely to be better than you expect, as well as worse.