



Prefatory Note

The Presidential papers during the period from March 4, 1861, to March 4, 1869, are contained in this volume. No other period of American history since the Revolution comprises so many events of surpassing importance. The Administrations of Presidents Lincoln and Johnson represent two distinct epochs. That of Abraham Lincoln was dedicated to the successful prosecution of the most stupendous war of modern times, while that of Andrew Johnson was dedicated to the reestablishment of peace and the restoration of the Union as it had existed prior to the war. Strange to say, it fell to the lot of the kind-hearted humanitarian, who loved peace and his fellow-man, to wage the bloody conflict of civil war, and the more aggressive, combative character directed the affairs of the Government while the land took upon itself the conditions of peace. Yet who can say that each was not best suited for his particular sphere of action? A greater lover of his kind has not filled the office of President since Thomas Jefferson, and no public servant ever left with the people a gentler memory than Abraham Lincoln. A more self-willed and determined Chief Executive has not held that office since Andrew Jackson, and no public servant ever left with the people a higher character for honesty, integrity, and sincerity of purpose and action than Andrew Johnson. The life of each of these two great men had been a series of obscure but heroic struggles; each had experienced a varied and checkered career; each reached the highest political station of earth. Their official state papers are of supreme interest, and comprise the utterances of President Lincoln while he in four years placed in the field nearly three millions of soldiers; what he said when victories were won or when his armies went down in defeat; what treasures of blood and money it cost to triumph; also, the utterances of President Johnson as he through his eventful term waged the fiercest political battle of our country's his- to- ry in his efforts, along his own lines, for the restoration of peace and the reunion of the States.

Interesting papers relating to the death and funeral obsequies of President Lincoln have been inserted, as also the more important papers and proceedings connected with the impeachment of President Johnson.

Much time and labor have been expended in the compilation of this volume—more than on any one of the preceding—to the end that all papers of importance that could be found should be published; and I feel sure that no other collection of Presidential papers is so thorough and complete.

The perusal of these papers should enkindle within the heart of every citizen of the American Republic, whether he fought on the one side or the other in that unparalleled struggle, or whether he has come upon the scene since its closing, a greater love of country, a greater devotion to the cause of true liberty, and an undying resolve that all the blessings of a free government and the fullest liberty of the individual shall be perpetuated.

JAMES D. RICHARDSON.

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