

## GOVERNOR THAYER REPLIES.

To the editor of the *World-Herald*:—I fully appreciate the fair and manly spirit of your editorial with which you accompany the publication in the *World-Herald* of my letter which appeared in the *Lincoln Courier* on the relations of Grant and Bristow.

You raise the question as to the correctness of my assertion that a general feeling prevailed in favor of the renomination of Grant for a third term. Possibly I may have stated it too strongly, but the fact that three hundred and six delegates in the National republican convention at Chicago, nearly half the number of delegates, stood like a rock wall against all attempts to swerve them from their support of Grant for the nomination for a third term furnishes pretty good evidence that Grant had quite a strong following in the country. As to the other point made by the *World-Herald*, I will concede that it may be correct in its estimate of Bristow as a lawyer at the time referred to. I wrote of him as a third rate lawyer when he was appointed United States district attorney for the district of Kentucky. That was some twenty-eight years ago according to my recollection. He was then a young man and had not, as I supposed, reached much distinction at the bar. I had in my mind such great lawyers as Henry Clay, John J. Crittenden, the Marshalls, the Speeds and others, whose names do not now occur to me who made the Kentucky bar famous throughout the whole country fifty years ago. Not wishing to do Mr. Bristow any injustice I will now say that I believe he stands high at the New York bar.

By a letter which appeared in the *World-Herald* I am led to think that my communication on Bristow has thrown my old friend Major Patrick O'Hawes into political convulsions, which I trust will not prove serious. I had not the slightest idea of disturbing the even tenor of his way and of his mind. But, nevertheless, I cannot help it now, and retract nothing of what was stated by me. His letter is really amusing to me when I notice the confidential air in which he makes assertions which have no foundation in fact. When one starts out to correct the alleged mis-statements of another, he should himself first be correct.

Major Hawes asserted that Bristow was appointed United States district attorney for Kentucky by President Lincoln. I still believe he was appointed by Grant for the reason that according to my recollection, I was in the north when the appointment was made after the war, and therefore he could not have been appointed by Lincoln, who died just as the war closed. The *World-Herald* confirms me in this belief by its statement that Mr. Bristow served as lieutenant colonel of the 25th Kentucky, and was wounded at Donelson, and afterwards became colonel of the 8th Kentucky and served as a gallant Union soldier throughout the war. Now, if he was serving in the field throughout the war, then Mr. Lincoln did not appoint him district attorney for Kentucky, or if he did tender him the appointment and Bristow accepted it, while the war continued, and he left the service, it stands to his discredit. My friend Mr. Hawes speaks of himself and Bristow as having served in the Home Guards of Kentucky, but fails to mention that Bristow was a brave Union soldier down to the close of the rebellion. According to my veritable historian, Hawes, Bristow's sole claim to military glory rests upon the distinguished services of himself and Bristow in the Home Guards of Kentucky. The *World-Herald* and myself are more chary of the military reputation of Bristow than is my critic, for we both assign to him the distinction of having been a brave officer down to the close of the war.

Now here are a few of the reckless misstatements of my friend Hawes: He says I am mistaken in saying Grant told Bristow he had no further use for him as secretary of the treasury, and then adds that when Bristow sent his resignation to the White House Gen. Grant read it and remarked to Belknap, who was present, that the resignation did not come any too soon. That shows that Grant intended Bristow should leave his cabinet, else why did he send in his resignation?

Why, because Grant had indicated to him that he desired his (Bristow's) resignation. I care not in what form of language Grant made it known, but that he did so my friend Patrick Hawes proves, for he quotes what Grant said, that "the resignation did not come any too soon," thus proving that Grant intended to be rid of Bristow.

Again, my friend Hawes says Grant appointed a man by the name

of Taft from Georgia, as attorney general of the United States, and appointed Bristow as assistant attorney general. Hawes is again mistaken for Grant did nothing of the kind. He did appoint Jacob M. Ackerman of Georgia as attorney general. I voted for his confirmation and frequently had business with him during my term. Grant appointed Bristow as solicitor general and I voted for his confirmation. The Taft to whom Hawes refers was Judge Alfonso Taft of Cincinnati, Ohio; whom Grant appointed secretary of war to succeed, I think, Belknap. During the second term of Grant he desired to bring Donald Cameron, now the Pennsylvania senator, into his cabinet. Edward Pierrepont, of New York, was then attorney general. The president desired to send him as minister to England and did so. Cameron was not a lawyer and, therefore, could not take the attorney generalship. The president, therefore, transferred Judge Taft, who was an able lawyer, from the war department to the attorney generalship. Then he appointed Don Cameron secretary of war.

There was, by the way, some interesting gossip about the appointment of Cameron. The veteran senator, Gen. Simon Cameron, must have been eighty six or eighty-seven years of age and desired to retire from the senate. He was anxious to have his son Don for his successor, but hardly thought it prudent to have it proposed as his son had not hitherto occupied any political position, and he thought it would be too much to ask to have his son step right into his shoes. Therefore he conceived the idea of having Don occupy a position in the cabinet. The latter was a favorite with Grant and when the old senator proposed the son for secretary of war, Grant readily acceded to it, and thus according to rumor, the arrangement was brought about. It was easier to secure his election as senator after having occupied a cabinet position.

Another of Hawes's misstatements:

He says Babcock never acted as private secretary to Gen. Grant after her trial and acquittal. I say he did act in that capacity after his acquittal quite a long time, for I saw him in that office performing its duties.

My friend Patrick says Bristow appointed him as special assistant United States attorney to prosecute the distilleries, distillers and whiskey thieves. Bristow was then secretary of the treasury. The attorney general appoints all assistant attorneys. It would seem therefore, that he is a little off again. I am glad to learn from his letter that he created such havoc among the distillers and whiskey thieves, and think it was a pity he was not continued in that position.

My friend says that all the leading colored men of the south favored Bristow's nomination for the presidency in 1876. That was undoubtedly true for Bristow and his friends were plying them with patronage so as to secure their votes in the Cincinnati convention which was held in May or June, though my friend Patrick speaks of the meeting of the Cincinnati convention in the fall of 1876. He seems to have gotten things badly mixed. His memory is treacherous. For reformers they did well in working up the colored delegation for Bristow.

I will not longer multiply the errors of my critic. The weather is too torrid. But I reassert and reaffirm every statement made in my communication to which exception has been taken, and with more emphasis than before. I knew what I was writing about, and wrote from my personal knowledge.

Mr. Bristow may have all the virtues that are claimed for him. I wrote nothing whatever against him except his connection with the conspiracy to smirch Grant and destroy him as a candidate for a third term. That the conspiracy did exist I well know and history knows it too. It was one of the meanest conspiracies ever recorded in American annals and all the waters of Lethe can not wash out its memory. Benjamin H. Bristow was in that conspiracy. He was the chief figure head and was to be chief beneficiary if successful. He is not the only one, who, when the presidential bee buzzed around him entered into arrangements and schemes to accomplish the aim of his ambition which did not square with the strict rules of fairness and moral integrity. I never heard any reflections upon him as a man and citizen except in connection with this affair. The parties who entered into that scheme to make him the presidential nominee were reformers of the goody goody class. They were goody goody's par excellence—they were the salt of the earth, they were too good to dwell in this world of sin—they were to usher in the very millennial time. It was about the beginning of mugwumpery which blos-