

PRISON LIFE OF JEFFERSON DAVIS

BY

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Of Mr. Lincoln he then spoke, not in affected terms of regard or admiration, but paying a simple and sincere tribute to his goodness of character, honesty of purpose, and Christian desire to be faithful to his duties according to such light as was given him. Also to his official purity and freedom from avarice. The Southern press labored in the early part of the war to render Mr. Lincoln abhorred and contemptible; but such efforts were against his judgment, and met such opposition as his multiplied cares and labors would permit. Behind Mr. Lincoln, during his first term, stood an infinitely more objectionable and less scrupulous successor (Mr. Hamlin); and the blow that struck down the President of the United States would place that successor in power. When Mr. Lincoln was reinaugurated, the cause of his people was hopeless, or very nearly so - the struggle only justifiable in continuance by its better attitude for obtaining terms; and from no ruler the United States could have, might terms so generous have been expected. Mr. Lincoln was kind of heart, naturally longing for the glory and repose of a second term in peace. Mr. Johnson, being from the South, dare not offer such liberal treatment; his motives would be impugned. In every embittered national struggle, proposals to assassinate the rival representatives were common, emanating from different classes of men, with different motives; from spies of the enemy, wishing to obtain evidence how such proposals would be received; from fanatics, religious or patriotic, believing the act would prove acceptable to Heaven; from lunatics, driven mad by sufferings connected with the struggle;

and from boastful and often cowardly desperadoes, seeking gold and notoriety by attempting, or promising to attempt, the crime. At the time it occurred, Mr. Lincoln's death, even by natural causes, would have been a serious injury to the prospects of the South; but the manner of his taking-off, frenzying the Northern mind, was the last crowning calamity of a despairing and defeated, though righteous cause.