

DAY, MARCH 7, 1903

BOUTWELL**Only Active Survivor****Of Participants in Johnson Impeachment.****An Ohio Man Cast Deciding Vote For Acquittal.****New Facts on a Most Unique Political Case.****Johnson Denominated a Drunken Buffoon By One of His Trusted Followers.**

[Washington Star.]

More than a third of a century has passed into history since the famous trial and acquittal of President Andrew Johnson on the charge of "high crimes and misdemeanors." It was the first and only attempt ever made to impeach a President of the United States.

Of the men who were active participants in that famous hearing George S. Boutwell, of Massachusetts, alone survives. His compeers in the management of the trial on the part of the prosecution—Thaddeus Stevens, "Ben" Butler, General John A. Logan, John A. Bingham, J. F. Wilson and T. Williams, all members of the House of Representatives—have long since been gathered to their fathers.

Butler and Bingham were among the ablest lawyers in the country. Pitted against these managers, assisting the Attorney General of the United States, Henry Stanberry, were Jeremiah S. Black, William M. Evarts, Benjamin R. Curtis and Thomas A. R. Nelson. Such an array of legal wisdom will probably never again be brought together at a trial.

The generation of this day seldom hears mentioned the names of any of these men. Yet they were leaders in public life in the critical period of reconstruction. The only man in Congress to-day who was serving a constituency at the time of the famous trial is the veteran Galusha A. Grow, of Pennsylvania.

GULF HAD GRADUALLY WIDENED.

The impeachment of President Johnson was loudly demanded by Senator Wade of Ohio, Stevens, James M. Ashley of Ohio, Butler and other ultra-radicals when Congress met in December, 1867. The gulf between Johnson and Congress had gradually widened after the reconstruction bill was passed over his veto, although his friends announced that, while he opposed the act and resisted its passage, it was the law of the land, and he would fairly execute it. Edwin M. Stanton was removed from the War Department and Grant appointed in his place. The Senate when it met overruled the deposition of Stanton, and Grant gracefully retired that the War Secretary might resume his duties.

President Johnson, with an unfortunate want of reticence, denounced Congress and finally again issued an order removing Stanton and appointing Adjutant General Thomas as Secretary of War. Charles Sumner telegraphed Stanton to hold the place. Many were of the opinion that a scene of violence would be witnessed at the War Department.

The Senate was not slow in declaring that the President had exceeded his authority, and the House of Representatives, by a vote of 126 to 47, passed a resolution that he be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors.

ASHLEY INTRODUCED RESOLUTION.

James M. Ashley introduced the resolution. The House of Representatives agreed to the articles of impeachment March 3, 1868, and the Senate received them two days later. Ashley was possessed of a fearless nature. He was a picturesque character. It is with him that this article proposes to deal.

He began his career as an Abolition Democrat, and his first vote, he used to say, was cast in 1852 for John P. Hale and George W. Julian. They were what was called "Free Democrats." Ashley voted for Fremont, and was a member of the committee that notified him of his nomination. He was a delegate to the first Republican National Convention in Pittsburg, when the party was born. He was in the first convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln; also in the second convention, and he voted for Andrew Johnson for Vice President.

During the impeachment trial, when friends of the President taunted Ashley with having assisted Johnson to the Vice Presidency, Ashley would explain:

"I voted for Johnson in that convention because I had known him in the South and believed him to be a Union man, thoroughly saturated with Union sympathy. But," he would add with unmistakable emphasis, "I have lived to find him a scheming scoundrel, and I will never darken the White House doors while he pollutes the building with his presence."

FEELING THAT EXISTED AT THE TIME.

That may give a faint idea of the feeling that existed as the result of the proceedings against the President. Those who believed that Johnson should be impeached were loud in their denunciation of him, and the language employed often included epithets that a person at all sensitive might construe as personal. Johnson had his defenders, who were at times equally careless in the use of swear words.

A few evenings ago in a downtown hotel two former members of Congress, one of whom knew Ashley personally, were recalling the days of reconstruction and the men who took an active part in attendant legislation. The impeachment trial was mentioned, as was Ashley's name, and the latter's friend told of the last visit made to Washington by the man who introduced the impeachment resolution in Congress, and of listening to the story of the impeachment trial as related by Ashley himself.

"I think it was in the spring of 1896 that I last saw Ashley," said the speaker. "I met him on the avenue and accompanied him over to the Capitol. He wore a broad-brimmed hat and had overcoat thrown loosely over his shoulders. He told me he had not been in Washington for a dozen years."

"I want to take a peep in the House and Senate Chambers," he said. "Outside of Grow I don't know of a single person who was there when I served."

TOLD ON A STREET CAR RIDE.

"That afternoon we took a street car ride over the city and talked over old times en route. Ashley told of the impeachment trial and of the part he played in it.

"There was nothing personal in introducing the resolution, as was thought at the time," he said. "On the contrary, Johnson and I had been warm friends up to the time when he came to me and told me his plans for administering affairs as President of the United States. Then it was I knew that he and the Republican party had parted company. I thought he was recreant to his trust, and should be condemned in the only way that we had any power to touch him."

"At Johnson's inauguration my disgust became intense. I wanted to crawl under my chair or go and hide my head in the cloakroom when he began his maudlin speech. It was horrible. The more he said the worse he got. That was one time when the newspapers didn't want facts, and every line sent out was severely edited, lest the disgraceful truth make us the laughing stock abroad."

"It would have been a lasting disgrace had all he said gone into print and into the

archives. In the Senate chamber that day were representatives of foreign Governments, accompanied by ladies of their households, heads of departments, members of the Supreme Court, Cabinet officers, all accompanied by ladies, and hundreds of honored guests. Simply frightful was the exhibition the drunken buffoon made for himself.

CONFERENCE AT THE SAM HOOPER HOUSE.

"After Johnson became President, following the death of Lincoln, he accepted an offer of a house belonging to Sam Hooper, elegantly furnished, to live in till the White House could be renovated. In the big, handsome parlors, in company of half a dozen other gentlemen, all members of Congress, he outlined to me his policy.

"I made up my mind then and there that if he meant to carry out the plans as outlined to us he and the Republican party were two separate institutions, and I told him so in language more pungent than polite. We never touched hands after the episode. The talk that I had with Johnson before he moved into the White House was sufficient to prove he had sold out his principles and was a renegade.

"So I set about preparing articles of impeachment, as soon as an opportunity offered to reach him, and which failed because of the remissness of Ross, of Kansas, who defeated the project in the teeth of opposition from his own state. Kansas was against Johnson and for impeachment to a man, except in so far as her representation in Congress was concerned, and I believe she tried her best to control them, but couldn't."

"I know that when Senator Ross, of Kansas, voted against impeachment there was lying on his desk a telegram from Kansas signed by D. R. Anthony, the veteran editor, and a thousand others, telling him to vote for impeachment or come home for political death. There was also on his desk a telegram ready to send in reply that he would vote his convictions regardless of what the state instructed, and it was signed in full with his name."

A SCENE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN.

"Those who were in the Senate Chamber when the vote was taken that day will never forget it. Among the Senators was Grimes, of Iowa, who was at the time stricken with death, but, in a desire to do what he thought a justice to Johnson, was carried into the Senate Chamber, a dying man, to cast his vote against impeachment."

"The House had adjourned to permit us all to go over. There were present members of the Cabinet, foreign Ministers, members of the Supreme Court and other dignitaries, as well as many women. Chief Justice Chase presided, as he had all through the proceedings. You could have heard the drop of a pin.

"It was known positively that 18 Senators would vote against the resolution of impeachment, and a single accession would defeat. For days we had labored to get an expression of opinion from each Senator, but many evaded us, and Ross said frankly that he would not tell a living man how he would vote. He was true to his word."

"When the day came we felt perfectly sure exactly how each Senator would vote, except Ross, and his vote either way would carry the day. We tried to build courage on the sentiment of Kansas, which was squarely and avowedly for impeachment, but all the time felt that Ross was going to bolt."

"When his name was called, deathlike stillness came over the Senate Chamber, and the faint whisper of his response was not perceptible 10 feet away. A Senator asked how he had voted and he repeated in a clear, loud tone:

"Not guilty."

"There was not much use to go on with the roll call, for there were only two more votes that way and we knew them—Trumbull and Van Winkle. All others were for impeachment, and it only needed Ross' response to decide the matter."

LITTLE SATISFACTION DID ROSS GET.

"I don't think Ross ever got much satisfaction, except a clear conscience, out of it. He thought he was right, but his idea of right and mine differ. Johnson was whitewashed, but the coat didn't last well."

Ashley was a noted figure in Congress. He wrote and introduced in the Thirty-seventh Congress, in 1864, the resolution to free the slaves in the District of Columbia. It was amended so as to give slave owners compensation for their slaves. He introduced in Congress what afterward became a law, the fifteenth amendment, which provides the rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.

Ross was a native of Ohio. He learned the printer's trade and was for a time foreman of the Milwaukee Sentinel. At the beginning of troubles in Kansas he became the editor of the Kansas Tribune, the only free state paper in the territory at the time, the others having been destroyed. He was appointed to the United States Senate to succeed Lane. This was in 1866.

Ross is still living, setting type on a paper down in Arizona or New Mexico.