

[1881 Aug 27]

To the Hon Chester A. Arthur.

The hours of Garfield's life are numbered — before this meets your eye, you may be President. The people are bowed in grief; but — do you realize it? — not so much because he is dying, as because you are his successor. What President ever entered office under circumstances so sad! The day he was shot, the thought rose in a thousand minds that you might be the instigator of the foul act. Is not that a humiliation which cuts deeper than any bullet can pierce? Your best friends said: "Arthur must resign — he cannot accept office, with such a suspicion resting upon him." And now your kindest opponents say: "Arthur will try to do

right - adding gloomily - "He  
won't succeed, though - making  
a man President cannot change  
him."

But making a man President  
can change him! At a time  
like this, if anything can, that  
can. Great emergencies awaken  
generous traits which have lain  
dormant half a life. If there is  
a spark of true nobility in you,  
now is the occasion to let it  
shine. Faith in your better nature  
forces me to write to you - but  
not to beg you to resign. Do  
what is more difficult & more  
brave. Reform! It is not the  
proof of highest goodness never  
to have done wrong - but it is  
a proof of it, sometime in  
ones career, to pause & ponder,  
to recognize the evil, to turn  
resolutely against it & devote  
the remainder of ones life to

that only which is pure & exalted.  
Such revolutions of the soul are not  
common. No step towards them is  
easy. In the humdrum drift of  
daily life, they are impossible.  
But once in a while there comes  
a crisis which renders miracles  
feasible. The great tidal wave of  
sorrow which has rolled over  
the country, has swept you  
loose from your old moorings  
& set you on a mountain-  
top, alone. As President of the  
United States - made such by no  
election, but by a national  
calamity - you have no old  
associations, no personal friends,  
no political ties, you have only  
your duty to the people at  
large. You are free - free to be  
as able & as honorable as any  
man who ever filled the  
presidential chair.

Your past - you know best

what it has been. You have lived for worldly things.. Fairly or unfairly, you have won them. You are rich, powerful - tomorrow, perhaps you will be President. And what is it all worth? Are you peaceful - are you happy? What if a few days hence the hand of the next unsatisfied ruffian should lay you low, & you should drag through months of weary suffering, in the White House, knowing that all over the land not a prayer was uttered in your behalf, not a tear shed, that the great American people was glad to be rid of you - would not worldly honors seem rather empty then?

Make such things impossible. Rise to the emergency. Disappoint our fears. Force the nation to have faith in you. Show from the first that you have none

but the purest aims. It may be difficult at once to inspire confidence, but persevere. In time - when you have given reason for it - the country will love & trust you. If any man says: "With Arthur for President, Civil Service Reform is doomed," prove that Arthur can be its firmest champion. Do not thrust on the people politicians who have forfeited their respect - no matter how near they may be to you as personal friends. Do not remove any man from office unnecessarily. Appoint those only of marked ability & of sterling character. Such may not be abundant, but you will find them, if you seek them. You are far too clever to be easily deceived. In all your policy, have but the highest motives. With the lamp of patri-

riotism in your hand, you  
feet will not be likely to  
stumble.

Do you care for applause?  
Of course, you have had it—  
after a fashion. Perhaps from  
the dregs of the populace, inspired  
by the lowest of politicians. Possibly  
it pleased you at the time—it  
may have served some purpose  
that you valued then. But now,  
in the depths of your soul, do  
you not despise it? Would not  
one heart-felt "God bless you!"  
from the honest & true among  
your countrymen, be worth ten  
thousand times more? You can  
win such blessings, if you  
will.

Your name now is on the  
annals of history. You cannot  
slink back into obscurity, if  
you would. A hundred years  
hence, school boys will recite

your name in the list of Presi-  
dents & tell of your administration.  
And what shall posterity say?  
It is for you to choose whether  
your record shall be written  
in black or in gold. For the  
sake of your country, for your  
own sake & for the sakes of  
all who have ever loved you,  
let it be pure & bright.

As one of the people over  
whom you are to be President,  
I make you this appeal. Perhaps  
you have received many similar.  
If not, still believe that this  
expresses the thoughts in many  
minds, the anxieties in many  
hearts, today — & do not give  
those who have had faith in  
you, cause for regret.

Yours Respectfully,  
Julia J. Land.

46 E. 74<sup>th</sup> St. New York.  
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