

[1882 Nov 8]

Hon. Chester A. Arthur.



The struggle is over - election day past. And I have some sad thoughts concerning you. It is not my nature to find pleasure in saying to people who are discomfited: "There, I told you so -" & it is not in such a spirit that I write. Before I have written for other reasons - today it is wholly for your own sake. You are unhappy - gloomy - disappointed. If I were at home, I should feel almost tempted to go & see you. And yet I would dread the meeting. You would say to me something harsh - something bitter - something that would wound me. Yet it is not the mere words, nor even the fact

of being wounded that I shrink from — it is that you have the hard, bitter thoughts in your heart. Put them away from you. Be true to your better nature, at last.

You have had a terrible defeat. You know it — everyone does. It would be useless to try to disguise it — you could deceive no one, except yourself. And you have deceived yourself too much already. You have trusted in the badness & the stupidity of human nature — you have believed that all good men were cowards. There was some excuse for the latter impression, I admit. They do often seem cowards. But it is because they trust too much to the goodness & intelligence of human nature — they cannot

easily imagine that people deliberately mean to do wrong & so will not vigorously oppose them. Yet, when they are aroused to danger, you see what they can do. You must not think that there was anything factional or personal in the opposition you have met. The men of the Republican party who voted against you yesterday would stand by you through thick & thin, if you would stand by principle. If there was a factional spirit in the campaign, you introduced it yourself by the factional methods you have followed for the past few months — if there was a personal element you forced it on the people by the active personal interest you have shown in local affairs. Had you remained

at your post of duty in Wash-
ton, or at least kept out of
the state of New York, for the
last six weeks, you would
not be in the deplorable
position you are now. If there
was anything deeply humiliating
in your defeat, it consisted
in, not what your opponents
prepared for you, but in
what you prepared for
yourself. You have been your
own worst enemy. I say
this to you, not as a taunt,
but because I believe that,
when we see that our troubles
are of our own making, somehow
it touches our sense of justice
& compels us to bear them
more patiently. Do not imagine
that your opponents are triumph-
ing over you. It was a melan-
choly victory to those who
defeated you — it is painful

for life-long Republicans to vote against the Republican party—sad for any true-hearted American to be opposed to the President of the United States.

And now it remains for you to decide what you will make of this defeat—whether it shall be the stepping stone to better things, or the mill-stone about your neck to sink you to the bottom of the deep. There is only one way to make the world forget your humiliation—make people forget how much you have deserved it. I do not know whether you aimed at a second term of the Presidency but if you did, you have destroyed your chances for it by the part you have taken in the present campaign.

No free convention would nominate you — & if a packed convention did so, more than half the party would bolt. You have undermined your power both for good & evil. It is not of vital importance to the country what you choose to do now — but it is of vital importance to yourself. Remember how swiftly time glides away. To many men there comes a long pause between the activity of life & the closing scenes of death. How sad it must be for anyone then to look back & feel that the best strength of their manhood has all been wasted on unworthy ends. For your own sake & for the sake of those who love you, do not fill your life with actions which after

wards can bring you only regret. Go back to Washington — forget New York, political strife & personal animosity. Remember that you are President of the United States — work only for the good of the country. And bear in mind, that, in a free country, the only bulwark of power worth trusting, is the affection of the people.

You will not come to see me here, I suppose, & probably I will not be in New York again for a long long time — so perhaps we will never meet any more. But please think sometimes of what I have said to you — & ask yourself if, even when opposed to you, even in the severest things I have said, if I have not been more truly your friend than many

who are nearer to you.

Yours Sincerely,

J. J. P.

103 Circular St. [Julia C. Sand]

Saratoga N.Y.

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