

*Dear Brother:*

I need not say I don't want to come. There can be no satisfaction to me in being drawn into the vortex of confusion in which public affairs seem to be. I cannot do or say anything that will influence either the President or Congress. If the President be impeached and the South reduced to Territories, the country will, of course, relapse to a state of war or quasi war, and what good it is to do passes my comprehension. Our debt is already as much as the country can stand, and we shall, with Indians and local troubles, have full employment for all the regular army. I suppose the Southern States will then require a standing army of an hundred thousand men, and it would be prudent to provide them before the emergency is created.

Affectionately,  
W. T. SHERMAN.

About this time General Sherman writes:—

I see occasionally that a move in Congress is made about the Mormons. We shall this year and next have our hands full with the Indians, and the conflict of races in the South, without begging any new cause of trouble. As I am interested, I want you to know that my opinion is emphatic that we should attempt nothing with the Mormons until the railroad is finished as far as Fort Bridger. That cannot be until about the year 1869. As long as cases have to be tried by juries, all laws counter to the prejudice of the whole people are waste paper.

I got your letter a few days ago, and am glad you feel so confident of the political situation. I am not

alarmed at the fact that universal suffrage — blacks, whites, Chinese, and Indians — is to be the basis, but the devil comes in when we shall be forced to contract the right of suffrage. It is easy enough to roll down hill, but the trouble is in getting back again; but I am out and shall keep out. . . . G. A. Custer, Lieutenant-Colonel Seventh Cavalry, is young, *very* brave, even to rashness, a good trait for a cavalry officer. He came to duty immediately on being appointed, and is ready and willing now to fight the Indians. He is in my command, and I am bound to befriend him. I think he merits confirmation for military service already rendered, and military qualities still needed — youth, health, energy, and extreme willingness to act and fight. . . .

WASHINGTON, March 7, 1867.

*Dear Brother:* . . . You will have noticed that my name is connected with the Reconstruction Law. I did nothing but reduce and group the ideas of others, carefully leaving open to the South the whole machinery of reconstruction. The bill was much injured by the additions in the House, but, after all, there is nothing obnoxious to the South in it but general suffrage. This they must take, and the only question is whether they will take it in their own way by their own popular movements, or whether we shall be compelled at the next session to organize provisional governments. I hope and trust they will learn wisdom from the past. Can't you in some way give them that advice? Three years ago they hated you and Johnson most of all men; now, your advice goes farther than any two men of the nation. We will adjourn soon until November next. The impeachment movement has, so far, been a complete failure. Butler and Logan are reinforcements, but will effect nothing.

The President has only to forward and enforce the law as they stand, and he is safe. He ought not to, and must not stand in the way of the determined movement to recognize the rebel States. He has had his way and it failed; he ought now fairly to try the Congressional way. I think some of going to Paris in April. I am tendered an honorary membership of the commission, and a free passage. The occasion is tempting; if I go, it will be about the middle of April.

Affectionately,  
JOHN SHERMAN.

After a short and hurried trip abroad, John Sherman writes:—

UNITED STATES SENATE, July 15, 1867.

*Dear Brother:* . . . I have no time to write you more as to my trip, except to convey the earnest personal message sent by Emperor Louis Napoleon to you. He asked me to say to you, in his name, that he considered you the genius of our war, and that he had for you as a military man the highest regard. He and his Court treated me with unusual attention, no doubt partly on your account. You would have been received with much heartiness. While I am glad you abandoned that excursion, yet I hope you will arrange to go this winter to Paris and London.

The Indian War is an inglorious one. We shall probably pass a bill to authorize you and others to make a treaty with the Indians, with a view to gather them into reservations. I have many things to write about, but must defer them for the present.

On July 16, 1867, General Sherman writes to his brother of the Indian troubles in the West.

I have good Department Commanders, but the country is so large, and the Indians so scattered, that we cannot

foresee where they will turn up. Not only real depredations are committed, but every fear, or apprehension, on whatever it may be founded, is published, and protection claimed and demanded. . . .

You have doubtless heard much of the war. The fact is, this contact of the two races has caused universal hostility, and the Indians operate in small, scattered bands, avoiding the posts and well-guarded trains, and hitting little parties who are off their guard. I have a much heavier force on the plains, but they are so large that it is impossible to guard at all points, and the clamor for protection everywhere has prevented our being able to collect a large force to go into the country where we believe the Indians have hid their families; viz., up on the Yellowstone, and down on the Red River. I see it stated the Indian War is costing a million a week. This cannot be; for I have not employed anything but the regular troops or the regular appropriations, except from companies of Kansas volunteers, who know they can't get any pay at all till Congress appropriates.

I have sent full reports to Washington, and hope Congress now will act in one way or the other. A commission going out can meet only little squads of Indians. They are scattered from Minnesota to Texas, and if they make treaties they won't last twenty-four hours.

We must fight the Indians, and force them to collect in agreed-on limits far away from the continental roads.

I do think this subject as important as Reconstruction.

Affectionately yours,

W. T. SHERMAN.

About this time Congress appointed General Sherman a member of a Commission to investigate the Indian troubles, and to make treaties with the Indians. This

Commission was rendered necessary on account of the discontent of the Indians with regard to their reservations.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION  
OF THE MISSOURI,  
MADISON, Wis., Aug. 3, 1867.

*Dear Brother:*

As I expected, I am on the detail,<sup>1</sup> and have official notice that I shall be required in St. Louis, Tuesday, August 6th. . . .

I got your message from Napoleon. He sent me a similar message by Schofield, but I would hardly venture to France as the representative of our military system, as it would subject me to heavy expense and much trouble.

Grant told me he would not accept a nomination for President, and if he departs from this, his natural conclusion, it will be by side influence, and because no good candidate has thus far been brought forward by the ruling party. I don't think he has clearly defined political opinions, but would let Congress and the departments work out the problem of the future, which is probably better than to form a theory and force matters to conform to it. . . .

Yours affectionately,  
W. T. SHERMAN.

MANSFIELD, OHIO, Aug. 9, 1867.

*Dear Brother:* . . . It is now becoming extremely important to know precisely what Grant wants in connection with the Presidency. If he has really made up his mind that he would like to hold that office, he can have it. Popular opinion is all in his favor. His position is the

<sup>1</sup> The Indian Commission.

rare one of having that office within his easy reach, and yet it is clear that his interest is against his acceptance. The moment he is nominated, he at once becomes the victim of abuse; and even his great services will not shield him. Our politics for years will be a maelstrom, destroying and building up reputations with rapidity. My conviction is clear that Grant ought not to change his present position to that of President; and if he declines, then by all odds Chase is the safest man for the country. He is wise, politic, and safe. Our finances, the public credit, and the general interests of all parts of the country will be safe with him. His opinions are advanced on the suffrage question, but this waived, he would be a most conservative President. He is not a partisan, scarcely enough so for his own interests; still, if Grant wishes to be President, all other candidates will have to stand aside. I see nothing in his way unless he is foolish enough to connect his future with the Democratic party. This party cannot dictate the next President. They would deaden any man they praise. Even Grant could not overcome any fellowship with them. If they should take a wise course on future political questions, their course during the war will bar their way. You may not think so, but I know it. The strength is with the Republicans. Not of the Butler stripe, but with just that kind of men who would be satisfied with the position of Grant. The suffrage and reconstruction questions will be settled before the election, and in such a way as to secure the Republican party an even chance in every Southern State except Kentucky. . . .

I agree with you that Indian wars will not cease until all the Indian tribes are absorbed in our population, and can be controlled by constables instead of soldiers.

I mean to remain as quiet as possible this fall. I am

not now in high favor with the Radicals, and can afford to wait awhile. The election in Ohio will go as usual. The suffrage amendment will be adopted by a close vote, and that will settle forever the negro question in Ohio. A reaction and struggle may occur in the South, but no change will occur in the loyal States until they decide on financial questions. This is inevitable after the next election. . . .

Affectionately yours,  
JOHN SHERMAN.

HEADQUARTERS, OMAHA, NEB., Sept. 12, 1867.

Dear Brother :

As to politics, I hardly know if I should approach Grant, as I can hardly judge of the influences that have operated on him since we were together last November. In accepting the acting office of Secretary of War, I doubt not he realized the delicacy of his position, and was willing to risk the chances. It is not for the interest of the United States that in a temporary political office he should sink his character as a military officer. In the former he should be in harmony with the executive, but in the latter he should be simply a high sheriff to execute the process of the court. My belief is that Congress cannot qualify the President's right to command the army and navy. He is the Constitutional Commander-in-Chief. But Congress can make rules and laws for the government of the army and thereby control the President as such Commander-in-Chief. In trying to array the President and General Grant in antagonism, Congress did wrong, and reaction is sure to result. It damages all parties, because few people take the trouble to study out the right, yet time moves along so

rapidly and the election of a new President will soon settle these and all kindred questions. Your course has been fair, and you cannot wish to alter or amend it. Our country ought not to be ruled by the extreme views of Sumner or Stevens any more than by the extreme views of Calhoun, Yancey, etc., that have produced our Civil War. There is some just middle course, and events will flow into it whether any one man or set of men is wise enough to foresee it and lay down its maxims. I think Chase is the ablest man of his school, and I would personally prefer him to Wade, Colfax, or any of the men whose names I notice in this connection. Whether the precedent of a Chief Justice being a political aspirant may not be bad, I don't know. This is the Mexican rule, and has resulted in anarchy.

I don't think Grant, Sheridan, Thomas, or any real military man wants to be President. All see that, however pure or exalted their past reputations may have been, it don't shield them from the lies and aspersions of a besotted press. . . . Grant writes me in the most unreserved confidence, and never has said a word that looks like wanting the office of President. His whole nature is to smooth over troubles, and he waits with the most seeming indifference, under false and unjust assertions, till the right time, when the truth peeps out, so as to defy contradiction. . . .

Affectionately,  
W. T. SHERMAN.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION  
OF THE MISSOURI,  
St. Louis, Sept. 28, 1867.

Dear Brother :

We have now been near two months on the Indian Commission, and I can pretty closely judge of the result. It cannot be complete or final, because it will take years to do all the law requires, and I suppose the pressure will force Congress to do something conclusive this winter. According to existing treaties with Indians, they have a right to wander and hunt across all the railroads toward the West, and Henderson thinks we had no right to locate roads through without a prior assent, and by the payment of damages. Whether right or wrong, those roads will be built, and everybody knows that Congress, after granting the charters and fixing the routes, cannot now back out and surrender the country to a few bands of roving Indians. Henderson says, also, that the demand of these railroads, stage, telegraph, and other lines on me for military aid or protection were not contemplated, but that these companies took their franchises and contracts with a full knowledge of the difficulties. Now I and all who have gone before me have acted on the general theory that when Congress located a road, that it amounted to an implied promise to give reasonable military protection. However, by the time Congress meets, we can, I think, submit to you some general plan that is practicable, and will in time — not at once — attain a result. . . .

Yours,  
W. T. SHERMAN.

Early in October, 1867, General Sherman was again summoned to Washington by the President.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11, 1867.

Dear Brother: I have no doubt you have been duly concerned about my being summoned to Washington.

It was imprudently done by the President without going through Grant. But I think I have smoothed it over so that Grant does not feel hurt. I cannot place myself in a situation even partially antagonistic with Grant. We must work together. Mr. Johnson has not offered me anything, only has talked over every subject, and because I listen to him patiently, and make short and decisive answers, he says he would like to have me here. Still he does not oppose my going back home. . . .

On Monday I will start for St. Louis by the Atlantic and G. W. Road, and pass Mansfield Tuesday. Can't you meet me and ride some miles? I have been away from home so much, and must go right along to Fort Laramie, that I cannot well stop at Cleveland or Mansfield, and would like to see you for an hour or so to hear your views of the coming events. . . .

Yours affectionately,  
W. T. SHERMAN.

And on his return to St. Louis he continues:—

I have always talked kindly to the President, and advised Grant to do so. I do think that it is best for all hands that his administration be allowed to run out its course without threatened or attempted violence. Whoever begins violent proceedings will lose in the long run. Johnson is not a man of action, but of theory, and so long as your party is in doubt as to the true mode of procedure, it would be at great risk that an attempt be

made to displease the President by a simple Law of Congress. This is as much as I have ever said to anybody. I have never by word or inference given anybody the right to class me in opposition to or in support of Congress. On the contrary, I told Mr. Johnson that from the nature of things he could not dispense with a Congress to make laws and appropriate money, and suggested to him to receive and make overtures to such men as Fessenden, Trumbull, Sherman, Morgan, and Morton, who, though differing with him in abstract views of Constitutional Law and Practice, were not destructive. That if the Congressional plan of reconstruction succeeded, he could do nothing, and if it failed or led to confusion, the future developed results in his favor, etc.; and that is pretty much all I have ever said or done. At the meeting of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee on the 13th inst., I will be forced to speak, if here, and though I can confine myself purely to the military events of the past, I can make the opportunity of stating that in no event will I be drawn into the complications of the civil politics of this country.

If Congress could meet and confine itself to current and committee business, I feel certain that everything will work along quietly till the nominations are made, and a new Presidential election will likely settle the principle if negroes are to be voters in the States without the consent of the whites. This is more a question of prejudice than principle, but a voter has as much right to his prejudices as to his vote.

Yours affectionately,  
W. T. SHERMAN.

MANSFIELD, OHIO, NOV. 1, 1867.

Dear Brother:

I see no real occasion for trouble with Johnson. The great error of his life was in not acquiescing in and supporting the 14th Amendment of the Constitution in the Thirty-ninth Congress. This he could easily have carried. It referred the suffrage question to each State, and if adopted long ago the whole controversy would have culminated; or if further opposed by the extreme Radicals, they would have been easily beaten. Now I see nothing short of universal suffrage and universal amnesty as the basis. When you come on, I suggest that you give out that you go on to make your annual report and settle Indian affairs. Give us notice when you will be on, and come directly to my house, where we will make you one of the family.

Grant, I think, is inevitably a candidate. He allows himself to drift into a position where he can't decline if he would, and I feel sure he don't want to decline. My judgment is that Chase is better for the country and for Grant himself, but I will not quarrel with what I cannot control.

JOHN SHERMAN.

And later he writes:—

If you can keep free from committals to Johnson, you will surely as you live be called upon to act as President. The danger now is that the mistakes of the Republicans may drift the Democratic party into power. If so, the rebellion is triumphant, and no man active in suppressing it will be trusted or honored. Grant is not injured by his correspondence with Johnson, but no doubt feels annoyed. . . .

At this time President Johnson had come to open disagreement with Mr. Stanton, his Secretary of War, and wished to force him from the Cabinet. Mr. Stanton had refused to resign and had been upheld by Congress. The President then turned for help in his difficulties to General Grant, commanding the army; but the latter found that any interference on his part would be illegal and impossible.

Mr. Johnson then planned to create a new office for General Sherman, that of Brevet General of the army, in order to bring him to Washington.

The following letters and telegrams refer to this difficulty.

CONFIDENTIAL.

LIBRARY ROOM, WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 31, 1868.

TO THE PRESIDENT:

Since our interview of yesterday I have given the subject of our conversation all my thoughts, and I beg you will pardon my reducing the result to writing.

My personal preferences, if expressed, were to be allowed to return to St. Louis to resume my present command; because my command was important, large, suited to my rank and inclination, and because my family was well provided for there, in house facilities, schools, living, and agreeable society.

Whilst, on the other hand, Washington was for many (to me) good reasons highly objectionable. Especially because it is the political capital of the country and focus of intrigue, gossip, and slander. Your personal preferences were, as expressed, to make a new department East adequate to my rank, with headquarters at Washington, and to assign me to its command — to remove my family here, and to avail myself of its schools, etc.; to remove Mr. Stanton from his office as Secretary of War, and have me to discharge the duties.

To effect this removal two modes were indicated: to simply cause him to quit the War Office building and notify the Treasury Department and the Army Staff Departments no longer to respect him as Secretary of War; or to remove him, and submit my name to the Senate for confirmation. Permit me to discuss these points a little, and I will premise by saying that I have spoken to no one on the subject, and have not even seen Mr. Ewing, Mr. Stanbery, or General Grant since I was with you.

It has been the rule and custom of our army since the organization of the Government that the second officer of the army should be at the second (in importance) command, and remote from general headquarters. To bring me to Washington would put three heads to an army,— yourself, General Grant, and myself,— and we would be more than human if we were not to differ. In my judgment it would ruin the army, and would be fatal to one or two of us.

Generals Scott and Taylor proved themselves soldiers and patriots in the field, but Washington was fatal to both. This city and the influences that centred here defeated every army that had its head here from 1861 to 1865, and would have overwhelmed General Grant at Spottsylvania and Petersburg had he not been fortified by a strong reputation already hard earned, and because no one then living coveted the place. Whereas in the West we made progress from the start, because there was no political capital near enough to poison our minds and kindle into light that craving itching for fame which has killed more good men than bullets. I have been with General Grant in the midst of death and slaughter — when the howls of people reached him after Shiloh; when messengers were speeding to and fro between his