

and in 1802 was appointed by President Jefferson comptroller of the United States treasury. He continued to hold this office until in November, 1811, when he was appointed by President Madison an associate justice of the federal Supreme Court. Justice Duval's term of service began ten years after the accession of John Marshall to the chief justiceship and terminated in the same year that Roger Brooke Taney succeeded Marshall, when, having reached the age of nearly eighty-four years, he resigned on account of the infirmities of old age. During his service on the bench many important questions connected with the construing of the constitution came before the court, and his opinions commanded general respect. He survived his retirement about eight years, dying at his home in Prince George's county, March 6, 1844, in the ninety-second year of his age.

REVERDY JOHNSON.
(1796-1876.)

Reverdy Johnson, eminent lawyer, United States senator, attorney general of the United States and minister to the court of St. James, was born in Annapolis, Maryland, May 21, 1796. His family was of English origin and had early settled in the province of Maryland. His grandfather, Robert Johnson, was a soldier of the revolution and his father, John Johnson, was a lawyer of distinction, serving successively as attorney general, judge of the court of appeals and chancellor of Maryland. Reverdy's brother, John Johnson, Jr., also held the high office of chancellor of the state. The mother of Reverdy was of French descent, a daughter of Reverdy Ghiselin, who for many years was commissioner of the land office of Maryland.

Reverdy Johnson was educated at St. John's College in Annapolis, being graduated from that institution at the early age of sixteen years. He at once began the study of law under his father's supervision and later under that of Judge Stevens. In 1815 he was admitted to the bar, although only nineteen years of age, and began practice in Upper Marlboro, Prince George's county. In the following year he was appointed deputy of the attorney general for the judicial district, an office equivalent to the present district attorneyship. In 1817, he removed to Baltimore. The bar of that city at the time boasted some of the greatest lawyers in America, among them being Luther Martin, Roger Brooke Taney, William Pinkney and Robert Goodloe Harper. In this distinguished company, Reverdy Johnson, at the age of twenty-one years, succeeded in obtaining recognition as a barrister of remarkable ability.

In 1821 Johnson was elected to the state senate, and at the close of his term of five years was reelected, but resigned after two years, owing to the growth of his law practice. During the ensuing seventeen years he devoted himself assiduously to his profession and rose to the very front rank at the bar. He nevertheless gave some attention to public affairs and came to be recognized as a leading defender of the policies of the whig party. In 1845 he was elected to the United States senate. In that body he displayed the independence which characterized his entire political career by supporting Polk's administration in prosecuting the war with Mexico, although the majority of his fellow whigs were against the war. When Zachary Taylor became president in 1849 he selected Johnson for the post of attorney general of the United States, an office which five eminent Marylanders, Robert Smith, William Pinkney, William Wirt, Roger B. Taney, and John Nelson had occupied for more than twenty-one years of the sixty which had elapsed since the adoption of the constitution of the United States. Johnson resigned his seat in the senate to enter the cabinet, but on the death of President Taylor, relinquished the office and resumed the practice of law.

During the ensuing decade Johnson's reputation as a lawyer became nationwide. He was, indeed, regarded virtually as the leader of the American bar. It is a matter of record that he was counsel in almost every case of great importance before the supreme court of the United States as well as before the courts of Maryland. In 1854 his fame was further enhanced by his engagement to argue a case involving the claim of an English house against the United States government for a large sum of money before a joint English and American commission. In this case he was associated as counsel with Lord Cairns who was afterwards lord chancellor of England. He visited England in connection with this matter and came

in contact with the greatest legal minds of that country, upon whom he made so great an impression that he was the recipient of unusual marks of respect.

The collapse of the whig party after its overwhelming defeat at the presidential election of 1852, led Johnson, like others of its southern leaders, to cast his lot with the democracy in preference to the republican party which had risen on the ruins of the party of Webster and Clay. He supported Buchanan for president in 1856, but when the issue of secession was pressed to the front promptly took a firm stand against disunion, contending that the preservation of the Union was paramount to all else. He was a member of the peace convention which met in Washington after the election of Abraham Lincoln and took a conspicuous part in its proceedings, urging compromise and conciliatory measures for averting the peril that confronted the country. In 1861 he was elected to the general assembly of Maryland and in that body bitterly denounced the secession leaders, charging them with contributing to the election of Lincoln in order to precipitate revolution in the cotton states and with seeking to draw Maryland and the rest of the upper south into this confederacy in order to divert the horrors of warfare from their own territories. After the capture of New Orleans by the Union forces in 1862 Johnson was sent to that city by President Lincoln as a special commissioner to revise the decisions of General Benjamin F. Butler in matters involving the relations of the United States with foreign nations. He reversed the heedless actions of Butler, and thus rescued the administration from many serious embarrassments, for which service he received its hearty thanks.

In 1863 Johnson was elected to the United States senate, from which body he had resigned fourteen years previously. Johnson was unfaltering in his support of the war for the preservation of the Union, but he had no sympathy whatever with the aims of the northern radicals who sought to make that war a means of accomplishing their ulterior purposes. He voted for the constitutional amendment which abolished slavery, but there he halted. His desire was to have the Union restored just as it had been when it was torn asunder in 1861, with the old constitution intact. He therefore advocated the readmission of the seceded states without any conditions attached, and urged amnesty for all who had participated in the so-called rebellion. In 1868 he was appointed by President Andrew Johnson as United States minister to Great Britain and was confirmed by the republican senate, the radical majority of which was doubtless glad to be rid of so redoubtable an antagonist in its midst. At the court of St. James he negotiated the Johnson-Clarendon treaty for the settlement of the claims growing out of the cruise of the Confederate commerce destroyer Alabama. This treaty gave to the United States everything that it could fairly claim, and a subsequent treaty obtained for the United States nothing which Johnson had failed to obtain, but the bitterly partisan senate rejected it solely because it had been negotiated by a representative of the Andrew Johnson administration.

One of the most important services rendered to his country by Reverdy Johnson was in connection with the effort of the radical congress to impeach President Andrew Johnson. It is highly probable that but for his unofficial intervention, this perilous partisan precedent might have been established. A handful of patriotic republican senators were known to be opposed to the impeachment, and it was feared by the ruthless majority that they might prevent the necessary two-thirds vote of the senate for the deposition of the president. The impeachment advocates sought to establish a system of terrorism to bring these senators into submission. The pressure of popular clamor was invoked and, in addition, stories were set afloat as to the dire things the president would do if he should escape conviction. Some of the doubtful senators were believed to be wavering and it was deemed necessary to have the president assure them in some way that he would give them no cause for regret if they voted for his acquittal. He was in no position to issue a public statement denying these stories, and it was necessary to find another way to achieve the end in view.

This end was reached through Reverdy Johnson's diplomatic tact. The friends of the president had been accustomed to meet at the home of the Maryland senator during the trial to discuss its developments. It was contrived by them to have the president visit the senator on a certain evening when Senator Grimes, who was believed to be one of the waverers, would also "happen" to be his guest. The plan was successfully carried out. Senator Johnson skillfully directed the conversation. Senator Grimes left the house fully assured of the president's prudent intentions. He conveyed a knowledge of what he had learned to his colleagues and the scheme to Mexicanize the American presidency failed. In after years James G. Blaine and

other leading republicans frankly admitted that the country had been fortunate in the failure of this effort to depose the president.

After his return from England, Reverdy Johnson, then advanced in years, resumed the practice of law to some extent. His last participation in politics was during the exciting gubernatorial campaign of 1875 in Maryland in which he supported John Lee Carroll, democrat, against an independent candidate. He had become almost blind and did not appear on the hustings in person, but contributed an address to the voters which was read from the platform at a great mass meeting in Baltimore. In the following year he met his death as the result of an accident due to his semi-blindness. He had argued a case before the court of appeals in Annapolis on the tenth of February, 1876. In the evening he was a guest at dinner of Governor Carroll. After dinner, being annoyed by the tobacco smoke when other guests lit their cigars, he stepped into an adjoining apartment the windows of which came down nearly to the floor. A short while afterward he was found lying dead on the ground fifteen feet beneath a window, having evidently stepped out thinking to find a porch.

Johnson lost the sight of one eye early in his career and later the other eye became affected. At a race between a horse owned by President Andrew Jackson and Gabriel Duval of Maryland, a justice of the supreme court, a quarrel occurred between two congressmen which resulted in a duel. Johnson acted as second for one of the principals. While practicing at a mark with duelling pistols a bullet hit a tree, and being diverted from its course struck him in the eye, destroying it. Duelling was much in vogue in Maryland in the first half of the nineteenth century and Johnson is said to have been on the verge of figuring in one as a principal in 1843. Although invariably courteous himself at the trial table, he and George R. Richardson, a brilliant but hot-headed member of the bar, became involved in an altercation in court. The presiding judge deemed it advisable to issue a warrant for Johnson's arrest to prevent bloodshed. A few days later, through the good offices of friends, the parties were reconciled and shook hands in open court. In 1868 Johnson received the degree of LL. D. from St. John's College. In conjunction with Thomas Harris he published the decisions of the Maryland court of appeals, known as Harris's and Johnson's Reports (7 vols., 1820-'27).

SAMUEL RINGGOLD,
(1800-1846.)

Samuel Ringgold, a gallant officer of the United States regular army, whose heroic death at the battle of Palo Alto during the war between the United States and Mexico caused unusual regret throughout the country, was born in Washington county, Maryland, in 1800. His father, General Samuel Ringgold, was for several years a member of the Maryland senate and from 1810 to 1821 a member of the federal house of representatives. His mother was a daughter of General John Cadwallader of Philadelphia, a distinguished soldier of the revolution. Samuel Ringgold was appointed to a cadetship at West Point at the age of fourteen, and was graduated in 1818 with high honors. He entered the army as a lieutenant of artillery, and during his entire career, devoted his attention to that branch of the service, being considered one of the most intelligent and studious artillery officers in the country. He kept abreast of advances in military science abroad and was the inventor of several improvements in equipment, particularly the McClelland military saddle and a brass rebounding hammer for field guns. Shortly after his graduation at West Point, General Winfield Scott selected him as one of his aides, in which capacity he served several years. During the Florida campaign he was actively engaged as captain of artillery and was brevetted major for meritorious service.

At the outbreak of the Mexican war Major Ringgold went to the front with a flying artillery corps organized by himself, which is said to have been the first of its kind in this country. At Palo Alto, on the afternoon of May 8, 1846, he placed his corps within seven hundred yards of the enemy, subsequently advancing one hundred yards, and opened fire with his eighteen-pounders with tremendous effect as was revealed next day by the great number of the enemy found slain. He personally directed the firing, often pointing the guns with his own hands. The unerring precision of the firing was shown in the fact that individual men as well