

THE Maryland Republican

CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRACY BELIEF IN THE COUNTRY

LUTHER F. COLTON,
PUBLISHER AND PROPRIETOR.

ANNAPOLIS, MD.:

Saturday Morning, - - - Feb. 12, 1876

NOTICE.—All communications or letters of business and information connected with this office must hereafter be addressed to THE MARYLAND REPUBLICAN.

DEATH OF HON. REVERDY JOHNSON.

The sad and sudden death of the Hon. Reverdy Johnson, at the Governor's Mansion in this city, on Thursday evening last, fell upon the ears of this community like a clap of thunder, or an earthquake. He had visited our city the day before for the purpose of arguing a case before the Court of Appeals, and was at the time of his death the guest of Gov. Carroll, where, just a few moments before he had gone to dine.

It is evident that Mr. Johnson had left the house for some purpose, and in endeavoring to find his way, with his dim sight, along the carriage-road had been thrown by stepping on some loose coal lying there, and in falling struck his head against a projecting corner of granite base-stone, which there extends from the ground two feet up, and projects about half an inch from the line of brick wall above it.

Speaking of his sudden death, the *Baltimore Gazette* says: Although he had nearly completed his eightieth year, his vigorous vitality of body and mind had given no hint of decay or dissolution. His powerful frame was unbent, his gait firm and steady, his active and restless intellect was busied with all the great interests of the present stirring times, and his hearty, genial temperament still made his presence a joy to his many friends. We all looked for a long twilight to his rich and eventful life, and did not think to see it close with such a sudden eclipse. And yet there is something so melancholy in the slow decline of great powers, that those who loved him best may feel a sort of relief in the fact that he leaped the dark gulf while still in the splendor of his energies, and did not like Swift, and Marlborough and Brougham totter slowly down the hill.

In his death one of the grandest intellects of this generation has ceased to be. He is the last of that splendid galaxy of jurists that thirty years ago made the bar and bench of Maryland so illustrious; and now that he is gone he leaves no one that can fill the space that he occupied. At the bar when he was in his fullest practice, he was, all things considered, without a peer. His great opponents might each have a special excellence, but Mr. Johnson possessed the greatest sum of rare qualities. His skill in examining, and especially in cross-examining witnesses, his lucid statements of facts, his wonderful memory of details seemingly trivial, his weighty, thunderous manner; his quick retorts, his unshakable presence of mind, his clear judgment, his magnificent grasp of a case in all its completeness—these qualities made him a forensic force that has had no equal, take

him for all in all, since the days of Luther Martin, General Walter Jones, William Pinkney and Roger B. Taney.

In this was his eminence. In his career as a diplomatist and as a Senator, although these were distinguished, he shone by the same qualities that gave him pre-eminence at the bar. In the Senate it was his profound knowledge of constitutional law that gave him his greatest influence; and in his foreign missions the government made use of his mastery of the Laws of Nations.

In social life his manners were genial and winning. A strong nature like his could hardly go through a life of constant warfare without making many enemies, but very few could long remain at enmity with him. He had the power of winning them over to him, one hardly knew how, and grappling them to him with hooks of steel. And as he grew older he seemed to cling more closely to his old and valued friends and his warm and affectionate feelings showed themselves more plainly. As the older members of the bar dropped off one by one, it often fell to his lot to announce the death to the court. Those who ever saw him at such times will not forget it. His mind would travel back over years and years of friendly intercourse with the old friend; and he would speak of him, not in fulsome eulogy, but with just and discriminative judgments; scenes and incidents full of character would bring the departed back to remembrance; and yet all this would be in a style of singular tenderness, his features would show the deepest emotion, his ponderous voice would break, his chin quiver, and the sightless eyes fill with tears.