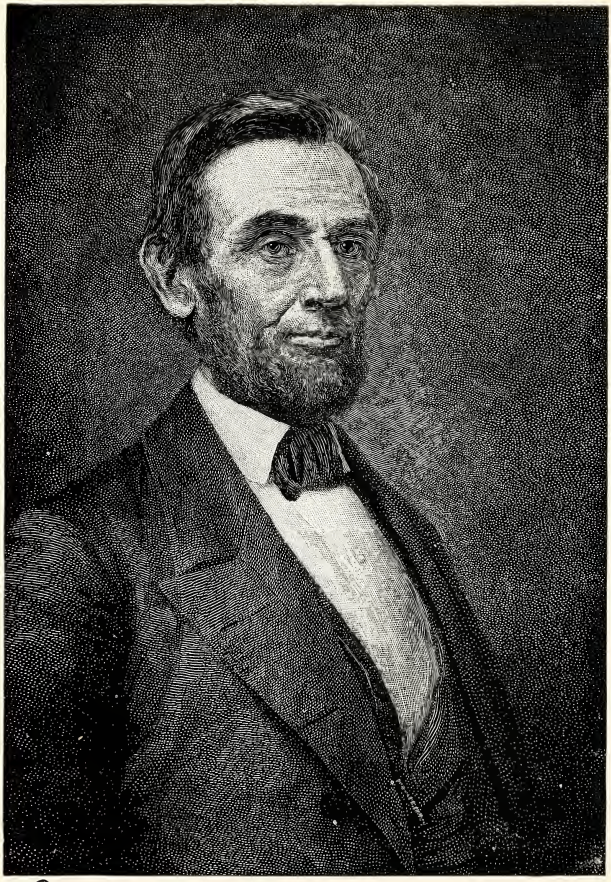


A. Lincoln January 26. 1861
Springfield, Ills.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A HISTORY

BY JOHN G. NICOLAY
AND JOHN HAY

VOLUME THREE



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Abraham Lincoln ..... *Frontispiece*
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER I

SOUTH CAROLINA SECESSION

THE delegates to the South Carolina Convention were elected on the 6th of December, and assembled and organized at Columbia, the capital of the State, on the 17th of the same month; on account of a local epidemic, however, both the convention and the Legislature adjourned to Charleston, where the former reassembled on the following day and the latter two days afterwards. Elected under the prevailing secession *furor* which tolerated no opposition, and embracing the leading conspirators in its membership, the convention was practically unanimous. "There is no honor," said the chairman on taking his seat, "I esteem more highly than to sign the ordinance of secession as a member of this body; but I will regard it as the greatest honor of my life to sign it as your presiding officer."

"Convention Journal," p. 10.

The Legislature of South Carolina had just elected a new governor, who was inaugurated on the same day on which the convention met. This

CHAP. I. was F. W. Pickens, a revolutionist of a yet more radical and energetic type than his predecessor Gist, and who, as we have seen, had been in close consultation with the Cabinet cabal at Washington, more than a month before. He was, of course, anxious to signalize his advent; and to this end immediately dispatched to Washington a special messenger, bearing the following letter to President Buchanan:

(Strictly confidential.)

COLUMBIA, December 17, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: With a sincere desire to prevent a collision of force, I have thought proper to address you directly and truthfully on points of deep and immediate interest.

I am authentically informed that the forts in Charleston harbor are now being thoroughly prepared to turn, with effect, their guns upon the interior and the city. Jurisdiction was ceded by this State expressly for the purpose of external defense from foreign invasion, and not with any view that they should be turned upon the State.

In an ordinary case of mob rebellion, perhaps it might be proper to prepare them for sudden outbreak. But when the people of the State, in sovereign convention assembled, determine to resume their original powers of separate and independent sovereignty, the whole question is changed, and it is no longer an act of rebellion. I, therefore, most respectfully urge that all work on the forts be put a stop to for the present, and that no more force may be ordered there.

The regular convention of the people of the State of South Carolina, legally and properly called, under our Constitution, is now in session, deliberating upon the gravest and most momentous questions, and the excitement of the great masses of the people is great, under a sense of deep wrongs, and a profound necessity of doing something to preserve the peace and safety of the State.

To spare the effusion of blood, which no human power may be able to prevent, I earnestly beg your immediate consideration of all the points I call your attention to. It is not improbable that, under orders from the Commandant, or perhaps from the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the alteration and defenses of those posts are progressing without the knowledge of yourself or the Secretary of War.

The arsenal, in the city of Charleston, with the public arms, I am informed, was turned over very properly to the keeping and defense of a State force, at the urgent request of the Governor of South Carolina. I would most respectfully, and from a sincere devotion to the public peace, request that you would allow me to send a small force, not exceeding twenty-five men and an officer, to take possession of Fort Sumter, immediately, in order to give a feeling of safety to the community. There are no United States troops in that fort whatever, or perhaps only four or five, at present; besides some additional workmen or laborers, lately employed to put the guns in order. If Fort Sumter could be given to me, as Governor, under a permission similar to that by which the Governor was permitted to keep the arsenal with the United States arms in the city of Charleston, then I think the public mind would be quieted under a feeling of safety; and as the convention is now in full authority, it strikes me that could be done with perfect propriety. I need not go into particulars, for urgent reasons will force themselves readily upon your consideration.

If something of the kind be not done, I cannot answer for the consequences.

I send this by a private and confidential gentleman, who is authorized to confer with Mr. Trescott fully, and to receive through him any answer you may think proper to give to this.

Pickens to Buchanan, December 17, 1860. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, pp. 167, 168.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully,

Yours truly, F. W. PICKENS.

To the President of the United States.

Arrived in Washington, the special messenger who bore this document sought the active agent

CHAP. I.

of the central cabal,[1] Mr. Trescott, Assistant Secretary of State, and was by him on Thursday morning, December 20, conducted to the White House and presented to Mr. Buchanan, to whom he personally delivered his communication. The President received the document and promised an answer to it on the following day. The temper and condition of his mind is plainly reflected in what he wrote. He seems to have realized no offense in this insult to the sovereignty and dignity of the United States whose Constitution he had sworn to "preserve, protect, and defend"; no patriotic resentment against the South Carolina conspirators who, as he knew by the telegraph, were assembling that same day in convention to inaugurate local rebellion;—his whole answer breathed a tone of apology that his oath and duties would not permit him to oblige the South Carolina Governor; and he feebly groped for relief from his perplexities in the suggestion that Congress might perhaps somehow arrange the trouble. This was the answer prepared:

Buchanan, Memorandum, Curtis, "Life of Buchanan." Vol. II., pp. 383, 384.

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: I have received your favor of the 17th inst. by Mr. Hamilton. From it I deeply regret to observe that you seem entirely to have misapprehended my position, which I supposed had been clearly stated in my message. I have incurred, and shall incur, any reasonable risk within the clearly prescribed line of my executive duties to prevent a collision between the army

[1] In his message of November 5, 1861, Governor Pickens, of South Carolina, refers to William H. Trescott, Esq., who was in December, 1860, Assistant Secretary of State of the United States, at Washington, as "a distinguished citizen, appointed, as I have since been informed by my predecessor, to remain at Washington as confidential representative of the State." —"South Carolina House Journal," 1861, p. 31.

and navy of the United States and the citizens of South Carolina in defense of the forts within the harbor of Charleston. Hence I have declined for the present to reënforce these forts, relying upon the honor of South Carolinians that they will not be assaulted whilst they remain in their present condition; but that commissioners will be sent by the convention to treat with Congress on the subject. I say with *Congress* because, as I state in my message, "Apart from the execution of the laws so far as this may be practicable, the Executive has no authority to decide what shall be the relations between the Federal Government and South Carolina. He has been invested with no such discretion. He possesses no power to change the relations heretofore existing between them, much less to acknowledge the independence of that State." This would be to invest a mere executive officer with the power of recognizing the dissolution of the confederacy among our thirty-three sovereign States. It bears no resemblance to the recognition of a foreign *de facto* government, involving no such responsibility. Any attempt to do this would, on my part, be a naked act of usurpation.

As an executive officer of the Government, I have no power to surrender, to any human authority, Fort Sumter or any of the other forts or public property in South Carolina. To do this would, on my part, as I have already said, be a naked act of usurpation. It is for Congress to decide this question, and for me to preserve the status of the public property as I found it at the commencement of the troubles.

If South Carolina should attack any of these forts, she will then become the assailant in a war against the United States. It will not then be a question of coercing a State to remain in the Union, to which I am utterly opposed, as my message proves, but it will be a question of voluntarily precipitating a conflict of arms on her part, without even consulting the only authority which possesses the power to act upon the subject. Between independent governments, if one possesses a fortress within the limits of another, and the latter should seize it without calling upon the appropriate authorities of the power in posses-

CHAP. I.

sion to surrender it, this would not only be a just cause of war, but the actual commencement of hostilities.

No authority was given, as you suppose, from myself or from the War Department, to Governor Gist, to guard the United States Arsenal in Charleston by a company of South Carolina volunteers. In this respect you have been misinformed — I have, therefore, never been more astonished in my life, than to learn from you that unless Fort Sumter be delivered into your hands, you cannot be answerable for the consequences.

Curtis, "Life of Buchanan." Vol. II., pp. 384, 385.

It is easy to infer from results, that while Mr. Buchanan was laboring over this document the central cabal was busy. They saw that the rash zeal of Governor Pickens was endangering the web of conspiracy they had wound around the President. He was committed to non-coercion; committed to non-reënforcement; committed to await the arrival of South Carolina commissioners. This new demand from a new authority not only indicated a division of sentiment and purpose in the insurrectionary councils in the Palmetto State, but created an opportunity through which Mr. Buchanan under a possible healthier impulse of patriotism might repudiate the whole obligation of non-resistance to their schemes into which they had beguiled him. They clearly saw, as they themselves explained, that though he would not deliver Sumter now, he might be willing to "approach such action" hereafter, "a possibility not at all improbable, and which ought to be kept open."

Trescott to Pickens, Dec. 21, 1860. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, p. 170.

Mr. Trescott therefore hastened to take the advice of two of the South Carolina Congressmen,— McQueen and Bonham,— and it is not a violent presumption to assume, also of the chief Senatorial conspirators; for only six days had elapsed since

the Congressional circular was signed and published, which called upon the Cotton States to proceed with the plot of secession and the formation of a Southern Confederacy. A telegram was at once sent to Charleston, mildly explaining to Governor Pickens the blunder he was making and asking his authority to withdraw his letter to Mr. Buchanan. Governor Pickens must be credited with astuteness enough to comprehend the situation, for he gave the consent requested. On Friday morning Mr. Trescott waited upon Mr. Buchanan and informed him that he would not be required to answer as Governor Pickens had withdrawn his demand; and Mr. Trescott records, with an evident appreciation of the affair as a successful stroke of policy, that "the withdrawal of the letter was a great relief to the President." To understand more fully the whole scope and spirit of the incident, we must read the report of it which he then transmitted to Charleston:

WASHINGTON, December 21, 1860.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY F. W. PICKENS,
GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

SIR: Your confidential letter to the President was duly delivered to him yesterday by D. H. Hamilton, Esq., according to your instructions. It was withdrawn (no copy having been taken) this morning by me, under the authority of your telegraphic dispatch. Its withdrawal was most opportune. It reached here under circumstances which you could not have anticipated, and it produced the —— effect upon the President.

He had removed Colonel Gardiner from command at Fort Moultrie, for carrying ammunition from the arsenal at Charleston; he had refused to send reënforcements to the garrison there; he had accepted the resignation of

CHAP. I. the oldest, most eminent, and highest member of his Cabinet, rather than consent to send additional force, and the night before your letter arrived, he,[1] upon a telegraphic communication that arms had been removed from the arsenal to Fort Moultrie, the Department of War had issued prompt orders by telegraph to the officer removing them, to restore them immediately. He had done this upon his determination to avoid all risk of collision, and upon the written assurance of the majority of the Congressional Delegation from the State that they did not believe there was any danger of an attack upon the forts before the passage of the Ordinance, and an expression of their trust and hope that there would be none after, until the State had sent commissioners here. His course had been violently denounced by the Northern press, and an effort was being made to[1] —— a Congressional investigation. At that moment he could not have gone to the extent of action you desired, and I felt confident that if forced to answer your letter then he would have taken such ground as would have prevented his ever approaching it hereafter, a possibility not at all improbable, and which ought to be kept open. I considered, also, that the chance of public investigation rendered the utmost caution necessary as to any communications from the State, and having presented the letter, and ascertained what the nature of the reply would be, you had all the advantage of knowing the truth, without the disadvantage of having it put on record. Besides this, the President seemed to think that your request was based upon the impossibility of your restraining the spirit of our people; an interpretation which did you injustice, and the possibility of which I deemed it due to you to avoid. He also appeared to labor under the impression that the representations of the Members of Congress and your own differed essentially, and this, I thought, on account of both, should not be stated in any reply to you. I was also perfectly satisfied that the status of the garrisons would not be disturbed.

Under these circumstances, if I had been acting under

[1] The blanks and rhetorical construction are copied exactly as the authors find them printed in the "South Carolina House Journal."

formal credentials from you, and the letter had been unsealed, I would have delayed its presentation for some hours, until I could have telegraphed you, but that was impossible. As Mr. Hamilton, therefore, had brought with him General McQueen and General Bonham, when he called on me and delivered the letter, and had even gone so far as to express the wish that they should be present when he delivered it to the President,— a proposition which they declined, however,— I deemed it not indiscreet, nor in violation of the discretionary confidence which your letter implied, to take their counsel. We agreed perfectly, and the result was the telegraphic dispatch of last night. The withdrawal of the letter was a great relief to the President, who is most earnestly anxious to avoid an issue with the State or its authorities, and, I think, has encouraged his disposition to go as far as he can in this matter, and to treat those who may represent the State with perfect frankness.

I have had this morning an interview with Governor Floyd, the Secretary of War. No order has been issued that will at all disturb the present condition of the garrisons, and while I cannot even here venture into details, which are too confidential to be risked in any way, I am prepared to say, with a full sense of the responsibility, that nothing will be done which will either do you injury or properly create alarm. Of course when your commissioners have succeeded or failed to effect their negotiations, the whole issue is fairly before you, to be met as courage, honor, and wisdom may direct.

My delay in answering your telegraph concerning Colonel Huger, was caused by his absence from this place. He came, in reply to my telegraph last night, and this morning I telegraphed upon his decision, which I presume he has explained by a letter of this same date. As Dr. Hamilton leaves this evening, I have only time to write this hurried letter, and am, sir,

Trescott to Pickens, Dec. 21, 1860. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, pp. 169-71.

Very respectfully,

WM. HENRY TRESCOTT.

I inclose your confidential letter in this.[1]

[1] In Curtis's "Life of Buchanan," Vol. II., pp. 383, 384, will be found the private memorandum of President Buchanan

CHAP. I.

We must now turn our attention from the executive rooms of the Presidential mansion in Washington to the executive rooms of South Carolina in Charleston, where on the same day a counterpart of the transaction we have described was going on. Since the beginning of these new troubles, especially since the discussion and issuing of his message, President Buchanan had been anxious and ill at ease. He could not shut his eyes to the fact that in South Carolina, at least, the tide of revolution was steadily rising. He appears to have dimly felt that his official responsibility and honor were somehow involved; and since he had reasoned the executive power into nothingness, the idea suggested itself to his mind that a little friendly expostulation at least was due from him. Under some such impulse he

giving his statement of the incident:

"On Thursday morning, December 20, 1860, Hamilton, late marshal of South Carolina, sent especially for this purpose, presented me a letter from Governor Pickens, in the presence of Mr. Trescott, dated at Columbia, South Carolina, 17th December (Monday). He was to wait until this day (Friday afternoon) for my answer. The character of the letter will appear from the answer to it which I had prepared. Thursday night, between 9 and 10 o'clock, Mr. Trescott called upon me. He said that he had seen Messrs. Bonham and McQueen of the South Carolina delegation, that they all agreed that this letter of Governor Pickens was in violation of the pledge which had been given by themselves not to make an assault upon the forts, but to leave them *in statu quo* until the result of an application of commissioners to be appointed by the State was known; that Pickens, at Columbia, could not have known of the arrangements. They — to wit, Bonham, McQueen, and Trescott — had telegraphed to Pickens for authority to withdraw his letter. Friday morning, 10 o'clock, 21st December, Mr. Trescott called upon me with a telegram of which the following is a copy from that which he delivered to me: 'December 21, 1860. — You are authorized and requested to withdraw my letter sent by Dr. Hamilton immediately. F. W. P.' Mr. Trescott read to me, from the same telegram, that Governor Pickens had seen Mr. Cushing; the letter was accordingly withdrawn."

wrote the following letter to Governor Pickens, and with it dispatched Caleb Cushing to Charleston, to see if he might not exert a personal influence upon the malcontents, who paid no heed to any wishes or interests but their own:

WASHINGTON, December 18, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: From common notoriety, I assume the fact that the State of South Carolina is now deliberating on the question of seceding from the Union. Whilst any hope remains that this may be prevented, or even retarded, so long as to allow the people of her sister States an opportunity to manifest their opinions upon the causes which have led to this proceeding, it is my duty to exert all the means in my power to avert so dread a catastrophe. I have, therefore, deemed it advisable to send to you the Hon. Caleb Cushing, in whose integrity, ability, and prudence I have full confidence, to hold communications with you on my behalf, for the purpose of changing or modifying the contemplated action of the State in the manner I have already suggested. Commending Mr. Cushing to your kind attention, for his own sake, as well as that of the cause, I remain,

Very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Buchanan to Pickens, Dec. 18, 1860. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, p. 171.

HIS EXCELLENCY FRANCIS W. PICKENS.

Mr. Cushing was a man of great affability, and of prominence in the Democratic party. He had been Attorney-General under President Pierce, and was called to preside over the Charleston Convention, until the dissension in that body between Northern and Southern Democrats caused its disruption and adjournment to Baltimore. In the second disruption at Baltimore, Mr. Cushing had followed the fortunes of the Southern leaders, and with them had seceded, and presided over that fraction of the original body which nominated

CHAP. I. Breckinridge. Though a Massachusetts man, he was thus affiliated in party principle, party organization, and party action with the South, and President Buchanan not unnaturally thought that he was personally an agreeable agent, and ought to be an influential party representative, capable, in behalf of the Administration, of dissuading the Charleston conspirators from their dangerous determination, or at least from their reckless precipitancy. But the sequel shows that Buchanan both misunderstood the men he had to deal with, and was unequal in purpose and will to cope with their superior daring and resolution.

Mr. Cushing arrived in Charleston on the day the South Carolina Convention passed its ordinance of secession. He obtained an interview with the Governor, and presented the President's letter. "I had but a short interview with him," said Governor Pickens in his message of November 5, 1861, "and told him I would return no reply to the President's letter, except to say very candidly that there was no hope for the Union, and that, so far as I was concerned, I intended to maintain the separate independence of South Carolina, and from this purpose neither temptation nor danger should for a moment deter me." There is a notable contrast in this haughty and defiant reception by a South Carolina governor of the messenger of the President of the United States, to the cringing and apologetic spirit in which the President had on that same morning received the messenger of the Governor and replied to his demand. Mr. Cushing's reply deserves special notice. "He said," continues Governor Pickens,

"that he could not say what changes circumstances might produce, but when he left Washington, there was then no intention whatever to change the status of the forts in our harbor in any way." By this language Mr. Cushing himself seems to have changed his errand from a patriotic mission of protest and warning to one conveying advantageous information to the conspirators.

It could hardly have been without a sense of personal mortification to Mr. Cushing that the drama which he had been sent to avert, or at least to postpone, immediately unrolled itself under his very eyes, and his mortification must have risen to indignation when he was requested by his presence to grace the pageant. The South Carolina Convention, during the two days which had elapsed since its adjournment hither from Columbia, had been deliberating in secret session. A little after midday of December 20, the streets of Charleston were filled with placards (see page 14) giving the public the first notice of its action.

The usual jubilations immediately followed—ringing of bells, salutes of cannon, and the noise and display of street parades. The convention resolved to celebrate the event further by a public ceremonial to which it invited the Governor, the Legislature, and other dignitaries; and both branches of the Legislature also sent a committee to Caleb Cushing to give him an official invitation to attend. At half-past six that evening the members of the convention marched in procession to Institute Hall, where the public signing of the ordinance of secession was performed with appropriate solemnities, and at its close the presiding

CHARLESTON

MERCURY

EXTRA:

Passed unanimously at 1.15 o'clock, P. M., December 20th, 1860.

AN ORDINANCE

To dissolve the Union between the State of South Carolina and other States united with her under the compact entitled "The Constitution of the United States of America."

We, the People of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained,

That the Ordinance adopted by us in Convention, on the twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, whereby the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified, and also, all Acts and parts of Acts of the General Assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed; and that the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of "The United States of America," is hereby dissolved.

THE

UNION

IS

DISSOLVED!

officer announced: "The ordinance of secession has been signed and ratified, and I proclaim the State of South Carolina an Independent Commonwealth."

The city and the State joined in general exultation as if a great work had been accomplished, as if the efforts of a generation had been crowned with fulfillment, and nothing remained but to rest and enjoy the ripened fruit of independence. There seemed to be no dream amid all this rejoicing, that nothing definite had as yet been effected; that the reckless day's act was but the prelude to the most terrible tragedy of the age, the unchaining of a storm which should shake the continent with terror and devastation, leaving every Southern State a wreck, and sweeping from the face of the earth the institution in whose behalf the fatal work was done.

The secession ordinance having been passed, signed, and proclaimed, the convention busied itself for the next few days in making up a public statement of its reasons for the anomalous procedure. The discussion showed a wide divergence of opinion as to the causes which had produced the act. One ascribed it to the election of Lincoln, another to the failure of the Northern States to execute the fugitive-slave law, a third to the anti-slavery sentiment of the free States, a fourth to the tariff, a fifth to unconstitutional appropriations by Congress, and so on. On the 24th of December the convention adopted a "Declaration of Causes," and an "Address to the Slave-holding States," the two papers together embracing the above and other specifications. Since neither the Constitution of the United States nor the laws of Congress contained

CHAP. I. any section, clause, word, or reasonable implication that authorized an act of secession, the "Declaration of Causes" formulated the doctrine of States rights in justification. That doctrine in substance was, that the several States entered the Union as sovereignties; that in forming the Federal Government they delegated to it only specific powers for specific ends; that the Federal Government was not a sovereign over sovereignties, but was only an agent between them; that there existed no common arbiter to adjudge differences; that each State or sovereignty might judge for itself any violation of the common agreement and choose its own mode of redress; consequently that each State might adhere to or secede from the Union, at its own sovereign will and pleasure.

This doctrine, springing from early differences of constitutional interpretation, had not been promulgated in its ultra form until South Carolina's nullification movement in 1832. It had been accepted and sustained by only a small fraction of the American people. The whole current, action, and development of the government of the United States under the Constitution was based upon the opposite theory. Washington and the succeeding Presidents rejected it in their practical administration; Marshall and the Supreme Court condemned it in their judicial decisions; Webster refuted it in his highest constitutional arguments; Congress repudiated it in its legislation; Jackson denounced it in executive proclamation as treasonable and revolutionary; and the people of the Union at large regarded it as an absurd and dangerous political heresy.



ROBERT C. WINTHROP.

CHAPTER II

PERSONAL LIBERTY BILLS

THE "Declaration of Causes" and its accompanying address which the South Carolina Convention put forth to justify secession, both deal in such ambiguous phrases and vague generalities that in the main they betray their own weakness and insufficiency; and the critical student finds the same defect in the whole deluge of Southern rhetoric, spoken and written to defend the rebellion. If any denial or refutation of many of the allegations they contained were needed, it is conveniently furnished by an authority whose competency the Southern people themselves cannot deny. Alexander H. Stephens, who was soon afterwards elected Vice-President of the Confederate States, made the following frank criticism which is all the more valuable that it was written in a confidential letter to his brother and remained unpublished till after the war:

> I have read the address put forth by the Convention at Charleston to the Southern States. It has not impressed me favorably. In it South Carolina clearly shows that it is not her intention to be satisfied with any redress of grievances. Indeed, she hardly deigns to specify any. The slavery question is almost entirely ignored. Her greatest complaint seems to be the tariff, though there

CHAP. II.

is but little intelligent or intelligible thought on that subject. Perhaps the less she said about it the better. For the present tariff from which she secedes is just what her own Senators and Members in Congress made it. There are general and vague charges about consolidation, despotism, etc., and the South having, under the operation of the general Government, been reduced to a minority incapable of protecting itself, etc. This complaint I do not think well founded. It arises more from a spirit of peevishness or restless fretfulness than from calm and deliberate judgment. The truth is, the South, almost in mass, has voted I think for every measure of general legislation that has passed both Houses and become law for the last ten years. Indeed, with but few exceptions, the South has controlled the Government in its every important action from the beginning. The protective policy was once, for a time, carried against the South; but that was subsequently completely changed. Our policy ultimately prevailed. The South put in power — or joined a united country in putting in power and sustaining the Administration of Washington for eight years. She put in and sustained Jefferson eight years, Madison eight years, Jackson eight years, Van Buren four years, Tyler four years, Polk four years, Pierce four years, and Buchanan four years. That is, they have aided in making and sustaining the administration for sixty years out of the seventy-two of the government's existence. Does this look like we were or are in an abject minority at the mercy of a despotic Northern majority, rapacious to rob and plunder us? It is true we are in a minority, and have been a long time. It is true also that a party at the North advocate principles which would lead to a despotism, and they would rob us if they had the power — I have no doubt of that. But by the prudent and wise counsels of Southern statesmen this party has been kept in the minority in the past, and by the same prudent and wise statesmanship on our part I can but hope and think it can be so for many long years to come.

A. H. Stephens to Linton Stephens, Jan. 1, 1861. Johnston & Browne, "Life of A. H. Stephens," p. 375.

On one point, however, the South Carolina "Declaration of Causes" attempted to be specific,

saying that "fourteen of the States have deliberately refused for years past to fulfill their constitutional obligations. . . The States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa have enacted laws which either nullify the acts of Congress or render useless any attempt to execute them." These acts were popularly known as "Personal Liberty Bills"; and since Mr. Stephens in the same letter we have quoted also declares that "they constitute the only cause in my opinion which can justify secession," the subject demands a careful examination. We shall see how, under analysis, the Personal Liberty Bills also dwindle into ridiculous insignificance as a motive for disunion and war.

It was a chronic evil in the system of slavery that slaves would run away from their masters. The liberty of which a hostile tribe robbed the ancestor in Africa, the children would strive to regain to the latest generation, anywhere under the sun. The master was a perpetual jailer, but his single vigilance was not enough to hold his captive; he required the help of the entire community; even this was insufficient; he needed also the assistance of bordering States. When the Constitution of the United States was formed, the movement towards the abolition of slavery in the Northern States was already in progress. The delegates from the South considered it a great gain that, instead of being obliged to depend upon the separate action of each Northern State for the recovery of their runaways under the mere obligation of interna-

CHAP. II.

tional comity, they obtained an express provision in the Constitution guaranteeing the "delivery" of their fugitive slaves from any State in the Union; ownership being thus acknowledged throughout the whole nation.

Section II. Article 4.

But as yet no legal machinery existed to carry out this constitutional provision, and it is a curious historical fact that the first national fugitive-slave law grew, not out of the effort of a negro slave to obtain his freedom by flight, but out of the circumstance that three white Virginians kidnaped a free colored man from Pennsylvania and sold him into slavery. And no less noteworthy is the example which the State of Virginia set, of fulfilling "constitutional obligations." The event happened in the year 1788; the offenders were in due time indicted, and the Governor of Pennsylvania requested the Governor of Virginia to deliver them up for trial under another clause of the Constitution. The Governor of Virginia refused to surrender the kidnapers, returning for answer the opinion of his Attorney-General, that there existed no laws to carry out the Constitution in this particular, and also laying down the following broad legal principles:

"American State Papers." Vol. I. Miscellaneous, p. 39.

1791.

"Every free man in Virginia is entitled to the unmolested enjoyment of his liberty, unless it be taken away by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or by the Constitution or laws of Virginia. No molestation, seizure, or removal of his person can take place, but under the authority of those, or some of them."

"American State Papers," Vol. I. Miscellaneous, p. 41.

President Washington appears to have transmitted the official correspondence about this affair to

Act approved Feb. 12, 1793

Congress, which in 1793 enacted a law, containing provisions and machinery for a twofold object: first, the surrender of criminals for trial; second, the delivery of fugitives from service or labor. Thus at the very beginning the twin subjects of kidnaping and flight from slavery formed the double reason for, and incidentally the double subject of, the first fugitive-slave law.

The machinery of this law was very simple. The owner, his agent or attorney, finding the slave in a free State, might seize or arrest him, take him before a magistrate, and, having satisfactorily proved that the slave was his property, receive from the magistrate a certificate to that effect; which certificate authorized the owner to carry his slave to the State from which he escaped. Any one obstructing or hindering the execution of the law or knowingly harboring or concealing such fugitive was punishable by a fine of $500.

This law it will be perceived in its chief provision violated a broad fundamental principle of both English and American liberty, in omitting to provide trial by jury in a question of right to personal freedom; but as slavery was an anomaly in American government, so every slave law was necessarily an anomaly in American jurisprudence. To repeat a definition we have before employed, the system being barbarous it could only be maintained by barbarous safeguards. The difficulty of legislation arose from the fact that the slave had a double character. He was both a piece of property and a person. The law must be framed to counteract, not merely the intelligence of the human being seeking freedom, but it must also

CHAP. II. counteract the sympathy of other human beings willing to lend him assistance. Hence summary process and the denial of the ordinary legal remedies. But the exceptional character of the law was probably little thought of. It was passed amid a public sentiment accepting such incongruities as necessary and therefore proper. Apparently it provoked little contest in Congress. The House of Representatives passed it by a vote of, yeas, forty-eight; nays, seven.

It only needs the statement of the origin and provisions of this first fugitive-slave law to show that the slave system was a matter of grave concern, not merely to the States in which it existed, but also to every free State in the Union. To permit the owner to catch his absconding slave placed every free person of color in a certain jeopardy. It was a matter of common notoriety that professional slave-traders and slave-catchers were, as a class, men of coarse, hardened, unscrupulous natures. In the South, in slave communities, they were the Pariahs of society. For such men, trained in the arts and wiles of their calling, it was a vastly easier and quicker stroke of business to kidnap an ignorant free negro, living in a lonely shanty on the outskirts of a quiet village, than to earn the price of their victim by honest work. It was thus an imperative duty of free communities and States to enact and maintain rigid laws for the protection of the personal liberty of such citizens; and it was probably due to this class of laws in the free States that the evil did not become a crying public scandal.

The fugitive-slave law of 1793 remained without notable incident in its administration for nearly

half a century. As a rule, the free States passed laws on the one hand to assist in carrying out the act of Congress, and on the other hand providing certain precautionary regulations to prevent kidnaping. In the year 1842, however, there was announced a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States which radically changed public opinion and legislative action on this subject. In a case brought up by amicable proceedings between the States of Maryland and Pennsylvania, the Supreme Court decided that under the Constitution there existed a positive unqualified right, on the part of the owner of the slave, which no State law or regulation could in any way qualify, regulate, control, or restrain. The owner of a slave was clothed with entire authority, in every State in the Union, to seize and recapture his slave whenever he could do it without any breach of the peace or illegal violence. In this sense, and to this extent, this clause of the Constitution might properly be said to execute itself, and required no aid from legislation, State or national; that the power of legislation on the subject was exclusive in Congress, and by implication prohibited all State legislation on the same subject.

Prigg *vs.* The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. 16 Peters, pp. 539 *et seq.*

A result probably unexpected by the Supreme Court, and certainly not looked for by Southern States, followed the announcement of this remarkable decision. The Court had, by a breath, annulled all State legislation either to restrain or to assist the owner in recovering his runaway. It had even superseded and declared useless the act of Congress of 1793. It sent forth the slave-owner with simply the letter of the Constitution for his warrant, to go

CHAP. II. into any free State, lay his hand upon whomsoever he might claim and carry him away into bondage. He was to be his own officer, and his own judge and jury.

It is painfully in evidence that at that day judicial interpretation by the Supreme Court was still under the influence of strong pro-slavery sentiment. In the long opinions of the court and individual judges, the master's right to slave property is continually treated as of higher constitutional concern than any black man's right to personal liberty. In declaring the owner's right to seize and remove his slave under the constitutional provision that persons held to service or labor "shall be delivered up," no mention is made of that other equally binding constitutional provision, that no person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law. It is not surprising that this dictum created a profound reaction; and a significant legislative movement followed in the free States. In varying forms, such laws as had to some extent been framed to aid the claimant were repealed, and others enacted having for their sole object the protection of free citizens of color, either by agency of the writ of habeas corpus or by prohibiting officers and citizens of the State from lending any assistance in the capture of fugitive slaves, either under the act of Congress or voluntarily. But, in most instances, these laws in express terms disavowed any intention to impair or interfere with the owner's constitutional right of property; they simply threw him back upon his Federal rights and resources. As the Virginia kidnapers were the cause of the first fugitive-slave law, so

this Supreme Court decision was the cause of the first personal liberty bills.

Under this condition of affairs, there came on the great slavery agitation of 1850, and, as one phase of that controversy, the South demanded a new and more effective fugitive-slave law. Since 1793 the difficulties were aggravated in all directions. Pro-slavery sentiment and antislavery sentiment were both more intense and more uncompromising. There were more slaves in the slave States to escape and more free blacks in the free States liable to unlawful seizure. The master's authority had been increased by the Supreme Court decision while his resources were diminished by State legislation. Upon the controverted question whether State authority or Federal authority ought to act, there were as sharp differences in the South as in the North. On the question of violating or executing the Constitution, the debates showed that in the past one section had transgressed about as much and obeyed about as much as the other section. The fundamental question, however, remained. Should the person claimed be fairly tried? Mr. Webster proposed an amendment, that he should have a jury trial at the place where he was arrested. Mr. Clay reported in favor of a jury trial at the place he fled from. As between these two propositions the issue was tersely summarized by Mr. Winthrop: "It must always be a question," said he, "whether such a person be your slave, or whether he be our freeman. Now, whether he be your slave might be a question very proper to be tried by a jury of the vicinage, and to be decided on the spot where

"Globe," June 3, 1850, p. 1111.

Ibid., May 8, 1850, p. 946.

CHAP. II. the professed owner resides; but whether he be our freeman would seem to be a question which, upon the very same principle, should be tried where he is seized, and where the immediate liberty which he enjoys is about to be taken away from him." But Mr. Mason, representing the more ultra Southern view, opposed any jury trial and insisted on summary proceedings. This view prevailed, and the act which finally passed, besides denying jury trial, contained certain other harsh features that made it peculiarly obnoxious to anti-slavery citizens and communities; and while it increased the claimant's facilities for recapture, also greatly intensified the public opinion of the free States against the law.

Appendix, "Globe," Aug. 19, 1850, p. 1585.

This new fugitive-slave act was mainly the work of Mr. Mason, of Virginia,—a man of intolerant pro-slavery views, and afterwards a conspicuous secession conspirator,—and appears to have been passed with but slight discussion, the attention of Congress being centered upon other, and at the moment more absorbing, features of the compromise measures of 1850. It passed the Senate, August 23, by a vote of 27 to 12, and the House, on the 12th of September, by a vote of 109 to 76; and was approved on the 18th of September by President Fillmore.

The act provided that all United States commissioners, concurrently with judges of United States courts, should have authority to issue warrants for the arrest of fugitive slaves, which warrants should be served by marshals or deputy marshals, or the commissioners might appoint suitable persons to execute the warrants or process

issued by them; to cause fugitives to be arrested and brought before them; to hear and determine the case of the claimant in a summary manner, and upon satisfactory proof, by deposition and affidavit of the identity of the fugitive and that the person arrested owed the service or labor alleged and had escaped, to make out and deliver to such claimant, his agent or attorney, a certificate of the facts. The fugitive might thereupon be taken back, or the commissioner might cause him to be taken back to the State or place whence he fled. The testimony of the alleged fugitive was not admitted in evidence. Rescuing or concealing such fugitive, or hindering his capture, or aiding his escape, directly or indirectly, was punishable by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisonment not exceeding six months, with civil damages to the party injured of one thousand dollars for each fugitive so lost; and the officers were authorized "to summon and call to their aid the bystanders or *posse comitatus* of the proper county," who were "hereby commanded to aid and assist in the prompt and efficient execution of this law." The commissioner should receive a fee of ten dollars when he delivered the fugitive, and only five dollars "in case where the proof shall not, in the opinion of such commissioner, warrant such certificate and delivery," and the certificate should prevent all molestation of persons removing the fugitive "by any process issued by any court, judge, magistrate, or other person whomsoever"; also that the claimant might seize and arrest a fugitive and take him before the commissioner or court without process.

CHAP. II. It was argued with much warmth that this act virtually offered the commissioner a bribe to return the fugitive. That it violated four different provisions of the Constitution of the United States, namely: The VIIth Amendment, which prescribes that in suits at common law, when the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved; the Vth Amendment, that no person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law; the IVth Amendment, that the right of the people to be secure in their persons against unreasonable seizure shall not be violated; and Section IX. of Article I., that the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended unless when in case of rebellion and invasion the public safety may require it.

Aside from the denial of trial by jury, the other feature of the fugitive-slave law of 1793 embodied only such legal principles as applied to the recovery of other property. The whole labor of the recovery was put upon the claimant or his hired or voluntary help; he was obliged himself to seize his runaway slave, just as he was obliged himself to seize his runaway horse. That law forced no one to assist him; it only required that no one should hinder him. But the new law compelled every citizen of a free State, when summoned to do so, to become a slave-catcher for the claimant, under penalty of fine and imprisonment. No wonder that the dignity and humanity of respectable citizens of the North revolted at the idea of being forced to do what a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, though himself a zealot in enforcing the law, fitly chronicles as "a most danger-

ous and disgusting duty," for the mere selfish and pecuniary advantage of a distant slaveholder; while to conscientious minds it was the commission of a positive moral and religious transgression.

Greeley, "American Conflict." Vol. I., p. 217.

The law was scarcely passed when there ensued, and for many years continued, an unwonted activity in the pursuit and capture of runaways in various parts of the North. From time to time the newspapers were full of sensational reports of the incidents and excitements attending such affairs. Persons in the free States were pursued, seized, handcuffed, gagged, bludgeoned, or shot; free persons were sometimes carried away to slavery, and escaped slaves sometimes rescued by mobs. Once a slave mother, crazed by the agony of recapture, cut the throat of one of her children and attempted in the same way to kill three others to prevent their being carried back to bondage; and once the city of Boston was put into ferment and riot, requiring a strong military guard to bring away the captured fugitive to a Federal revenue cutter, ordered by the President of the United States to convey him from Massachusetts Bay to Virginia. Newspapers criticized and lawyers debated the law and the proceedings; judges delivered learned opinions and courts rendered varying decisions.

Even under the provocation of these and other inflammatory incidents, eight to ten years elapsed before the public opinion of the North began to embody itself in hostile legislation. It was not till these slave-hunting disturbances, which began in 1850, had been supplemented by the rising and culminating events of the great pro-slavery reaction — the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the

CHAP. II. Kansas war, the Sumner assault, the Dred Scott decision, the demand for a Congressional slave code, and the raid of John Brown and his capture and execution — that the Legislatures of several free States remodeled their statutes and passed new and more stringent personal liberty bills, to better protect free colored persons against being kidnaped, or as far as possible to evade and counteract the enforcement of the law. In most of these new statutes care was taken to shelter them under the theory of States rights, so tenaciously asserted and industriously propagated by the South, and to avoid the appearance at least of a direct conflict with Federal laws; though it was doubtless the intention of the framers of some of them practically to nullify the fugitive-slave act.[1]

But, with only occasional exceptions, the general

[1] The editors of the "National Intelligencer," who certainly could not be accused of a desire to misrepresent either the North or the South, printed in their issue of December 11, 1860, a careful analysis and review of all Northern personal liberty bills. They found much difficulty in arriving at the exact condition of these laws, and stated that the "shifting legislation" on this subject was sufficient explanation of the obscurity and inaccuracy of existing compilations and summaries, and consequent erroneous opinions. Their conclusion is specific and pertinent:

"It will be seen from the review through which we have gone that very few States have enacted laws directly or avowedly in opposition to the act of 1850. Laws against 'kidnaping,' properly so-called, cannot be placed in this category. Laws forbidding, under this head, the use of State jails for Federal purposes, however 'unfriendly' in motive, are not 'unconstitutional,' and find parallels in other cases and in Southern States. Laws forbidding State officers to issue writs for the recapture of alleged fugitives are passed in conformity with the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the celebrated Prigg case. But all laws interfering with the exercise of the powers conferred by Congress on the commissioners appointed under the fugitive-slave law of 1850, as is the case with the laws of Vermont, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Wisconsin, are clearly unconstitutional, and, as such, are null and void."

course in the free States was a practical enforcement of the fugitive-slave law of 1850, despite the fact that its arbitrary features were odious to the moral and legal sense of public opinion. The decided preponderance of judicial decision sustained it; and in 1858 the Supreme Court of the United States, by a unanimous judgment, declared that "the act of Congress, commonly called the fugitive-slave law, is, in all its provisions, fully authorized by the Constitution of the United States." So, also, the census of 1860 shows that while in that year the total number of fugitive slaves was 803, the total number ten years before, under the census of 1850, had been 1011, proving an actual decrease of escapes under what the South alleged to have been an intentional legal increase of opportunity and assistance through personal liberty bills.

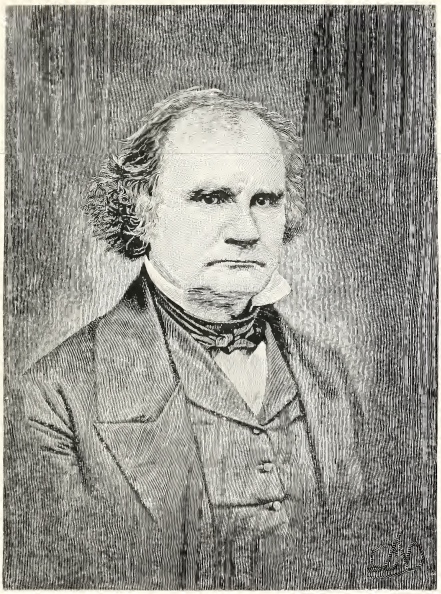
Ableman *vs.* Booth, 21 Howard, p. 526.

Compendium VIII. Census, pp. 11, 12, and 137.

It is interesting to note in this connection that, as a rule, the most violent outcry on this subject came from Southern States which lost the fewest slaves. South Carolina, which would not remain in the Union, lost in 1860 but 23 slaves, or an average of one out of 17,501; Kentucky, which would not be dragged out of the Union, lost 119, or an average of one out of 1,895. Moreover, the total average loss was absurdly insignificant as compared with risks in other kinds of property (as, for example, of houses burned or crops destroyed by bad weather), such loss in slaves being only about one-fiftieth of one per cent. for the whole South, and only a little more than one two-hundredth of one per cent. for the complaining, nullifying, seceding State of South Carolina.

CHAP. II. But whatever may have been the violations of the Constitution by free States through personal liberty bills, the slave States were not guiltless of similar infractions. It was notorious that pro-slavery sentiment rendered the constitutional right of "freedom of speech or of the press," and rights of domicile and of citizenship, practically a dead letter throughout the South, to all men of strong antislavery convictions. Nor did this violation manifest itself alone in the form of public opinion. Many of the slave States had penal statutes prohibiting what they chose to term "incendiary" publications, and some of them statutes of this character to punish incendiary expression. So, also, South Carolina and other sea-board slave States had laws to imprison free colored seamen for no crime whatever, but merely as a precaution against the possibility of their uttering "abolition" sentiment, or instigating servile insurrection. And, more flagrant still, South Carolina had a statute authorizing her Governor to expel a citizen of Massachusetts, who had come to that State by authority of his own Governor and Legislature for the purpose of beginning a suit to test the validity of the last-mentioned law. Finally, it was no secret that the law was violated every now and then by surreptitious instances of the slave trade. No principle of equity, therefore, could justify the South in secession and rebellion on account of Northern personal liberty bills.

Especially was this true when secession and rebellion seized upon the election of Mr. Lincoln as the occasion for such reprisal. A strong reaction in the North in favor of repealing the more ques-



JAMES M. MASON.

tionable features of the personal liberty bills had set in; and movements to that end were in progress in the Legislatures of several Northern States. More important than all was the fact that Mr. Lincoln himself held a proper fugitive-slave law to be constitutional. In the Freeport debate he thus answered Douglas's question on this point: "I have never hesitated to say, and I do not now hesitate to say, that I think, under the Constitution of the United States, the people of the Southern States are entitled to a Congressional fugitive-slave law; further than that, I think it should have been framed so as to be free from some of the objections that pertain to it, without lessening its efficiency." And the opinion was quite as distinctly reiterated in his inaugural address. But while willing to accord to the South this constitutional right, he did not forget the rights due to all free citizens of the North; for his inaugural address also said: "In any law upon this subject, ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not, in any case, surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that 'the citizen of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States'?"

"Lincoln-Douglas Debates," p. 89.

Lincoln, Inaugural, Mar. 4, 1861.

Had the South been content to pursue legislative remedies instead of making war, it is quite possible that the questions about fugitive slaves could have been brought to some endurable compromise. Unconstitutional personal liberty bills, on the one

CHAP. II. hand, might have been repealed by State Legislatures, and the unconstitutional provisions of the fugitive-slave law on the other, repealed by Congress. Both the Supreme Courts of States and the Supreme Court of the United States might have ultimately modified their decisions towards a better mutual accord. The runaway slave could have received a jury trial at the place of his capture, and the master been reimbursed in money damages in case of his unlawful rescue by mobs. But the predetermined action of the Southern conspirators made argument and compromise impossible. The proclamation of a Southern Confederacy by Jefferson Davis and his associate signers on the 14th of
1860. December, and the secession of South Carolina on the 20th, were a practical bar to any adjustment through legislative channels.

CHAPTER III

THE SURRENDER PROGRAMME

NOT alone in the affair of the forty muskets, but in the decisions and instructions concerning almost every point of inquiry which was referred to Washington, did the Government exert its discouraging and paralyzing influence upon the Union commander and his loyal officers and men at Charleston. Under his general instructions to initiate no collision, Major Anderson was constantly beset with perplexing questions upon minor details. Thus, for instance, he reported that within easy musket-shot of the eastern wall of Moultrie were several sand-hillocks, "which offer admirable cover to approaching parties, and would be formidable points for sharpshooters." Would leveling these sand-hills be construed into initiating a collision? Again: "I would thank you also to inform me under what circumstances I would be justified in setting fire to or destroying the houses which afford dangerous shelter to an enemy, and whether I would be justified in firing upon an armed body which may be seen approaching our works." And not only his own precautions, but the aggressive preparations of the Charlestonians were from time to time thrusting upon his atten-

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Nov. 23, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 74.

Ibid., Dec. 6, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 88.

CHAP. III. tion irritating conflicts of jurisdiction. "Captain Foster informs me," he wrote, "that an adjutant of a South Carolina regiment applied to him for his rolls [of workmen] stating that he wished to enroll the men for military duty. The captain told him that they had no right to do it, as the men were in the pay of the United States Government." What should he do if the State authorities demanded these men from Captain Foster?

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Nov. 28, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 79.

All these questions were duly considered by the War Department, and under date of December 14th, Secretary Floyd (through Adjutant-General Samuel Cooper, afterwards of the rebel army) proceeded to answer them with a particularity, a gravity, and a show of reasoning which mark the communication as a piece of delicate irony. The sand-hills and houses were not to be touched, and the workmen were to be surrendered on demand.[1]

1860.

Different circumstances can be imagined which might have justified the passiveness which Ander-

[1] "If the State authorities demand any of Captain Foster's workmen, on the ground of their being enrolled into the service of the State, and the subject is referred to you, you will, after fully satisfying yourself that the men are subject to enrollment, and have been properly enrolled under the laws of the United States and of the State of South Carolina, cause them to be delivered up, or suffer them to depart.

"If deemed essential to the more perfect defense of the work, the leveling of the sand-hills which command the fort would not, under ordinary circumstances, be considered as initiating a collision. But the delicate question of its bearing on the popular mind, in its present excited state, demands the coolest and wisest judgment. The fact of the sand-hills being private property, and, as is understood, having private residences built upon them, decides the question in the negative. The houses which might afford dangerous shelter to an enemy, being chiefly frame, could be destroyed by the heavy guns of the fort at any moment, while the fact of their being leveled in anticipation of an attack might betray distrust, and prematurely bring on a collision. Their destruc-

son was here enjoined to observe. Had his original discretion been left free and unhampered; had he received a single word of loyal prompting or encouragement; had he been reënforced according to his urgent demand; or had he possessed a sufficient garrison to work his guns, man his walls, and throw out skirmishers and picket-guards, these instructions would perhaps have been no serious embarrassment. But under the impending *coup de main* from Charleston, which if it came at all would come in overwhelming numbers, and with only 60 men to guard 1500 feet of rampart, these restrictions from the Secretary were little less than a formal delivery of the work to the assailants. Before he could see the tiger's teeth he would be in the tiger's mouth.[1]

A remarkable coincidence of dates must at this point not be allowed to escape attention. The significant Buell order was given about the time of the President's truce with the South Carolina

tion at the moment of being used as a cover for an enemy would be more fatal to the attacking force than if swept away before their approach.

"An armed body, approaching for hostile purposes, would in all probability either attempt a surprise or send a summons to surrender. In the former case there can be no doubt as to the course to be pursued. In the latter case, after refusal to surrender and a warning to keep off, a further advance by the armed body would be initiating a collision on their part. If no summons be made by them, their purpose should be demanded at the same time that they are warned to keep off, and their failure to answer, and further advance, would throw the responsibility upon them."—Adjutant-General Samuel Cooper to Major Anderson, Dec. 14, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 92, 93.

[1] "This fort," wrote Anderson on December 19th, "is a very weak one in its capacity of being defended; it is surrounded by houses that I cannot burn or destroy until I am certain that I am to be attacked, and I shall not be certain of it till the South Carolinians are in possession."—Crawford, "The Story of Sumter," p. 70.

CHAP. III. Members; the "sand-hill" instructions were written on the day of General Cass's retirement from the Cabinet, and the issuing of the first rebel manifesto; and now on December 21st, the day after the adoption of the secession ordinance, Secretary Floyd signalized his official life by another effort to make the bloodless victory of the rebellion in South Carolina entirely easy and complete. Up to this point the secret intrigues of the conspiracy were carried on cautiously step by step, until peaceable secession under alleged State authority advanced from vague theory to accomplished practical fact, so far as unopposed popular action could bring it about. They had not only kept the Government on the defensive; they had actually rendered it defenseless, and the logic of its attitude indicated a willingness to be forced by further pressure of necessity to relinquish its hold upon the Charleston forts. By his rupture with General Cass, the President apparently conceded the proposition that the forts were simply "property" which South Carolina could bargain for without offense, and the United States sell without disgrace.

But the conspirators were not satisfied with this hopeful prospect of bringing about the complete political disenthralment of the Palmetto State. They had boastfully announced their determination to have the forts after secession, and the zeal of their adherents would not suffer them to abate or delay the fulfillment of this promised conquest. Everything was ready to give South Carolina easy possession; coercion denied and reënforcements refused at Washington, secession proclaimed, vol-

unteer companies and scaling-ladders ready in Charleston, Anderson fettered with secret instructions in Moultrie, and in Sumter and Pinckney each only a single ordnance sergeant, whose solitary musket had been angrily ordered back to the Charleston arsenal by Secretary Floyd,—leaving them armed with nothing but "worsted epaulets on their shoulders and stripes down their pantaloons" to represent the sovereignty and military power of the United States of America. The formal demand of the forts by the commission already dispatched to Washington by the Convention would terminate the Presidential truce; and then half a night's campaign, and the lives of a score of the Charlestonians whose fingers were itching to plant scaling-ladders against the walls of Moultrie, would display the palmetto banner from every flag-staff in the harbor. Nevertheless, the more they prompted their newspaper scribblers and street-corner oracles to clamor for violence and bloodshed in public, the more the conspirators in secret feared and deprecated it, for they could not fail to see in it the reaction of the public endurance, the arousing of the Government and the North, and the premature and fatal destruction of their hitherto successful intrigue.

The correspondence discloses, quite incidentally, that on the 21st of December, the day after the adoption of the formal "Secession Ordinance" at Charleston, Secretary Floyd for the first time brought to the notice of President Buchanan the secret order which he had sent by Major Buell to Anderson, on his own responsibility, ten days before.

1860.

Buchanan to Commissioners, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 117.

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Why did the Secretary on the 21st show the President a document which he ought to have submitted to him for approval on the 11th? The inference is that it was for an object, and the object appears in the action taken by the President, which action he has recorded as follows:

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," pp. 166, 167.

The President having observed that Major Buell, in reducing to writing at Fort Moultrie the instructions he had verbally received, required Major Anderson, in case of attack, *to defend himself to the last extremity,* immediately caused the Secretary of War to modify this instruction. This extreme was not required by any principle of military honor or by any rule of war. It was sufficient for him to defend himself until no reasonable hope should remain of saving the fort. The instructions were accordingly so modified, with the approbation of General Scott.

Scott (by Lay) to Larz Anderson, Dec. 29, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 114.

If, as here alleged, General Scott gave his approbation, it must have been only to the general direction and not to the specific language employed, for we have his recorded assertion that "the War Department has kept secret from the General the instructions sent to the Major."[1] The probability is, that Floyd did not further consult either the General or the President, for he personally wrote to Anderson as follows:

Sir: In the verbal instructions communicated to you by Major Buell, you are directed to hold possession of the forts in the harbor of Charleston, and if attacked to defend yourself to the last extremity. Under these instructions you might infer that you are required to make a vain and useless sacrifice of your own life, and the lives of the men under your command, upon a mere point of honor. This is far from the President's inten-

[1] General Scott also makes the same assertion in a letter written by his direction to General Twiggs, under date of December 28, 1860.—W. R. Vol. I., p. 580.

tions. You are to exercise a sound military discretion on this subject. It is neither expected nor desired that you should expose your own life or that of your men, in a hopeless conflict in defense of these forts. If they are invested or attacked by a force so superior that resistance would, in your judgment, be a useless waste of life, it will be your duty to yield to necessity, and make the best terms in your power. This will be the conduct of an honorable, brave, and humane officer, and you will be fully justified in such action. These orders are strictly confidential, and not to be communicated even to the officers under your command without close necessity.

Floyd to Anderson, Dec. 21, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 103.

It is scarcely required to instruct an intelligent American officer in our day, that no professional duty requires him to sacrifice himself or his men upon any trifling point of honor. Self-respect and soldierly dignity, if not history and example, teach him the obvious truth. So far then from being a humanitarian precaution, the order seems plainly to have been worded to prepare the mind of Anderson for that easy surrender of his post which was now clearly the next step in the conspirators' programme. To them it doubtless appeared sure to follow as the natural and necessary sequence of their previous successes. At their bidding the President and Cabinet had created a fatal necessity; and now came Floyd's order to the practical effect that after a threatened attack or investment by a South Carolina army which they would take due pains to make "superior and overwhelming," after a show of force, with stage parade and flourish of trumpets, Anderson should "yield to necessity," and make the best terms in his power, march out with military courtesies, and give to South Carolina, Moultrie, Pinckney, Sumter,

CHAP. III. Charleston Harbor, and *de facto* independence. Then under the same military necessity, aggravated and amplified by similar concerted seizures in other States, a yielding President, and a Cabinet dominated by treachery, could negotiate a settlement; Congress might ratify, and a distracted and despondent North accept the accomplished revolution. It was a brilliant plot, but with many flaws; and one of the greatest was that they counted without Anderson.

Or rather, let us do them the justice to say, their intrigue seemed to them so complete, their control of the President and the War Department so absolute, that there appeared no reasonable chance that Anderson could become a marplot. The situation required no complicity on his part. He had but to tread the path of professional duty as marked out by Floyd, who had told him in plain words that the avoidance of a hopeless conflict in defense of these forts was the duty of an honorable, brave, and humane officer. There remained, therefore, but one danger,—namely, that Anderson might transfer his force to Sumter. This point too they had effectually guarded. The Buell order was a virtual official prohibition until there should occur "an attack on or attempt to take possession of either one of them," and was so regarded by Anderson himself; the workmen in the forts were openly in sympathy with the secessionists; the forty muskets had been taken out of Foster's hands; and an espionage was kept up night and day as the critical time approached, by which the Charleston authorities were fully and credibly informed that not an additional man nor gun had been sent there.

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 58.

It was their false security on this latter point which in the event made the transfer a success for Anderson, and a complete surprise and discomfiture to the conspirators. On the very day when it occurred, Secretary Floyd himself, reading Foster's report that rebel steamers were standing guard over Sumter, and that he was constructing traverses on the parapets of Moultrie, to intercept sharpshooters' bullets from the sand-hills, the dissembling Secretary pronounced the news "very satisfactory" and expressed his evidently genuine hope and belief that "we should get over these troubles without bloodshed."

Wright, Indorsement, Dec. 26, 1860, on Foster to De Russy, Dec. 22, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 107.

Anderson had been petted and lionized socially by the Charlestonians; but his soldierly reserve and loyalty to his flag came through the blandishments of Southern hospitality without a taint or whisper of suspicion. He kept his own secrets, from his secession friends by choice and necessity, from his subordinates by the special injunction of Floyd; debating anxiously in his own mind how he might keep the peace and save his honor. He was familiar with the unvarying Charleston threat that they must have the forts after secession; and now that the ordinance was duly passed and proclaimed, the indications of their earnest pursuit of this scheme began to multiply. On the day of the passage of the ordinance Governor Pickens inquired with great particularity and emphasis, through the medium of the serviceable military storekeeper, Humphreys, whether twenty enlisted men had not been sent from Moultrie to Sumter, and desired an authoritative contradiction of the rumor by night. Foster replied, indignantly pro-

Humphreys to Foster, Dec. 20, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 101.

CHAP. III. testing against the right to ask such a question by a State in avowed rebellion; nevertheless gave the denial to Humphreys, still a brother officer, and of course the Governor received the coveted information. On December 22d Anderson wrote:

> I have heard from several sources, that last night, and the night before, a steamer was stationed between this island and Fort Sumter. That the authorities of South Carolina are determined to prevent, if possible, any troops from being placed in that fort, and that they will seize upon that most important work, as soon as they think there is reasonable ground for a doubt whether it will be turned over to the State, I do not doubt. . . No one can tell what will be done. They may defer action until their Commissioners return from Washington; or if apprised by the nature of the debates in Congress that their demands will not probably be acceded to, they may act without waiting for them. I do not think that we can rely upon any assurances, and wish to God I only had men enough here to man fully my guns. . . P. S.—I have just heard that several of the men at work in Fort Sumter wear the blue cockade.

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Dec. 22, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 105.

Under the same date Foster reports the movements of the guard steamers in further detail, and says that when one of them was hailed by the night-watch on Castle Pinckney as to what she wanted, some one replied, "You will know in a week."

Foster to De Russy, Dec. 22, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 106.

All Major Anderson's dispatches prove that he was from the very first keenly alive to his situation and possible fate. He had now, for a whole month, been on the rack of doubt as to the propriety of every word and act; of anxious expectancy concerning the final course of the Government and nature of the instructions that might come; and it is not too violent a presumption to add,

of despondency at the neglect with which he had been treated. He had, from the first, recognized that his handful of men ought for more successful resistance to be in Sumter. He had discussed the question with his officers, who also advocated the removal, intimating to them that only his restraining orders kept him in Moultrie. Postpone it, or decide against it as he might, the paramount necessity forced itself anew upon his attention with every day's developments, with every fresh menace. By a very pointed suggestion, Anderson asked on December 22d for instructions from the War Department for a movement from Moultrie to Sumter, but found no response in the hopes and designs of Secretary Floyd. In spite of all question and resistance, however, the idea finally conquered him. In due time, doubt grew into conviction, and conviction into resolve.

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 58.

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Dec. 22, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 105.

Meantime the officers in Moultrie freely visited the city, and occasionally exchanged social courtesies with leading secessionists with many mutual protestations of high regard. "We appreciate your position," said their entertainers. "It is a point of honor with you to hold the fort, but a political necessity obliges us to take it." But after the passage of the ordinance of secession, Major Anderson ceased his visits to Charleston. Christmas day, however, was once more celebrated with such social amenities; Major Anderson, his officers, and many Charleston secessionists being together present at a family party given by Captain Foster and his wife at their residence in Moultrieville, a small village on Sullivan's Island, conveniently near the fort, where husbands, wives, and children, forget-

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," pp. 47, 48.

Dawson, "Historical Magazine," Jan., 1872, p. 48, note.

CHAP. III. ting all thoughts of war, gave themselves to the unreserved enjoyment of the kindly festivities appropriate to the day of peace and good-will.

To this temporary general happiness Major Anderson formed a notable exception. His mind was burdened with a heavy responsibility in the resolve which he had taken ten days before to transfer his garrison to Fort Sumter, and in the secret arrangements he had been making to carry out that intention. "I promised to go to Captain Foster's for a little while to-night," he wrote to his wife on Christmas evening, "but have really no inclination whatever to do so. I am sorry I have no Christmas gift to offer you. Never mind — the day may *very* soon come when I shall do something which will gratify you enough to make amends for all the anxiety you now feel on my account." Nevertheless, he went to the party in order to disarm suspicion of there being anything unusual in the air — to divert from himself the too close attention of his officers, lest they might discover signs of the preoccupation which filled his mind. When Anderson returned from that scene of merry-making to the suggestive contrast of his quarters in Fort Moultrie, it was to make a final study and review of his plans, and to calculate the chances, promising indeed, but by no means as assuring as he could have wished, that he and his whole command would spend the following night within the protecting walls of Fort Sumter.

CHAPTER IV

FORT SUMTER

AS soon as Anderson had resolved to make the transfer he planned the necessary details, and gave the orders for their execution with a discretion and skill, and at the same time with an energy and promptness, which mark the highest soldierly and administrative qualities.[1] It does not appear that

[1] The account which Anderson wrote to his wife of his secret preparations to move his garrison from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, and which is here printed for the first time, will be read with interest:

"As I was preparing for it several days before it occurred, it will be impossible for me to give you all the details, which though small and trifling in themselves, all tended to prepare for it. For instance, some ten days or more prior to it, I gave out to the officers and to the command that as the period when we might expect an attack was approaching, I thought I would send the women and children to Fort Johnson. And about three days before I moved I requested Captain Foster to discontinue mounting the guns on Fort Sumter, as I told him that they would certainly be turned against us. He assented to it, and on the 24th sent over to Fort Moultrie the elevating screws and pintle bolts of these guns, so that if the South Carolinians should take Fort Sumter, as we knew they intended, it would embarrass them very much in getting ready this battery to fire upon us. Both these measures were good blinds. On Christmas morning, the very day I designed moving, the vessels took the screws, etc., over to Fort Moultrie, and I, intending to go over that day, ordered those things to be put back into the vessels, on the plea that I had not room for them in my store-room then. I knew that of course the news of their removal and of the stoppage of the mounting of the guns had been communicated, and that both these measures would be regarded as conclusive that I had no idea of going over to Fort Sumter. I ordered the

CHAP. IV. he made his determination known to any one until the afternoon or evening of the day after Christmas. Foster as the engineer officer, who had under his

quartermaster to get transportation immediately for the women and children, and issued an order for their removal on the ground of our anticipated attack. The day proved rainy, and the debarkation did not take place until the next day, when, on the ground that we should not in all human probability be enabled to stand a siege in Fort Moultrie of longer than a month or six weeks, I directed the quartermaster to send to Fort Johnson and to let Captain Foster have for his workmen (on the plea that as provisions were very scarce and high in the city, he would have to pay exorbitant prices for them) all the commissary stores, except about one month's supply for us. I then advised the officers to send all their company property, and all their personal effects, except what the men could put in their knapsacks and the officers could have conveniently packed in a small compass, with the women and children; where I argued they would be safe, whatever might occur to us. I stated that I did not want anything left at Fort Moultrie, for that I designed, if we were attacked, to fight to the last, and then as we left the fort with what we could take in our hand, to blow up the fort. In this way I got nearly everything, both public and private, on the three vessels which were to take the women and children to Fort Johnson. I placed the quartermaster on board, and gave him confidential orders to take them to Fort Johnson, and to pretend to be looking around for quarters there, but not to land anything until he should hear two guns fired from Fort Moultrie, when he was to order the vessels to Fort Sumter on the plea that he would have to go there and report to me that he could not find accommodations. Having thus got rid of my women and children, and my public and personal property, the task was an easy one to move my command. I then arranged with Captain Foster to have all his boats with ours ready between 5 and 6. I did not select a later hour because we were watched every night from about 9 o'clock, and I must be over before that time. Only one officer knew anything of it on the 26th, the day I intended moving, and the men had no suspicion of where they were to go. I ordered their knapsacks to be packed that morning when I sent them to their posts at the battery, and gave a standing order that it was always to be done. The first set of boats was reported at the proper time, and I ordered one of the captains, who was just then let into my confidence, to form a part of his company with knapsacks on, and armed for secret service under me. I then marched out of the fort, went to the beach, and embarked. We reached the fort, very much to the astonishment of the 150 workmen who were in it, and I immediately took possession of the guard-room, had the muskets loaded, ordered the workmen in, and closed the gates." — MS.



GENERAL JOHN G. FOSTER.

orders not only laborers, but boats and small vessels heretofore used to carry men and materials needed in the various repairs he had been prosecuting, was probably informed among the first. That faithful officer entered heartily into the movement, and efficiently disposed of his facilities to accomplish the object. Excepting members of the staff, charged with indispensable preparations, all occupants of the garrison were kept in entire ignorance of the scheme until the moment of its consummation. CHAP IV.

The threatened night attack on Moultrie from the city had been the staple talk of the garrison for more than a month, and the various repairs and arrangements to repel it left no doubt of the genuineness of the apprehension. It was easy to give new point and currency to the rumor. On Christmas day an order had been issued to remove the soldiers' families, comprising about twenty women and twenty-five children, and all other non-combatants to Fort Johnson, an old and dilapidated Government work on the opposite side of the harbor, and three schooners were openly chartered for this alleged purpose. The embarkation was postponed on account of rain; but proceeded on the 26th without concealment; and in so far as it provoked observation, it seemed but a natural and necessary precaution. It seemed, too, to excuse the removal not only of lighter personal baggage, but also of such substantial provisions as were essential to a prolonged stay of a considerable number of women and children. In due course of time the entire fighting force of the garrison was mustered, with cartridge-boxes filled and knapsacks packed, and towards the critical hour held Dec., 1860

CHAP. IV.

on parade to be ready to move on an instant's warning. This again, being perhaps but the repetition of many similar occasions of special vigilance, excited no unusual comment.

The loading of one of the schooners with the soldiers' families finally completed during the afternoon, she set sail, under the orders of Lieutenant Hall, with her miscellaneous cargo of human freight, and still more miscellaneous lading of "camp plunder," comprising almost everything in the household line, from boxes and barrels of provisions to cages of canary birds. Lieutenant Hall had orders to sail to Fort Johnson, but more definite instructions, when he should hear the proper signal to come away and land promptly at Fort Sumter.

Dawson, "Historical Magazine," Jan., 1872, p. 49.

At about sunset, Major Anderson stood on the parapet of Fort Moultrie, in the midst of a group of officers, to whom he had evidently made some serious communication. Just then Captain Abner Doubleday, the second in command, still without any knowledge of the movement, ascended the steps to invite the Major to tea. As he approached, the Major said to him, "I have determined to evacuate this post immediately, for the purpose of occupying Fort Sumter; I can only allow you twenty minutes to form your company and be in readiness to start." The announcement, though a complete surprise, met a cordial reception and eager obedience from Captain Doubleday. In the allotted twenty minutes, he reported his men in readiness to march, having in the meantime provided for the safety of his wife outside the walls.

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," pp. 61–63.

As the twilight deepened, Captain Foster, Assistant-Surgeon Crawford, and Mr. Edward Moall,

and a rear-guard of two sergeants and three privates who were yet to remain in Moultrie, stationed themselves at the five heavy guns (columbiads), which had been loaded and brought to bear on the route of crossing,[1] having orders from Anderson to fire on any vessel attempting to interfere with the boats conveying the troops. Everything being reported in readiness for the movement, the garrison, under the personal command of Major Anderson, passed out of the main gates of Fort Moultrie and marched to where Lieutenants Meade and Snyder, engineer assistants to Captain Foster, had brought several barges or large row-boats and concealed them and their crews, as well as might be, behind an irregular pile of rocks which once formed part of the sea-wall. Over this intervening space,— about a quarter of a mile,— the command moved in discreet silence, with the good fortune to neither meet nor be observed by any human being.

Foster, Report to Committee on Conduct of the War.

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," pp. 64, 65.

The lieutenants were ready with the boats and crews, and the company of Captain Doubleday was embarked with all possible celerity, piling the muskets together on the thwarts next to the rowlocks, and presently the boats propelled by the oarsmen towards Sumter were rocking on the billows of the bay. Chance also favored this part of the movement, for even at this most critical juncture the enterprise was on the verge of discovery and possible interruption. Of the two rebel guard steamers which had for days been employed in regularly patrolling the harbor to intercept such a movement as this, the *Nina* was at the moment de-

[1] The narratives of the different officers vary in some of these minor details, but all agree in the main incidents of the crossing.

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tained at the Charleston wharf. The other, however, named the *General Clinch* in honor of the distinguished father of the wife of Major Anderson, was seen approaching, towing a vessel toward the bar. Captain Doubleday took off his military cap, threw back his uniform coat to conceal the buttons, made his men take off their coats to cover the muskets, and generally to assume unsoldierly attitudes and dispositions. A wide circuit was taken to avoid the meeting, but without avail, and when the steamer stopped her paddle-wheels within the nearness of a hundred yards it seemed impossible to escape detection. But in the dimness of the twilight, the size of the boat, and the men in their shirt-sleeves, so much resembled parties of workmen who for weeks had been passing unmolested to and fro, that no further attention was paid to them, and, to the infinite relief of officers and men alike, the *General Clinch* once more started her engines and passed on her course. The officers left in Fort Moultrie also anxiously watched the incident, every detail of which they could distinctly see through a glass, the while they stood nervously by a loaded thirty-two pounder ready to fire on the guard-boat had she undertaken to detain their comrades.

Dawson, p. 52. Note by Crawford.

Relieved thus unexpectedly from their momentary but intense anxiety, the boats passed without further encounter to the wharf at Fort Sumter. Here a new but happily transient excitement awaited them. It will be remembered that Foster had a party of over one hundred workmen in Sumter, engaged under his direction in repairing the fort. Their political sentiments had proved

to be changeable, but for some days they had strongly manifested secession feelings. It being past the working hours and not yet bedtime, they were loitering idly about the works; the approaching boats attracted their attention, and they rushed in crowds down to the wharf as the landing troops began to mount the steps. As the situation explained itself to their astonished eyes, a feeble cheer or two from the few sincere Union men among their number was quickly drowned by the angry expressions of discontent from the great majority, some of whom wore secession cockades. "What are those soldiers doing here?" they asked in tones of ill-natured protest. Captain Doubleday, however, gave them no time to organize any movement of resistance. Forming his men in company, they leveled their bayonets, before which the crowd hastily gave way as the soldiers advanced to the main entrance, and occupied the guard-room which commanded it, and placing sentinels, the captain, in a very few minutes, had the fort under military control.

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 66.

The empty boats were now sent back to Moultrie to bring Captain Seymour's company, which service they also accomplished without delay or interference. Anderson himself had in the meanwhile arrived in company with the engineer lieutenants; the concerted signal being given to Lieutenant Hall, the schooner stood for the Sumter wharf and unloaded the women, children, and camp baggage. With the exception of the little rear-guard which yet remained in Moultrie, the whole force arrived before 8 o'clock at night. Major Anderson was able to tender his

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Dec. 26, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 2.

CHAP. IV. congratulations to the assembled officers on the successful accomplishment of a movement which the best informed conspirators would three days before have pronounced impossible, and which they could scarcely believe even when their own eyes had proof of it next morning.

Having written a dispatch which briefly reported his movement to the authorities at Washington, the first question Major Anderson had to deal with was the presence of the mutinous engineer workmen. The probability of an attack from Charleston under the new condition of things rendered Fort Sumter a place of danger from which they were anxious to escape; their secession sympathies rendered any forced service in behalf of the Union especially odious. Without delay they asked to be discharged with permission to depart at once; and under Anderson's consent and orders the schooner which had brought the soldiers' families carried the disaffected workmen away from Sumter back to Moultrie, leaving only the most trusty and loyal. A row-boat, manned by volunteers, also went back to Moultrie, and brought to Sumter Mrs. Rippit, the housekeeper of the officers' mess, who, with her ready-prepared tea-tables to which no guests appeared, had been left behind; this enterprise, too, was successful, and the officers' evening meal prepared in Moultrie was eaten cold in Sumter.

Dawson, p. 52.

The whole expedition had been carried on with such alacrity, secrecy, and concurrence of happy accident that even the denizens of the neighboring village of Moultrieville, a quarter of a mile distant, remained in ignorance of it that night; and no cessation or interruption of the peaceful occupation

of Moultrie by those remaining in it occurred until about 4 o'clock the next afternoon. Captain Foster, his clerk, a few soldiers, and his engineer workmen remained overnight in Moultrie, engaged in carrying out the remainder of Anderson's verbal instructions. With the help of the engineer workmen, the empty schooners which yet lay at the wharf of Moultrie were loaded during the night with the various articles left behind in the haste of departure—the instruments of the regimental band, soldiers' clothing and private property, engineer implements and materials, ammunition, and stores—and dispatched under sail to Sumter in the early dawn. All Moultrie's guns were spiked during the night, its flag-staff was cut down before sunrise next morning, and all its guns bearing on Sumter disabled by burning the carriages, the rising smoke from these fires giving the Charlestonians their first evidence of the abandonment of the fort.

Foster, Report to Committee on Conduct of the War.

Dawson, pp. 52, 53, 142, and 143.

During the morning, and while this work of removal and destruction was yet in progress under the direction of Lieutenant Davis, who had come to his assistance with an armed guard from Sumter, Foster went to the city in his row-boat to close his bank accounts and secure the public money in his charge. With his own lips, he confirmed the news of the transfer to Sumter which had by this time begun to circulate, and witnessed the first manifestations of the storm of excitement and indignation which now broke out among the populace. No personal indignity was offered him, however, and he returned safely to Moultrie, leisurely paid off and discharged his workmen there, and, near 4 o'clock in the after-

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noon of the 27th, Captain Foster, Lieutenant Davis, and the guard, under orders from Anderson, finally withdrew from Moultrie. The charge and custody of the fort was turned over to the overseer of the engineer workmen, and thus this disputed stronghold of the great American Republic was left without flag, officer, soldier, or serviceable gun — without even the regulation ordnance-sergeant, the all-sufficient Floyd formula for maintaining the property claim and right of the United States. And yet the conspirators vehemently insisted that this was an act of aggressive war on the independent State of South Carolina.

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Dec. 27, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 3.

As already said, the rising smoke from the burning gun-carriages gave notice to the Charlestonians that unusual proceedings of some kind were going on in Moultrie, and as early as 8 o'clock in the morning rumors of the withdrawal began to circulate through the city, which were confirmed by the first arrivals from Moultrieville. Previous events had prepared the public mind for sudden excitements, and it was not long before the signs of a popular ferment became visible — a rush to the newspaper offices for information, impromptu gatherings of street-corner politicians, and loud and indignant talk everywhere of the alleged perfidy of the Administration in general and of Major Anderson in particular. While the reporters hurried off to Moultrie to witness the final work of demolition and transfer still going on, the appearance of the militia uniforms on the streets satisfied the citizens that the authorities were not idle. Indeed, after the continual threats universally indulged in during the preceding weeks, a failure to take aggressive

Charleston "Courier," Dec. 28, 1860.

measures under the circumstances would have seriously demoralized the insurrection. The real popular excitement which now for a day prevailed would not brook this, nor would it have been permitted by Governor Pickens. All his actions demonstrate that both in purpose and temper he was a revolutionist of a genuine and radical type, bold, unyielding, and without serious scruples as to questions of law and authority. Beyond his qualified control of the volunteer companies as commander-in-chief of the State militia under the Constitution of South Carolina, he had no military power of any kind, neither the Legislature nor the convention, although both were in session, having made as yet any law, order, or direction in anticipation of the emergency.

But all this was a matter of small moment to the impetuous and determined Governor. He was no sooner apprised of the transfer to Sumter than he sent an aide to Major Anderson demanding to know by what authority he had acted, and insisting, "courteously but peremptorily," that he should immediately return to Moultrie, reciting the alleged pledge of the President that the forts should not be reënforced. Anderson's reply was in good temper, and based upon a proper and manly statement of his rights. He said that he could not and would not return, that he had not reënforced the command, but merely transferred his garrison from one fort to another, and that as commander of the harbor he had a right to place his men in any fort he deemed proper; that his removal had been on his own responsibility, as the best means of preventing bloodshed.

Anderson to Adjutant General, Dec. 27, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 3.

CHAP. IV. This discussion exhausted the subject and was continued no further, both parties turning their attention, not so much to what either might desire to do, but what at the moment it was possible to accomplish. The much talked-of and dreaded collision was plainly impracticable. Without as yet a single gun mounted for efficient service, and many of the embrasures simply closed with light boards, Sumter was in no condition to invite attack; with only a few improvised companies of volunteers, and these badly equipped and supplied, Charleston could not afford to risk an assault. A mob might have run over the Moultrie sand-banks; but it had no adequate preparations with which to overwhelm Sumter. With all his stubbornness of will Governor Pickens combined an undercurrent of conservative prudence, which took discriminating note of the probabilities of success or failure.

Dawson p. 174.

For the present, therefore, he confined his enterprise to such measures as would meet no opposition. Before a single soldier moved from the city, the Governor had ample means of knowing, from both the personal observation of newspaper reporters and the statements of Captain Foster while on his business visit to Charleston, that Moultrie had been permanently abandoned, with no thought whatever of immediate defense, and also that no troops had been sent to Castle Pinckney. He doubtless had this specific information, and acting upon it he could with impunity seize both these places. He now issued written orders to have this done; once more, and for the last time, employing the pretext "that these occupations were made

with a view to prevent the further destruction of public property and to secure the public safety."

Gov. Pickens, Message, Jan. 3, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1860-61, p. 270.

While the volunteers, some eight or nine companies, were ordered to meet at their armories in the early afternoon, and the Governor was dispatching excited telegrams to the minute-men in different parts of the State, a company or two of already assembled soldiers proceeded during the morning to business which had no need of special preparation. A cordon of troops was stationed around the United States Arsenal, not indeed invading it, but quite as effectually taking possession of it by placing it under surveillance and guard. The other Government property in the city was treated with less delicacy: the custom-house, the post-office, and the branch United States Treasury were taken into military possession and control. A week later, in a special message to the Legislature, Governor Pickens placed on record his defense of these acts of war. "All the steps that have been taken have been from necessity, and with a view to endeavor to give security and safety in the present state of the country. The convention has by ordinance withdrawn the State from the Federal Union, and by consequence imposed upon the Executive the duty of endeavoring to sustain her dignity and her rights; and in this emergency I confidently rely upon the Legislature to sustain the Executive in all proper measures." What a piece of involuntary satire this language of a revolutionary chief of a petty commonwealth becomes in comparison with the halting and negligent course of the President to whom had been confided the "dignity and rights" of a powerful nation.

Ibid., pp. 270, 271.

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To make his advent into Sumter impressive, Anderson had ordered the solemnities of a formal noonday flag raising, with parade, military music, and appropriate religious exercises at the foot of the flag-staff by the army chaplain of the post. That afternoon, about 4 o'clock, he and some of his officers from the parapet of Sumter, and the excited Charlestonians from favorable lookouts in the city, witnessed the hostile occupation of Castle Pinckney. As a piece of theatrical soldiering this was the principal insurrectionary exploit of the day. One hundred and fifty volunteers with their brand-new equipments were put upon the guard-boat *Nina* which steamed away for the Castle, only three-quarters of a mile from Charleston. The curious crowd at the wharf watched them with eager interest until the steamer reached the landing, and the excited militiamen rushed valiantly down the gang-plank of the vessel with fixed bayonets and around the circular brick walls of the work to its main entrance. The remainder of the spectacular performance not in view to the Charlestonians could be plainly seen by the observers on Sumter. They halloed and hammered without effect at the great gates which were closed and barred. Finally the long-prepared scaling-ladders, which now at length found occasion for service, were brought and planted, and re-assured by the cover of leveled rifles a dozen or two men scrambled over the walls, and unbarred and opened the gates. The command entered and hauled up a red flag with a single white star, borrowed from the *Nina*, and the expedition had concluded its work of storming an undefended fort, there being only

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 71.

Dawson, pp. 152, 153.

the engineer officer, Lieutenant Meade, the ordnance-sergeant, and perhaps a dozen laborers in the work, who made no resistance.

The occupation of Fort Moultrie was the concluding affair of the day. Governor Pickens had no idea whatever of hurling his awkward squads against even its deserted walls. His order was to take possession of Sullivan's Island, "and if it could be done without too great loss, after precautionary examination as to mines, etc., then Fort Moultrie itself should be occupied." The final abandonment took place about four in the afternoon, and the expedition to seize it did not leave Charleston wharf until seven in the evening. Neither difficulty nor delay was encountered in the examination, and in the course of an hour the preconcerted signal of three rockets announced to the city both arrival and possession.

Gov. Pickens, Message, Jan. 3, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1860-61, p. 270.

N. Y. "World," Jan. 2, 1861.

CHAPTER V

A BLUNDERING COMMISSION

Commissioners to the President, Jan. 1, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 122.

ON Wednesday, December 26, at 3 o'clock P. M., it being about the same time of the same day that Anderson was completing his preparations to leave Moultrie, Messrs. Barnwell, Adams, and Orr, the three commissioners from South Carolina, reached Washington. They were by authority of the convention empowered to negotiate a treaty of peace and friendship between the embryo republic and the United States; to secure the delivery of the forts, arsenal, and light-houses; to divide the public property and apportion the public debt, and generally to settle all pending questions, upon the assumption that South Carolina was no longer a member of the Union, but an independent foreign State.

W. R. Vol. I., p. 111.

Arrived at Washington they found their friends no less hopeful that some at least of these important negotiations could be without delay conducted to a successful issue. Six days had elapsed since the passage of the ordinance of secession, and that revolutionary declaration had been, to say the least, tolerated as an act of the people, without a word of official criticism, dissent, or even definition. Four days had passed since the convention

had given the commissioners their credentials, and yet the hourly communications of the telegraph had brought them no word of discouragement. On the contrary, their coming was expected, and the course of action to be pursued towards them had been officially deliberated upon and settled.

President Buchanan had determined to assure them that he had "no authority to decide what shall be the relations between the Federal Government and South Carolina,"—thus conveniently shirking his sworn duty to assert and maintain existing relations as defined by the Constitution and laws, and thereby officially raising a presumption that they had been or might be changed by the action of South Carolina. Shrinking from the doctrine of his message that "secession is revolution," he now, instead of enforcing the penalties of treason against these avowed revolutionists, under the Constitution and law of nations, proposed to receive them as "private gentlemen of the highest character," and communicate to Congress any proposition they might have to make.

President to Commissioners, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 116.

This was certainly strewing the pathway of revolution with roses. The Executive of the nation assaulted, not only foregoes his power and duty of defense, but complacently volunteers to become the intermediary of the assailants for acknowledgment and recognition. There being no concealment about the temper and purpose of Mr. Buchanan, the arrival of the commissioners was promptly communicated to him, and he with an equal promptness appointed an interview with them at 1 o'clock of the next day, Thursday, December 27. On their part, the commissioners deliberately settled

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themselves for business by taking a house and appointing a secretary. But at sunrise on Thursday things were no longer as they had been at the previous sunset. Anderson's move on the military chess-board had changed not only the game of war, but yet more radically the game of politics. The Charleston authorities, bewildered by the event, probably suspected treachery from the Administration, and, under this impulse, delayed the transmission of the news northward. They, however, sent the information to the commissioners at Washington, who communicated it to Mr. Buchanan.

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 180.

If the President had any intelligible theory of the future, it was that he should be permitted to end his official term without war; that the Charlestonians would respect their promise not to attack Anderson; that Congress would tolerate the secession of South Carolina as a transient necessity, and hold the other threatening States with some tempting compromise. This comforting dream was rudely dispelled by the news, and, instead of enjoying quiet repose in a secure anchorage, he found himself adrift on a dreaded sea of troubles.

President to Commissioners, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 117, 118.

Catching at straws, Buchanan's first impulse was to assume that Anderson had abandoned Moultrie in a panic, and to restore the *status quo* by ordering him back into that fort. He had the distinct impression that his orders did not contemplate or permit the change, showing either how ignorant he was of the Buell memorandum, which had passed under his personal notice only six days before, or how thoroughly that contradictory document had mystified him as well as others. Had the influences which were theretofore paramount in Wash-



JAMES L. ORR.

ington yet remained, it is more than likely that this first impulse of the President would have been carried out. But things were changed at the capital as well as in Charleston. An embezzlement of near a million dollars' worth of Indian Trust Bonds had come to light, and kept the Federal city and the whole country in a ferment for nearly a week. A Department clerk and a New York contractor were in prison, but the responsibility of the affair was brought home to Secretary Floyd so pointedly that the President had, three days before, requested his resignation. Floyd was in no haste to comply, and Mr. Buchanan was too timid to summarily dismiss his disgraced minister, who still exercised the functions of Secretary of War.

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 185.

Anderson's report written at 8 P. M. on December 26th, and sent by mail, had not yet reached Washington. Floyd was therefore incredulous about what the commissioners told him, but took immediate steps to verify the rumor. "Intelligence has reached here this morning," he telegraphed to Anderson on the morning of the 27th, "that you have abandoned Fort Moultrie, spiked your guns, burned the carriages, and gone to Fort Sumter. It is not believed because there is no order for any such movement. Explain the meaning of this report."

Floyd to Anderson, Dec. 27, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 3.

"The telegram is correct," replied Anderson. "I abandoned Fort Moultrie because I was certain that if attacked my men must have been sacrificed, and the command of the harbor lost. I spiked the guns and destroyed the carriages to keep the guns from being used against us." And he added, "If attacked, the garrison would never have surrendered without a fight."

Anderson to Floyd, Dec. 27, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 3.

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Meanwhile, the Cabinet was called together to deliberate on the unwelcome news. During the two weeks which had elapsed since the retirement of Cass and Cobb, a profound change had occurred among the President's advisers. Philip F. Thomas, of Maryland, also a secessionist, was made Secretary of the Treasury, a substitution which brought no reform; but on the other hand Jeremiah S. Black had been made Secretary of State, and greatly transformed in his political sentiments and acts, and Edwin M. Stanton, a man of iron will and hearty Union sentiment, nominated to succeed him as Attorney-General. A new and healthier atmosphere pervaded the Executive council-chamber in the discussion of the crisis. A session of an hour ought to have sufficed to dispose of it, but the political condition of the nation was so abnormal, the public service so disorganized, and the Executive so timid, that for three days and four nights, from the evening of the 27th to the morning of the 31st, Anderson hung doubtfully in the balance between honorable approval and disgraceful censure.

C. F. Black, "Essays and Speeches of Jeremiah S. Black," pp. 11, 12.

Though under the accusation of theft and the intimation of dismissal, Secretary Floyd came up to the help of the imperiled conspiracy with vigor and audacity. Dropping the cloak of Unionism under which he had been hiding his misdeeds for a month, he maintained with vehemence the existence of a mutual pledge created by the President's truce of the 10th, and claimed that Anderson had violated this pledge, alleging there was nothing in his instructions which could in any wise justify his removal to Sumter. Against this assumption Mr. Black, the new Secretary of State, took much more

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 187. Also Mr. Holt, Charleston Banquet Speech, quoted in "Atlantic," Oct., 1870.

radical ground than he had hitherto occupied. He insisted that Anderson's transfer was in perfect accordance with his orders, announced his unqualified approval of it, and asserted the duty of the Administration to sustain it. In regard to the issue thus raised, the President exhibited his usual irresolution. He denied the technical existence of a pledge, but could not of course deny its spirit, and sided with Floyd in the belief that Anderson's zeal had outrun the limit of his instructions. The Buell memorandum and the modifying order were sent for, and now for the first time underwent Cabinet criticism. The studied ambiguity of these papers furnished arguments for both sides, the entire question turning upon the point whether Anderson had "tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act." The passion of the Cabinet members rose with their war of words. Floyd became more aggressive, and submitted a written demand that he should be allowed at once to order the garrison to be withdrawn entirely from the harbor of Charleston, alleging that the Government was dishonored in the violation of its most solemn pledges.

Black, "Essays and Speeches," p. 12.

Floyd to Buchanan, Dec. 29, 1860. Frank Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. I., Documents, p. 10.

Pending the discussion the Cabinet adjourned until evening. The President's audience to the commissioners had been postponed until the next day; but they were not idle. All that day and until midnight they were the center of the consternation, the hopes, and the counsels of the conspirators. Meanwhile the official leakage, the Baltimore dispatches, and finally the issue of the afternoon newspapers had communicated Anderson's *coup* to the whole Federal city. General Scott, confined to

"Charleston Courier," Dec. 28, 1860, Washington dispatch of 27th.

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his sick-room, and writhing under the persistent disregard of his advice by the Executive and his studied exclusion by the Secretary of War, sent his aide-de-camp to remind the President of the existence of such an officer as the General-in-Chief of the American armies. "Since the formal order, unaccompanied by special instructions, assigning Major Anderson to the command of Fort Moultrie, no order, intimation, suggestion, or communication, for his government and guidance, has gone to that officer, or any of his subordinates, from the headquarters of the army, nor have any reports or communications been addressed to the General-in-Chief from Fort Moultrie later than a letter written by Major Anderson almost immediately after his arrival in Charleston harbor, reporting the then state of the work."

Message of Gen. Scott to the President, 3½ P. M., Dec. 27, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 111.

So ran the message delivered to the President, giving him substantial food for reflection upon the methods of his Secretary of War. The spokesmen of the political factions also thronged to the White House with argument and counsel. The Republicans, of course, were obliged to remain aloof, as were also Mr. Douglas and his adherents; but the secession Democrats from the South were persistent in their appeals to have Anderson remanded to Moultrie, or entirely withdrawn; while on the other hand the Administration Democrats from the Northern States, though few in number, were urgent that he should be approved and sustained in his courageous step.

In the evening the adjourned Cabinet meeting resumed its deliberations, and continued the session to a late hour. Reports went forth to the Northern

newspapers that night that before its close a vote of four to three had decided against ordering the troops back to Moultrie. This, however, was premature. Whether a vote was taken or not, the question did not reach a decision. What was done is described in the language of Mr. Buchanan. "In this state of suspense, the President determined to await official information from Major Anderson himself. After its receipt, should he be convinced upon full examination that the Major, on a false alarm, had violated his instructions, he might then think seriously of restoring for the present the former *status quo* of the forts."

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 181.

But the aggressive acts of the insurgents were continually outrunning the vacillating decisions of the President. During the afternoon and evening of Thursday, while the Cabinet meetings and conspirators' caucuses were in session, and while Mr. Buchanan's irresolution was being tortured by the entreaties of Southern radicals and the remonstrances from his conservative friends of the North, active war, bloodless as yet, but active war no less, was being waged by Governor Pickens against the national sovereignty; and Fort Moultrie, Castle Pinckney, the arsenal, post-office, and custom-house at Charleston, for want of rightful assertion and protection, passed into the hands of the insurrection as already stated. Like the news of Anderson's transfer the day before, the information of this outrage upon the flag was suppressed by the Charleston authorities. Beyond its transmission perhaps to their friends in Washington, none of the transactions at Charleston on Thursday afternoon and night were permitted to be telegraphed to the North

CHAP. V. Dec., 1860.

until about 10 o'clock on Friday morning, the 28th, probably in the hope that the order for Anderson's return could be extorted from the President before he should be stung to resistance.

The seizures at Charleston, made on the personal judgment of Governor Pickens, and against at least the implied consent of the convention, were of doubtful expediency for them. The "Richmond Whig" denounced them as a "shameful outrage," and soundly berated South Carolina for not being content to go out of the Union peacefully. These, however, might still have been turned to advantage, but for the more serious blunder now committed by the commissioners themselves.

See Dawson, p. 155.

Ibid., p. 159, and note p. 160.

Their promised interview with Mr. Buchanan, postponed from 1 o'clock on Thursday, on account of the Anderson news, was held at half-past two on Friday the 28th. The President had that forenoon heard of the Charleston outrages, and knew that from being the agents of a conspiracy they had now become the emissaries of an insurrection. But he failed to note the declaration of the Constitution that treason against the United States consists in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. "He determined to listen with patience to what they had to communicate. . . On their introduction he stated that he could recognize them only as private gentlemen, and not as commissioners from a sovereign State; that it was to Congress, and Congress alone, they must appeal. He nevertheless expressed his willingness to communicate to that body, as the only competent tribunal, any propositions they might have to offer."

Commissioners to President, Jan. 1, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 22.

Mr. Buchanan's Administration, p. 181.

It is difficult to imagine the feeling of the commissioners under this treatment, whether it was one of grateful relief or profound contempt. Instead of being cast into prison, they were admitted to a considerate social conference with this Executive of a "foreign nation," and treated to friendly private advice, how best to accomplish the objects of their mission. According to his explanations the Constitution indeed forbade his recognizing their authority, or deciding their claim; but he would give this claim point and dignity by referring it officially to Congress, with the sanction of a Presidential message.

Had sound judgment guided them they would have seized eagerly upon this *quasi* acceptance of their mission,—which virtually gave them the President as an ally,—divided and paralyzed Congress by an active and concerted intrigue, and made a conciliatory appeal to the commercial apprehensions of the Northern cities and manufacturing districts. But instead they now ventured their whole success upon a single desperate chance. Assuming a tone of anger and accusation, they impugned the honor of the Government and asked explanations of Anderson's conduct under the childish threat of suspending negotiations which were not yet begun. "And in conclusion," they added, "we would urge upon you the immediate withdrawal of the troops from the harbor of Charleston. Under present circumstances they are a standing menace which renders negotiation impossible, and as our recent experience shows, threatens speedily to bring to a bloody issue questions which ought to be settled with temperance and judgment." The adoption of

Commissioners to President, Dec. 28, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 110.

CHAP V. this ultimatum by the conspirators shows the strong confidence they had in their complete domination over the will of Mr. Buchanan. Unprepared for war, they abruptly closed their only avenue to successful intrigue; feeling assured that all resistance from the President would break down, and that his infirm purpose would unconditionally yield their demand. But under wiser advice Mr. Buchanan's hesitating decision finally went against them; and in that failure terminated the last and only hope of accomplishing peaceable secession.

CHAPTER VI

THE CABINET RÉGIME

THE ultimatum presented by the commissioners was at once made the subject of a Cabinet discussion, continued in the evening of the same day. No decision was arrived at, and the meetings would be without special interest, were it not for the report of one of the incidents that shows the feeling which divided the members into two irreconcilable factions. The scene is given in the language of one of the participants in the evening session of Friday, December 28th, who afterwards recounted the event in the council-room of the White House. Secretary Stanton said:

> The last I saw of Floyd was in this room, lying on the sofa which then stood between the windows yonder. I remember it well — it was on the night of the 28th of December, 1860. We had had high words, and had almost come to blows, in our discussion over Fort Sumter. Thompson was here — Thompson was a plausible talker — and as a last resort, having been driven from every other argument, advocated the evacuation of the fort on the plea of generosity. South Carolina, he said, was but a small State with a sparse white population — we were a great and powerful people, and a strong vigorous government. We could afford to say to South Carolina, "See, we will withdraw our garrison as an evidence that we mean you no harm."

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Stanton replied to him, "Mr. President, the proposal to be generous implies that the Government is strong, and that we, as the public servants, have the confidence of the people. I think that is a mistake. No administration has ever suffered the loss of public confidence and support as this has done. Only the other day it was announced that a million of dollars had been stolen from Mr. Thompson's department. The bonds were found to have been taken from the vault where they should have been kept, and the notes of Mr. Floyd were substituted for them. Now it is proposed to give up Sumter. All I have to say is, that no administration, much less this one, can afford to lose a million of money and a fort in the same week." Floyd remained silent and did not reappear in that chamber.

Stanton conversation, J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

The Cabinet was again convened on the evening of Saturday, December 29th; but when it met, there was one vacant seat at the council-board.[1] During that day, Floyd sent in his formal resignation, complaining that he had been subjected "to a violation of solemn pledges and plighted faith." The resignation was accepted on the following Monday, and the War Department placed provisionally under the charge of Postmaster-General Holt. To the six assembled councilors, Mr. Buchanan now submitted the draft of his reply to the commissioners. The precise terms and substance of this document remain unpublished, and we are compelled to gather its import from a rather elaborate written criticism of it by a member of the Cabinet. This indicates, however, with sufficient clearness, that the paper, like all Mr. Buchanan's writings and conversations of that period, was contradictory, loose in expression, and entirely lacking

Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. I. Documents, p. 10.

[1] Floyd's resignation is dated Dec. 29th (Saturday), and the President's acceptance Dec. 31st (Monday), 1860.

in any clear presentation of issues, or straightforward decision of pending questions; a half-defense and half-apology, seeking simply to evade and shift just official responsibility. Of all the Cabinet members, Mr. Toucey alone approved the reply; Thompson and Thomas, with active sympathies in behalf of secession, assailed it as being hostile to South Carolina and calculated to provoke a conflict; while Black, Stanton, and Holt insisted that it ignobly yielded the rights and honor of the Government to the rebellion which had assailed its flag and property.

Black, "Essays and Speeches," pp. 13, 14.

To all appearance unmoved by these searching and acrimonious discussions, the President seemed to adhere inflexibly both to the form and substance of the reply he had sketched, and the conference ended with every indication of a new, and this time radical, Cabinet crisis. It is not probable that either the Chief Magistrate or any or all of his constitutional advisers comprehended the novel relations and changing aspects of national politics. The heat of their daily strife warped their judgment, and the rancor of their discords obscured their vision too much for correct analysis. Upon a more remote and dispassionate study of these men, it comes out that President Buchanan's was a cold, secretive, rigid, unsympathetic character, in which the two opposing qualities of stubbornness and timidity met and neutralized each other; leaving a colorless personality peculiarly subject to be moved by political drifts, which he lacked the insight to perceive and the courage to resist. Two opposing currents in the Cabinet, one towards active disunion, represented by Cobb, Thompson, and Floyd,

CHAP. VI. and recently Thomas, and the other towards a conservative unionism, represented by Cass, Black, Holt, and recently Stanton, had kept the President in an eddy, with his darling political paradoxes about secession and coercion, enforcement and violence, executive duty and Congressional power, revolution and compromise forever on his lips, and the ghastly and overwhelming phantom of civil war forever before his eyes. The end of December, therefore, when he was called upon to decide the fate of Anderson and Sumter, found him no further advanced than when, at the beginning of the month, he was writing his message. All the great political events which had happened — the significant Congressional debates, his truce with rebellion, the rupture of his Cabinet, proclamation of the insurrection, South Carolina secession, Anderson's movement, the Charleston seizures, and the actual presence of the insurrection in the Executive Mansion in the persons of the three commissioners — had swept by him, not indeed unnoted, but utterly uncomprehended. Though seized by friend and foe alike, and dragged time and again into the broad light of his state duties and responsibilities, he as constantly shrank back into the obscurity of his personal fears, refusing to exercise his executive functions.

The wide drift in politics, however, now sweeping unresisted and with a rising current, not only in South Carolina, but in other Cotton States as well, from discontent to conspiracy and from conspiracy to insurrection, while it left the President stationary in attitude and resolve, had quite a different effect upon the members of his Cabinet. We

have already seen how it drew out Cobb to personal service in rebellion, and drove out Cass as a protest against Executive indifference and neglect. The same influence had now forced out Floyd, much against the inclination of that double-dealing politician. Nor did the influence end here. Though the king be dead, the king must live. A nation of thirty millions is a daily force with daily needs, and if the President refuse his office, the next in authority must take up the task. With all Buchanan's protests that it was not his work, the national questions grew daily in magnitude and portent. On the 26th it was the query of receiving the commissioners; on the 27th, the question of remanding Anderson to Moultrie; on the 28th, the demand to withdraw the garrison altogether. In a week it might be civil war; and in a month an army at the gates of the capital. Though the President might shirk the pressing issues, South Carolina and the Union assuredly would not. CHAP. VI. Dec., 1860.

From the Presidential election to the evacuation of Moultrie, Mr. Buchanan's policy had been, in substance, an effort to abstain as far as possible from affairs of state; and his written reply to the commissioners was a simple continuation of that policy. But this was now approved by only one member of his Cabinet; the other five condemning it, though from motives radically unlike. Thompson and Thomas, importuned by their friends, could no longer postpone decisive action to favor the conspiracy; while Black, Holt, and Stanton dared no longer defer energetic efforts to maintain the Government. With the adjournment of that Cabinet meeting on Saturday night,

CHAP. VI. December 29th, therefore (it is scarcely too strong to say), terminated the real Administration of James Buchanan, and began what may be appropriately called the régime of the Cabinet.

It is true that he still continued to affix his official signature and draw his official salary; but the most that can be claimed for his rulership is that he performed the function defined by the French historian Thiers in his famous constitutional maxim of European monarchies: "The king reigns; he does not govern." We look in vain through the remainder of Mr. Buchanan's term for positive affirmative Executive acts. He simply assents to or refuses what is proposed by his ministers, and every strong manifestation of national authority seems to have been one which they did not permit him to prevent. The temper of his mind and purpose is accurately outlined in his own language in a special message which he transmitted to Congress on the 8th of January, and which was in its entirety little else than a lamentation over the woes and dangers of the country, and a despairing cry, exhorting Congress to call upon the people to preserve the Union, apparently forgetting that that was the precise duty for which the people had elected him President, and which duty he had specifically sworn to perform:

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> The dangerous and hostile attitude of the States towards each other has already far transcended and cast in the shade the ordinary Executive duties already provided for by law, and has assumed such vast and alarming proportions as to place the subject entirely above and beyond Executive control. The fact cannot be disguised that we are in the midst of a great revolution. In all its various bearings, therefore, I commend the question

to Congress, as the only human tribunal, under Providence, possessing the power to meet the existing emergency. To them, exclusively, belongs the power to declare war, or to authorize the employment of military force in all cases contemplated by the Constitution; and they alone possess the power to remove grievances which might lead to war, and to secure peace and union to this distracted country. On them, and on them alone, rests the responsibility. . . I therefore appeal through you to the people of the country to declare in their might that the Union must and shall be preserved by all constitutional means. . . In conclusion it may be permitted to me to remark that I have often warned my countrymen of the dangers which now surround us. This may be the last time I shall refer to the subject officially.

Buchanan, Message, Jan. 8, 1861. "Globe," Jan. 9, 1861, p. 295.

This is no longer the potential voice of a President of the United States administering government, but the cry of a bewildered functionary who has lost command, confidence, courage, and is even almost deserted by hope.

Most radical of all the changes effected by these developments was that wrought in Jeremiah S. Black, Secretary of State. No one can read his famous opinion on coercion, given to sustain the President's annual message, without realizing the profound influence under which the conspirators controlled his legal reasoning and his official utterance at the date of November 20, 1860. But on the retirement of Mr. Cass, his elevation to the Secretaryship of State appears to have given him wider and truer views. Growing with his increasing national responsibilities he now, in the Sumter crisis, seems to have risen to genuine leadership.

"Opinions of the Attorneys-General." Vol. IX., pp. 517 *et seq.*

On Sunday morning, December 30, convinced of the President's intention to adhere to his submitted

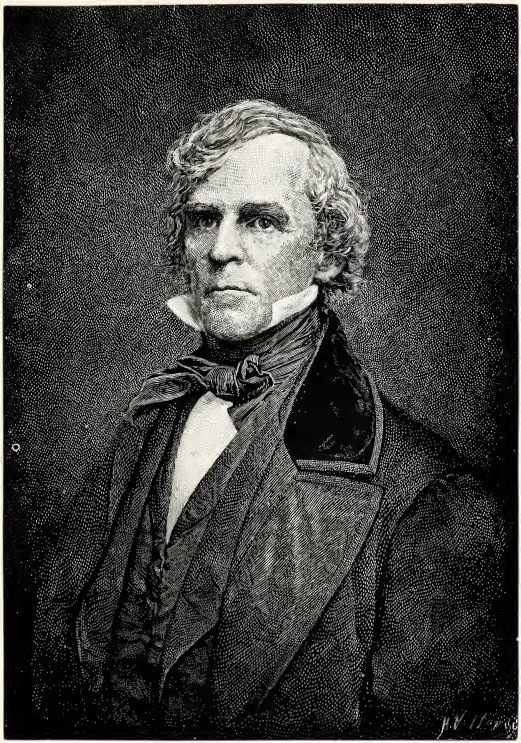
CHAP. VI. reply to the commissioners, Mr. Black convened the Union section of the Cabinet, and announcing to them his inability to sustain further the President's contemplated action, declared his intention to resign, in which resolve he was also joined by Mr. Stanton. After due discussion and reflection, Mr. Toucey carried the information of this threatened defection to the President. Mr. Buchanan's courage utterly broke down before the prospect of finding himself alone in face of the political complications which came crowding upon him. He at once sent for Mr. Black; and after a confidential interview, the details of which have never been revealed, he gave the objectionable draft of his reply to the Secretary of State, with liberty to make all changes and amendments which in his opinion might be necessary. It was the President's virtual abdication.

Black, "Essays and Speeches," p. 14.

Ibid., pp. 14 and 17.

Mr. Black hurried to the office of the Attorney-General, and there in the presence of Mr. Stanton, and doubtless with his advice and suggestion, wrote out a detailed and methodical memorandum, covering the points at variance. It is a strong and patriotic paper, and had it been adopted by the Executive as the key-note of his annual message, and enforced promptly by the army and navy, the rebellion might never have reached its final proportions.

It not only deprecated any expression of regret that the commissioners should suspend negotiations, but roundly denied the right of South Carolina to send any such officials or agents. It stated that the Charleston forts belonged to the Government, and could not be made the subject



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of any adjustment or arrangement, but must be maintained by the power of the nation. On the subject of the President's pledge it asserted with vigor that, "it deeply concerns the President's reputation that he should contradict this statement, since if it be undenied it puts him in the attitude of an executive officer who voluntarily disarms himself of the power to perform his duty, and ties up his hands so that he cannot, without breaking his word, 'preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and see the laws faithfully executed.'" The definition of "coercion" contained in this memorandum, when compared with the same writer's employment of the word in his famous opinion of November 20 1860, is a burst of patriotic sunlight:

The words "coercing a State by force of arms to remain in the confederacy — a power which I do not believe the Constitution has conferred on Congress"— ought certainly not to be retained. They are too vague, and might have the effect (which I am sure the President does not intend) to mislead the commissioners concerning his sentiments. The power to defend the public property, to resist an assailing force which unlawfully attempts to drive out the troops of the United States from one of the fortifications, and to use the military and naval forces for the purpose of aiding the proper officers of the United States in the execution of the laws — this, as far as it goes, *is* coercion, and may very well be called "coercing a State by force of arms to remain in the Union."

"Memorandum" quoted in Black, "Essays and Speeches," pp. 14–17.

Contrasting the language of Mr. Black, Secretary of State, indorsed and sustained by a mutinous Cabinet majority, with the words of Mr. Black, Attorney-General, acquiesced in by the tolerant Cabinet majority of six weeks previous, we are able

CHAP. VI. to measure accurately the immense change in the theory and purpose of the Administration, which was now intended to be announced. But the reform did not stop even here. From a hearty and outspoken eulogy of Anderson, the memorandum proceeded to a vigorous recommendation of defensive measures:

> He has saved the country, I solemnly believe, when its day was darkest, and its perils most extreme. He has done everything that mortal man could do to repair the fatal error which the Administration have committed in not sending down troops enough to hold all the forts. He has kept the strongest one. He still commands the harbor. We may still execute the laws if we try. . . I entreat the President to order the *Brooklyn* and the *Macedonian* to Charleston without the least delay, and in the meantime send a trusty messenger to Major Anderson to let him know that his Government will not desert him. The reënforcement of troops from New York or Old Point Comfort should follow immediately. If this be done at once, all may yet be not well, but comparatively safe. If not, I can see nothing before us but disaster and ruin to the country.

Black, "Essays and Speeches," pp. 14–17.

Sheet by sheet, as rapidly as Mr. Black wrote this long memorandum, Mr. Stanton made a copy of it, and the original was sent to the President. Mr. Holt saw it later in the day, and also gave it his unqualified approval. Mr. Buchanan amended his reply, embodying in it many parts of this document. But with a lingering pride of opinion, or perhaps deference to the haughty assumptions of the commissioners, he chose and used only the mildest and weakest phrases. Despite traceable infusion from Mr. Black's memorandum, his letter remained an humble, apologetic argument, and not a manly and confident assertion of right, duty, and

Ibid.

power. It still reiterated his purely defensive instructions, his anxiety to refer their propositions to Congress, his first prompting to remand Anderson to Moultrie, his deep regret that they deemed negotiations impossible. Yet it at least mentioned the insurrectionary seizure of forts and arsenal; it promised that Anderson should not be condemned without a fair hearing; that he would not withdraw the troops; and that it was his duty "to defend Fort Sumter as a portion of the public property of the United States against hostile attacks from whatever quarter they may come." By these narrow distinctions, a President of the United States escaped the impending disgrace of lowering the flag of the Union with not a hostile soldier in arms before it.

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President to Commissioners, Dec. 31, 1860 W. R. Vol I., p. 118.

When the commissioners, on Monday, the last day of December, received this reply of the Cabinet over the signature of the President, they saw that their mission was ended, and yet they were without results, without promises, without prospects. They had rejected the proffered negotiations with Congress, and sacrificed their visiting relations with the President. Worse than all, the letter indicated the advent of a new authority which had the courage to say "No." It was the first fresh breeze of a Northern reaction which might rise to a storm. Under the circumstances there was nothing to do but to pocket their credentials and go home. To this they added the only other expedient the situation permitted—a bitter and insulting rejoinder to "fire the Southern heart."

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Upon this second letter to the President they apparently expended their united skill and emptied their accumulated indignation. They drew up a

CHAP. VI. sententious arraignment of his official neglect of duty, and alleged his passive complicity with the South Carolina revolt. They charged distinctly that in his interview with them his words had indicated a willingness to withdraw the troops and deliver them the forts and the harbor. Their allegations were only partly true, for the dissembling Floyd was responsible for the Buell memorandum and the surrender instructions. They evidently thought Mr. Buchanan capable of treason, when his offense was personal timidity and consequent neglect of duty. As a succinct summary of events, no less than as the analysis of their complete web of intrigue and outline of expected successes, the following portion merits quotation:

> Some weeks ago the State of South Carolina declared her intention, in the existing condition of public affairs, to secede from the United States. She called a convention of her people to put her declaration in force. The convention met and passed the ordinance of secession. All this you anticipated and your course of action was thoroughly considered. In your annual message you declared you had no right, and would not attempt to coerce a seceding State, but that you were bound by your constitutional oath and would defend the property of the United States within the borders of South Carolina, if an attempt was made to take it by force. Seeing very early that this question of property was a difficult and delicate one, you manifested a desire to settle it without collision. You did not reënforce the garrison in the harbor of Charleston. You removed a distinguished and veteran officer from the command of Fort Moultrie because he attempted to increase his supply of ammunition. You refused to send additional troops to the same garrison when applied for by the officer appointed to succeed him. You accepted the resignation of the oldest and most eminent member of your Cabinet rather than allow the garrison to be strengthened. You compelled an officer

stationed at Fort Sumter to return immediately to the Arsenal forty muskets which he had taken to arm his men. You expressed, not to one but to many of the most distinguished of our public characters, whose testimony will be placed upon the record whenever it is necessary, your anxiety for a peaceful termination of this controversy, and your willingness not to disturb the military status of the forts, if commissioners should be sent to the Government, whose communications you promised to submit to Congress. You received and acted on assurances from the highest official authorities of South Carolina, that no attempt would be made to disturb your possession of the forts and property of the United States, if you would not disturb their existing condition until the commissioners had been sent, and the attempt to negotiate had failed. You took from the Members of the House of Representatives a written memorandum that no such attempt should be made. . . You sent orders to your officers commanding them strictly to follow a line of conduct in conformity with such an understanding. . . You knew the implied condition under which we came; our arrival was notified to you and an hour appointed for an interview. . . With the facts we have stated, and in face of the crowning and conclusive fact that your Secretary of War had resigned his seat in the Cabinet upon the publicly avowed ground that the action of Major Anderson had violated the pledged faith of the Government, and that unless the pledge was instantly redeemed he was dishonored, denial was impossible; you did not deny it. You do not deny it now, but you seek to escape from its obligation. . . You have decided, you have resolved to hold by force, what you have obtained through our misplaced confidence; and by refusing to disavow the action of Major Anderson, have converted his violation of orders into a legitimate act of your executive authority.

Commissioners to Buchanan, Jan. 1, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 121–124.

This humiliating reminder the commissioners sent to the President as a Parthian arrow, while they sped by rail back to Charleston to report their discomfiture. Too accurate in many points, both

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in statement and logic, to be completely refuted, and too offensive in language and intent to be either answered or tolerated, Mr. Buchanan took his only alternative by writing upon it the indorsement, "This paper just presented to the President is of such a character that he declines to receive it," and returning it to the signers. The central cabal, however, was unwilling to lose the effect of the forcible indictment on public opinion, and Jefferson Davis seized an early occasion to incorporate the commissioners' rejoinder at full length in a Senate speech, thus giving it ample circulation in print in the "Congressional Globe" and the newspaper reports of Senate proceedings.

"Globe," Jan. 9, 1861, pp. 284-289.

CHAPTER VII

THE "STAR OF THE WEST"

AS we have seen, the fate of Sumter hung in doubt from the evening of December 27, 1860, the day on which the President first received news of Anderson's transfer, until the afternoon of December 31, when he finally sent to the commissioners, in modified form, the answer dictated by Black and his Union colleagues, refusing to withdraw the troops. During these intervening three days, public rumor was possessed but vaguely of the information of passing events — of the commissioners' demand, of the Cabinet struggle, of Floyd's retirement, and of the final victory of the Union section of the Cabinet. General Scott, excited like all others by these rumors, made an appeal to Floyd on December 28, apparently still not fully realizing that Secretary's treachery. He wrote to him begging to express the hope that Sumter might not be evacuated, but that on the contrary troops, supplies, and ships of war might be sent to its support, repeating at the same time his former recommendations to garrison further the other Southern forts. Everybody's blood was astir with the Charleston news; and on the supposition that the Secretary of War was a loyal man, it was natural to expect that he too would catch

Gen. Scott to Secretary of War, Dec. 28, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 112.

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the patriotic contagion, and, in an impulse of national pride, applaud and support Anderson. Waiting impatiently, through all of Saturday, without response, the general was reluctantly forced to doubt, and wrote to Larz Anderson, the major's brother, at Cincinnati, assuring him of his admiration of the major's "masterly transfer of the garrison,"— that he had urged reënforcements within the last twenty-four hours — but, he added dubiously, "with what effect remains to be seen,"— since the War Department had kept secret from the general its instructions to the major.

Gen. Scott to Larz Anderson, Dec. 29, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 113, 114.

By Sunday morning, December 30, General Scott more accurately comprehended the situation. He realized that treason was doing its work in official circles, and that the regular channels and agencies of the Government could no longer be trusted. Considering the step justified by the emergency, routine having become useless and discipline dangerous, he wrote directly and confidentially to the President himself, urging that "matters of the highest national importance seem to forbid a moment's delay, and if misled by zeal he hopes for the President's forgiveness. Will the President permit General Scott, without reference to the War Department, and otherwise as secretly as possible, to send two hundred and fifty recruits from New York harbor to reënforce Fort Sumter, together with some extra muskets or rifles, ammunition, and subsistence stores? It is hoped that a sloop-of-war and cutter may be ordered for the same purpose as early as to-morrow."

Gen. Scott, "Autobiography." Vol. II., p. 619.

Gen. Scott to the President, Dec. 30, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 114.

Again the lapse of another long day without any Presidential order or indication of decision upon

these momentous questions. But finally, on Monday morning, the general was reassured by a sign of military promise. The rumor of Floyd's resignation grew into an accepted fact. Upon this cheering news he ventured once more to "trespass for a moment on the indulgence of the President of the United States," with suggestions about a successor, about a system of communication with Anderson, and more especially about a proffer of assistance and facilities in reënforcing Sumter and providing other defensive aid, coming from patriotic citizens of New York. CHAP. VII.

Gen. Scott to the President, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 119.

It was under these circumstances as well as the self-assertion and triumph of the Union elements of the Cabinet that on Monday morning, December 31, Postmaster-General Joseph Holt became Floyd's successor.[1] This choice, too, was dictated by the new powers at the helm—Mr. Stanton himself having gone to Mr. Holt's residence near midnight to urge upon him the acceptance of the post, to impress upon him the grave nature of the exigency, and the need of a man in that place whose sentiments they knew. Fortunately for the country, their choice was in every way justified. In the prime of life, with even, moderate temperament, with well-balanced judgment, and with tenacious patriotism, the new war minister

[1] On Monday, December 31, 1860, President Buchanan authorized Postmaster-General Holt "to perform the duties of the office of the Secretary of War, now vacant by the resignation of John B. Floyd, until a successor shall be appointed and the vacancy filled" [Records of the War Department, MS.]. On the following day (January 1, 1861), he more formally appointed Mr. Holt Secretary of War *ad interim* [Senate Journal, pp. 101, 102]. Finally, on the 18th of January, he regularly nominated Mr. Holt Secretary of War, which nomination the Senate duly confirmed.

CHAP. VII. was in almost every particular the opposite of his predecessor.

The newspaper dispatches of the day inform us that Mr. Holt had not been in the War Department five minutes when he sent for General Scott. It is certain that he promptly called the General-in-Chief to his aid, and he who had for six weeks been excluded from all duty and authority went eagerly to the service of the imperiled Union. The situation was hastily examined, the military resources calculated, and measures devised, somewhat too hastily as the result proved, to send relief and support to Anderson. The expediency and possibility of such an expedition had been long pondered and discussed, but hitherto without the professional advice of the General-in-Chief.

In the contingency only three plans seemed feasible; these had already been more or less considered, and each found liable to serious objection. The first was to send the *Brooklyn* with three hundred drilled men from Fort Monroe. Not only would an armed ship with disciplined troops afford greater probability of success in reaching Sumter against resistance, but once there the *Brooklyn* could be utilized as a floating custom-house, to enforce a collection of the import duties in default of officials or facilities in the city of Charleston. The President and Cabinet favored this plan, and notwithstanding its grave defects, of which General Scott was well aware, in his great anxiety to have something done, he acquiesced in its adoption. The President permitting, and a zealous Cabinet majority and General-in-Chief coöperating, all delay was set aside, and Monday evening General Scott called

Black, "Essays and Speeches," p. 19.

in person to congratulate Mr. Buchanan that relief to Anderson was at length to go, and to inform him that he had at that moment in his pocket the necessary orders from the War and Navy Departments for the prompt manning and sailing of the *Brooklyn*. CHAP. VII.

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 189.

But at this juncture an unexpected postponement grew out of the President's hesitation. Having remained, during this eventful Monday, subjected to the visits, solicitations, and importunings of the conspiring Senators and Representatives, he was by the weakness of his nature unable to emancipate himself abruptly from their habitual domination. It must have cost him a struggle to adhere to his official decision not to withdraw the garrison from Sumter, but he remained true to the newly adopted counsels of Black, Holt, and Stanton. That crisis was over; he had received the ultimatum of the commissioners, and on that afternoon had sent his own in reply. But with the argument closed and negotiation ended on that head, his fortitude again broke down. Under a frivolous pretext of social and friendly courtesy, and explicitly recognizing the absence of any official obligation, he suspended the orders for the relief expedition. To General Scott he explained that it was for the purpose of giving the commissioners time to make a reply, and that the delay for this purpose could not in his opinion exceed forty-eight hours. The general, with his habits of discipline, and schooled in old-time politeness, accepted the disappointment with becoming grace. To Thompson, however, still Secretary of the Interior and active conspirator, Mr. Buchanan, at a later hour that same evening, upon request gave the additional pledge that "the

Ibid., p. 190.

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orders should not be renewed without being previously considered and decided in Cabinet." That the Executive consent and orders for this pressing reënforcement given to his four loyal ministers should at the last moment be virtually abrogated at the demand of one Cabinet traitor exhibits an almost hopeless irresolution and irresponsibility.

Buchanan to Thompson, Jan. 9, 1861. Curtis, "Life of Buchanan." Vol. II., p. 402.

Meanwhile, that was a gloomy Monday afternoon for the conspirators. The commissioners had received the President's reply and found their mission at an end. Their elegant house in Franklin Row, hired for a month's diplomatic campaign, must needs be closed after a brief occupation of five days. The ambassadorial dignity of South Carolina, which grew in the hot-house atmosphere of Washington politics like Jonah's gourd and had become the shelter of calls, receptions, and caucuses, was doomed to wilt ignobly and disappear. Congressional conspirators saw their friends depart from the Cabinet, and found the familiar doors of the departments shut to their industrious visits. There were rumors of new combinations, of sudden resolves, of significant orders. There was danger in the air, and they sounded the alarm to their respective States. The commissioners themselves were not free from the prevailing panic. In a dispatch to the President of the South Carolina Convention they telegraphed: "Holt has been appointed Secretary of War. He is for coercion, and war is inevitable. We believe reënforcements are on their way. Prevent their entrance into the harbor at every hazard."

"National Intelligencer," Jan. 7, 1861.

As it turned out their warning was premature, but nevertheless received early fulfillment. The

Union members of the Cabinet were not men to submit quietly to have victory thus rudely snatched from their grasp. The customary official receptions on New Year's Day precluded all public business. Before the expiration of the forty-eight hours' grace, however, on Wednesday, the 2d of January, the Cabinet was once more convulsed in discussing the paramount question of reënforcements. The traitor Thompson was there as a forlorn hope, making a most spirited opposition to sending troops. It proved of no avail. The arguments of Holt, the mingled eloquence and cynical invective of Black, and the impetuous denunciations of Stanton held the President to their view and purpose. Before the conclusion of the debate the ill-tempered reply of the commissioners, described in the last chapter, was brought and read to the council. If the resolute and impressive deliberation had already made the decision sure, the general indignation over this missive made its announcement dramatic. "After this letter," said Secretary Black in a tone of confident triumph, "the Cabinet will be unanimous"; while the President, with the courage of desperation, and his mind filled with bloody visions of the immediate storming of Sumter, added, "It is now all over, and reënforcements must be sent."

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Buchanan to Thompson, Jan. 9, 1861. Curtis, "Life of Buchanan," Vol. II., p. 402.

Probably dreading the intervention of some new obstacle, the Union members of the Cabinet addressed themselves immediately to the task of getting off the relief expedition, without further specific orders from the President. During the delay which had occurred its proposed details had been more carefully examined and considered.

CHAP. VII. General Scott had never favored the plan of sending the *Brooklyn*. Two insuperable objections to it appeared to his professional judgment. It was affirmed that the vessel by reason of her deep draught could not cross the Charleston bar, unless under circumstances exceptionally favorable. Her arrival at low tide, or during a storm, would delay and most likely defeat her entrance by giving notice of approach and time to organize resistance. But the second objection was even more imperative. Fort Monroe was one of the two most important national strongholds on the whole Atlantic coast. As a guard to the entrance of Chesapeake Bay, and as a base for both seaboard and inland operations, its possession outweighed that of other harbor defenses, excepting, perhaps, only the Tortugas forts off the Florida headland. Both for its immediate and practical utility in a campaign, and its international importance as an indication of power and symbol of sovereignty, it dwarfed Sumter to insignificance. This great fortress was manned by a slender and altogether insufficient garrison. To strip it of two hundred men for the needed reënforcement would be to place it in extreme jeopardy. Doubtless this was the general's chief reason for rejecting the plan of sending the *Brooklyn*. Subsequent events abundantly vindicated his judgment. Within a week from that time the conspiring Governor of Virginia made an official examination into the feasibility of capturing Fort Monroe, and found peremptory discouragement in the professional advice that with the troops then in that stronghold it would be useless to make such an attempt "with-

out a large force thoroughly equipped and well appointed," and which was not at the command of the State of Virginia.

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Gov. Letcher, Message, Dec. 2, 1861.

Wisely preferring that all the regulars in Fort Monroe should be left there to place its security beyond the shadow of a doubt, General Scott desired that the reënforcement should consist of recruits which could without danger be spared from Governor's Island in New York harbor. The question of a suitable transport had been the chief difficulty in this plan, for which there now seemed to come an opportune solution. Three patriotic citizens of New York had made a tender of immediate military assistance to the Government, offering at their own expense to throw a garrison of four hundred artillerymen, to be selected from among the drilled New York military companies, as a special volunteer garrison into Fort Moultrie, to hold that particular post. It was a serious offer from responsible men, and planned by adequate professional skill. But as the emergency seemed scarcely to demand so extraordinary a step, and as it involved grave political questions and was liable to produce troublesome legal embarrassments, General Scott did not advise the President to accept it.

Col. James A. Hamilton, Moses H. Grinnell, and John E. Williams, Dawson, p. 181. See also Gen. Scott to the President, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 119.

The details and discussions of this proffered citizens' expedition disclosed to General Scott the means of securing his needed transport. The orders concerning the *Brooklyn* were therefore on this same Wednesday, January 2, rescinded, and a plan substituted to send the reënforcements from New York in a swift merchant steamer. The plan was believed to combine secrecy, celerity of movement, certainty of crossing the bar, the avoidance

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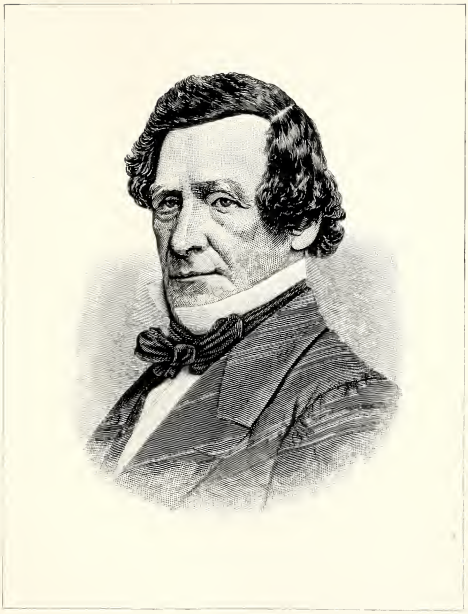
CHAP. VII. of any apparent purpose of "coercion," and the vital security of Fort Monroe. In conformity with this decision a telegram was dispatched to New York accepting the services of the steamer, and the Assistant Adjutant-General of the army was sent on the day following to organize and forward the expedition with all possible haste.

Gen. Scott, Memorandum, Jan. 2, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 128, 129.

It is the almost universal fate of such enterprises to encounter unforeseen difficulties and vexatious delays. In spite of these, at 9 o'clock on Saturday evening, January 5, 1861, the relief expedition sailed from the harbor of New York. In the substance of the orders which the commanding officer bore to Anderson, we learn its definite strength and plan. The chartered side-wheel merchant steamship *Star of the West*, running heretofore on regular coast service to New Orleans, now bore two hundred well-instructed recruits from Fort Columbus, with arms, ammunition, and subsistence for three months, to reënforce the garrison. Anderson was directed with these to fill up his two companies, to muster the residue as a detachment, and was promised further reënforcements, if necessary. He was warned against false telegrams, and told that measures would soon be taken to enable him to correspond with the Government by sea. He was assured of the approbation of his conduct by the "highest in authority." Finally he was directed to repel and silence with his guns any fire upon Sumter or upon any vessels or tow-boats bringing him reënforcements or supplies.

Thomas to Anderson, Jan. 5, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 132.

If instructions of this tenor had been given Anderson during the weary time he had waited for



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and almost implored them, they would have served a needful purpose. That very afternoon the War Department received a dispatch from him giving notice that six days previously the insurrectionists had among other offensive preparations begun the erection of a battery on Morris Island, which it was well known would command the main ship channel, and that they had extinguished all the harbor lights except the one on Sumter itself. Considering the time which had elapsed, there remained no reasonable doubt that the vessel would encounter a dangerous fire. But coupled with this intelligence was also the expression of Anderson's confidence that he and his command were safe: "Thank God, we are now where the Government may send us additional troops at its leisure. . . We can command this harbor as long as our Government wishes to keep it." As communicating his gratitude at the improved defensive situation, and as an opinion arising out of the President's long-standing policy of non-reënforcement, the language is natural and proper. But the new and radical measures at Washington put Anderson at cross-purpose with the Cabinet régime, and to their sanguine hopes his words implied more than he perhaps intended to convey. The President had consented to the relief expedition, and General Scott and the Cabinet had hastened its departure, under the apprehension of an immediate assault on the fort. This news seemed to change the situation, and in consequence orders went from Washington to New York to countermand the sailing of the ship. It was too late, however; the *Star of the West* was already on her voyage.

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Anderson to Adjutant-General, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol I., p. 120.

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Ever since their revolutionary seizure of the forts and other Government property, the Charlestonians had vibrated with anxious uncertainty between the extremes of exultant enthusiasm and depressing panic. The telegraph was busy with almost unintermitted dispatches, but from the best sources the news was untrustworthy and contradictory. The reports and advices of their own commissioners did not seem to hold good for even twenty-four hours. Under the influence of these recurring doubts and dangers, both Governor and people had labored to make the best of their very slender military resources. With the departure of their commissioners from Washington, the hope of immediate peaceful adjustment faded away. Dispatches of warning, though often denied and explained, continued to reappear and multiply. While some pains at concealment had been taken, the half-public preparations of the expedition in New York afforded unmistakable notice to all who chose to inform themselves. Though the *Star of the West* was cleared for her regular trip to New Orleans *via* Havana, it was asserted that telegrams were sent based upon visible details of preparation, which carried to Charleston the correct notice of her destination. But the insurrectionists had an efficient sentinel on watch in the person of Secretary Thompson. He appears to have kept them fully advised of the changing moods of the President, so far as his vigilance could keep pace with them. With all his care, he was for a while deceived, and narrowly escaped leading his friends into a false security. He publicly alleges that no decision was reached in the Cabinet meeting of

New York "Tribune," Jan. 10, 1861.

January 2. The allegation is, however, distinctly denied by both the President and his colleagues. Suspected and shunned, he was kept in ignorance of the expedition, and continued to assure the Charleston conspirators of the absence of danger almost until its actual arrival. The day before that event he first learned, to his extreme mortification, that the reënforcements were at sea. He lost no time in sending a warning dispatch. As illustrating the uncertainty of this class of news, it is interesting to note that his first telegram was actually withheld and suppressed by the department messenger to whom it was intrusted. A second one was more successful, and about 5 o'clock on the evening of the 8th gave the Charleston authorities reliable information of the expedition, if, indeed, any doubt remained in their minds on that point.

Thompson to Buchanan, Curtis, "Life of Buchanan," Vol. II., p. 402.

Black, "Essays and Speeches," p. 19.

Ibid., pp. 20, 21.

At half-past one o'clock on the morning of January 9, 1861, the *Star of the West* reached the vicinity of Charleston bar. The harbor lights being out, and the buoy removed, the captain deemed it unsafe to attempt an entrance. It was near daylight before he could ascertain his exact position, and make out the light on Fort Sumter. But by this time the presence of the vessel was discovered by the rebel guard-boat stationed at the bar, which rapidly steamed away towards the city, burning rockets and blue-lights to signal to the rebel batteries and forts the arrival of the expected expedition.

With the American ensign hoisted, and the troops all sent below, leaving only the crew of the vessel on deck, the *Star of the West*, as rapidly as she

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Capt. McGowan, Report, Jan. 12, 1861. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. I., Documents, p. 21.

could, followed the retreating guard-boat up the channel. The course was directly towards Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie being about the same distance off and somewhat to the right. Morris Island, however, lay comparatively near and parallel to the channel, to the left of the ship's course. Near the northern end of this island, the officers discovered a red palmetto flag which marked the site of a battery of two 24-pound guns (though it could not be seen from the ship), the erection of which was begun nine days previously. When the vessel was within five-eighths of a mile of this flag, and keeping as near it as the channel permitted, in order to avoid the fire from Fort Moultrie, the officers were unpleasantly notified of the existence of the masked battery by a shot across the bows of the steamer. The captain, according to orders, thereupon displayed from the fore a large army garrison flag which it was hoped Anderson would recognize as a signal of succor, and that he would promptly bring his own guns into service to protect the approaching ship. The speed of the ship was increased to its full extent, while the battery continued its fire as rapidly as possible, the gunners gradually obtaining the range of the vessel.

Pickens to Schnierle, Dec. 31, 1860. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, p. 175.

Notwithstanding the fire the steamer stood onward, and though the machinery and rudder narrowly escaped several balls, and a ricochet shot struck in the fore-chains, she had passed the battery without substantial injury when a new danger presented itself. The channel now obliged her to proceed for some distance in a direct line towards Moultrie before she could bear away for Sumter. In addition to this, two steamers were

seen to start towards her from near Fort Moultrie, one of them towing what was supposed to be the lately surrendered armed revenue cutter *William Aiken*. This new risk of attack, coupled with the fact that the guns of Sumter gave them no voice of welcome or assistance, shook the courage of the captain of the vessel and the lieutenant commanding the troops, and decided them to abandon their attempt.

McGowan, Report, Jan. 12, 1861. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. I., Documents, p. 21. Also Lieutenant Woods, Report, Jan. 13, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 10. Gen. Scott, "Autobiography," Vol. II., p. 621.

It seems to be conceded upon the judgment of competent military authority that this decision was a grave error, and that the remaining chances were as favorable as those under which many a dubious military enterprise has won success. A trifle more of daring might have insured preëminent historic fame to Captain McGowan and Lieutenant Woods; but under a higher guidance than individual or even national wisdom, the *Star of the West* turned upon her course, and once more repassing the Morris Island battery in safety, grated her retreating keel over Charleston bar with the falling tides on that memorable morning of January 9, 1861.

CHAPTER VIII

ANDERSON'S TRUCE

THE general public had no means of knowing anything about the fitting out and sailing of the *Star of the West* until Monday morning, thirty-six hours after her departure. The first announcement of the fact was in the shipping news of the "Sunday Herald," in small type at the bottom of the column: "Cleared — steamship *Star of the West*, McGowan, Havana and New Orleans." The "Tribune" of Monday morning gave the current reports: "This steamer cleared on Saturday for Havana and New Orleans. Rumors were rife that she was to convey troops to Charleston, but the story was ridiculed at the office of the owners, and they requested its contradiction. Several belonging to the vessel said that she was going to Charleston, and would take on troops in the stream during the night. The freight taken was nearly all pork, beef, and pilot bread." Between the publication of this news in New York on Monday morning and the actual arrival of the ship in Charleston harbor at daylight on Wednesday, there was not sufficient time for the mails to carry the newspapers to the garrison in Sumter. Something of a panic had

New York "Tribune," Jan. 7, 1861.

prevailed, however, in Charleston, for several days previous, growing out of the commissioners' warning of the 28th that troops were on the way—sometimes it was said in the *Harriet Lane*, sometimes in the *Brooklyn;* and doubtless these rumors found their way to Sumter, and had put the garrison and officers on the *qui vive.* But of the intended or actual sailing of the *Star of the West*, neither Anderson nor his subordinates had any notice or suspicion beyond the general hope and possibility that relief might be attempted by the Government.[1]

New York "Evening Post," Jan. 5 and 7, 1861.

The meagerness of the garrison compelled the few officers to remain on watch throughout the whole of each alternate night, and at about daylight on the 9th Captain Doubleday had his flagging energies aroused by discovering from the parapet that a large steamer was actually entering the harbor. He watched her with increasing interest as she steamed up the channel, and when at length the rebel battery opened its fire upon her, all doubt vanished that this must be an expedition of relief. Anderson being still in bed, Doubleday hurried down to his room to impart the stirring news. Quickly taking the commandant's orders, he ran out, called the drummers, had the long roll beaten, and in a few minutes both men and officers were stationed at the guns. Some forty of these were by this time mounted,—"twenty-nine on the

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 86.

Ibid., pp. 102, 103.

[1] Doubleday's statement in "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 101, must be an error of memory. He says: "We had seen a statement in a Northern paper that a steamer named the *Star of the West*, which belonged to Marshall O. Roberts, was to be sent to us, under command of Captain John McGowan, with a reënforcement of several hundred men and supplies of food and ammunition; but we could not credit the rumor."

CHAP. VIII. first tier, and eleven on the barbette tier,"— and the garrison had therefore the means of opening a lively cannonade. It was an anxious moment, and could Anderson have had General Scott's orders, which the *Star of the West* was at that moment bringing, or had he even given the Buell memorandum a liberal construction, the drama of war might have opened with a different scene. As it was, overprudence lost him the occasion to do a memorable and decisive act. In the uncertainty as to what the character and purpose of the vessel might be, he restrained the eagerness of some of his officers to fire; and while they waited in breathless anxiety for the further development of the conflict, the *Star of the West* suddenly put about and retreated to sea. Had she continued to approach, there is scarcely a doubt that Anderson would have aided her with his guns. Though the Morris Island battery was out of his reach, he could have replied effectually to the fire of Moultrie; and as the vessel had already passed the former, this diversion would have vastly increased her chances of a safe landing. But it is also probable that the captain of the ship and lieutenant commanding the troops were hastened in their flight by the failure of any sign of recognition or succor from Sumter. The blame of the *fiasco*, therefore, must be divided between the two commanders: for a lack of faith and daring in one and a want of quick resolution and prompt action in the other.

The emergency had come upon Major Anderson, his officers and men so suddenly, and the whole transaction was of such short duration, that most

probably their indignation was much more intense after the departure of the steamer than during the event itself. The vessel had only been under fire some ten or fifteen minutes; and taking out of that the summons to arms and the assembling, there remained but little time to deliberate upon and decide a course of conduct which would in either case bear such weighty consequences in its train.

Major Anderson immediately called a council of war to consider the action to be taken. No palliation could be urged in extenuation of studied insult and deliberate assault on the flag of the Union, and many of the officers were eloquent in their advice of instant retaliation. It was conceded that this might with propriety have been done while the fire was in progress, but the opportune moment had been lost. Anderson himself seems to have felt that his hesitation to return the rebel fire was hardly what the country, his officers, and even his own sense of honor demanded in such a trial, and proceeded to justify himself by producing his secret instructions, and explaining how he felt himself bound by these repeated and imperative orders not to begin hostilities; and how the tenor of all the promptings of the Government since his first arrival had been uniformly to the effect that he should suffer rather than repel indignities.

Foster, Report to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Upon apparently a full discussion a final vote was taken. "Five officers were for opening fire. These contended that the flag of the United States was fired on by hostile batteries, and that their simple duty as soldiers sworn to defend the Ameri-

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can flag and the honor of their country, was to revenge this insult to both. The others, five in number, deprecated precipitate measures as closing the door to any further compromise by which the threatening civil war could be averted, and referred to the orders of the War Department for authority."

Foster, Report to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Nevertheless, this was such a flagrant outrage, that it could not be passed over in silence. Since the council had rejected instant retaliation, there remained only the expedient of demanding an explanation of the offense. Anderson therefore wrote as follows to the Governor:

> Two of your batteries fired this morning upon an unarmed vessel bearing the flag of my Government. As I have not been notified that war has been declared by South Carolina against the Government of the United States, I cannot but think that this hostile act was committed without your sanction or authority. Under that hope, and that alone, did I refrain from opening fire upon your batteries. I have the honor, therefore, respectfully to ask whether the above-mentioned act — one, I believe, without a parallel in the history of our country or of any other civilized government — was committed in obedience to your instructions, and to notify you, if it be not disclaimed, that I must regard it as an act of war, and that I shall not, after a reasonable time for the return of my messenger, permit any vessels to pass within range of the guns of my fort. In order to save, as far as in my power, the shedding of blood, I beg that you will have due notification of this my decision given to all concerned.

Anderson to Pickens, Jan. 9, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 134.

This letter reveals only too plainly the struggle which was going on in the mind of the commandant. He clearly felt that the case demanded, if not punishment, at least reparation, and that

in asking for an apology he was making the utmost concession that was possible under the circumstances, and that upon this, at least, he must insist. The language shows an absence of all haste and the indulgence of all charity which might excuse the offense, and the calm and final assertion of a course of action from which in the future he could not swerve. It proves conclusively that he appreciated how he was being pushed to the wall and that at some point he must assert his official honor. CHAP. VIII

Perhaps what had hitherto passed between himself and the Charleston magnates in their social relations led him to expect a disavowal and apology. If so he was disappointed. Governor Pickens returned an elaborate reply, reciting the secession of the State, the alleged agreement with the President, Anderson's transfer to Sumter, and the attempts to reënforce the troops, and defiantly assumed the responsibility of the attack. "Under these circumstances," he wrote, "the *Star of the West*, it is understood, this morning attempted to enter this harbor with troops on board, and having been notified that she could not enter, she was fired into. The act is perfectly justified by me. In regard to your threat in regard to vessels in the harbor, it is only necessary to say that you must judge of your own responsibilities."

Pickens to Anderson, Jan. 9, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 136.

The answer was laid before the council of war called together to hear and consider it. It would appear, however, that though this council deliberated, Anderson decided. Perhaps he had in the meantime once more conned that fatal Buell mem-

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 105.

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orandum and Floyd's surrender instructions. Unlike the Governor, he determined that he would not take the responsibility, and the same afternoon wrote the following rejoinder:

"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of to-day, and to say that, under the circumstances, I have deemed it proper to refer the whole matter to my Government, and that I intend deferring the course indicated in my note of this morning until the arrival from Washington of the instructions I may receive."

Anderson to Gov. Pickens, Jan. 9, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1860-61, p. 311.

Governor Pickens had communicated the transactions of the day to the Legislature which was in session, and which promptly voted him resolutions of approval and support. When he also reported to them this final decision of Anderson, both he and they were no doubt highly elated at the moral victory which had again very unexpectedly fallen to their lot. They had accepted the gage and risk of battle; but instead of the shot and shell they anticipated, came the notice of a welcome delay which for some days at least would prolong the period of their uninterrupted preparation, and to the same extent diminish the time during which Sumter could be made to hold out. The Governor was not slow to accord the requested permission to send a bearer of dispatches, who was on his way that same evening to carry the new aspects of the controversy to Washington. The feelings of the garrison, thus hanging in perpetual balance between peace and war, duty and expediency, disgrace and honor, perplexity and indignation, are indicated in a note from Foster: "The firing upon the *Star of the West* this morning by the batteries

on Morris Island opened the war, but Major Anderson hopes that the delay of sending to Washington may possibly prevent civil war. The hope, although a small one, may be the thread that prevents the sundering of the Union. We are none the less determined to defend ourselves to the last extremity." CHAP. VIII.

Foster to Totten, Jan. 9, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 136.

In justice to Anderson, criticism of his conduct in this affair must be definitely stated. His neglect to reply to the batteries when they fired on the *Star of the West* can readily be excused on the ground of the suddenness of the issue and short duration of the opportunity. Whether that offense demanded subsequent retaliation at his hands was again a question which, considering the peculiar attitude the Government had placed him in, he might properly enough refuse to decide, and refer to his superiors.

Whatever doubt existed in his mind was soon removed by the answer he received from the War Department. On the 16th of January, Secretary Holt wrote to him: "You rightly designate the firing into the *Star of the West* as 'an act of war,' and one which was actually committed without the slightest provocation. Had their act been perpetrated by a foreign nation it would have been your imperative duty to have resented it with the whole force of your batteries. As, however, it was the work of the government of South Carolina, which is a member of this Confederacy, and was prompted by the passions of a highly inflamed population of citizens of the United States, your forbearance to return the fire is fully approved by the President."

Holt to Anderson, Jan. 16, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 140.

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From a careful analysis of the long and complicated affair Anderson was required to deal with in Charleston harbor, the conclusion is irresistible that the conspirators expected him finally to fall a prey to their influence and wiles. They now interpreted this incident as a significant symptom that he was at least preparing to yield to that "necessity" so invitingly set forth in the surrender instructions of Floyd. They lost no time, therefore, in attempting to seize this important advantage. On the 11th of January, two days after the *Star of the West* affair, Governor Pickens sent a formal commission to Fort Sumter under a flag of truce. To give it dignity and moral force, he composed it of two of his principal State functionaries, the late Federal judge, A. G. Magrath, now calling himself Secretary of State, and General D. F. Jamison, recently president of the convention which had adjourned, assuming to be Secretary of War of the new Republic of South Carolina. In his communication to Anderson, the Governor did not omit to impress upon him the exalted rank of these envoys whom he represented as "both members of the Executive Council and of the highest position in the State." When the commandant had formally convened his council of officers, to receive and hear these distinguished messengers, he found that they bore him a written demand for the surrender of the fort, but delicately worded to avoid irritating his military susceptibilities. A simple rough order which would wound a soldier's heart had been by careful diplomatic phraseology softened until it became an instruction to urge upon Major Anderson "considerations of the gravest

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 108.

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 192.

public character, and of the deepest interest to all who deprecate the improper waste of life, to induce the delivery of Fort Sumter to the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina with a pledge on its part to account for such public property as may be in your charge." In support of this summons, Judge Magrath addressed the improvised military council — one major, three captains, one first and four second lieutenants, and an assistant surgeon. He conjured Major Anderson "to listen to the refined dictates of humanity and avoid the shedding of blood, for, if not, thousands will howl around these walls, and pull out the bricks with their fingers." He represented "that President Buchanan was in his dotage; that the Government in Washington was breaking up; that all was confusion, despair, and disorder there; and that it was full time for us to look out for our own safety; for if we refused to give up the fort, nothing could prevent the Southern troops from exterminating us. He ended this tragical statement by saying, 'May God Almighty enable you to come to a just decision.'"

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 193.

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie." Appendix, p. 179.

Foster, Report to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," p. 108.

The direct statecraft of these simple soldiers easily detected the judge's sophistry. Disloyalty was treason. Surrender was dishonor. And so they all voted, with manly and honorable constancy.

Foster, Report to the Committee on the Conduct of the War; also Crawford, p. 192.

Though Anderson felt a just indignation at the Charleston aggressions, he had constantly expressed his heartfelt desire for peace. His patriotism is the more admirable in that it sprung not from any personal combativeness, but from a deep conviction of a soldier's and citizen's obligation to his flag and country. Strong ties of kindred and society

CHAP. VIII. weighed not a feather against the requirements of law and discipline. His sword stood as a stubborn barrier at the gate of Sumter, but his sympathies overleaped it and went out to his countrymen in an earnest wish for the restoration of harmony. History may deplore his error of judgment, but it cannot refuse him the meed of a humane patriotism in the step he now took.

Refusing very properly to entertain the proposition that Sumter was a piece of property which could be "delivered," he wisely treated the Governor's letter as a simple demand for military surrender. With this demand he told the commissioners he could not comply. Anxious, nevertheless, to do something on his own part to avert hostilities, "he asked them why they did not first attempt diplomacy instead of war. He said if they would send a commission to lay their claims before the authorities at Washington, he would send another to represent the condition of the fort, and the Government could then form its own judgment, and come to some decision." The commissioners could of course say nothing else than that they would submit the proposition to the Governor. Foster's recollection of the incident is slightly different; he says the commissioners' "demand was mitigated to a proposal to send a joint commission to Washington, which was agreed to by Major Anderson." Bringing their interview to a close, they bore to the city the following written reply from Anderson:

Doubleday, "Forts Sumter and Moultrie," pp. 108, 109.

Foster, Report to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your demand for the surrender of this fort to the authorities of South Carolina, and to say in reply that the demand is one with which I cannot comply. Your Excel-



FRANCIS W. PICKENS.

lency knows that I have recently sent a messenger to Washington, and that it will be impossible for me to receive an answer to my dispatches, forwarded by him, at an earlier date than next Monday. What the character of my instructions may be I cannot foresee.

Anderson to Pickens, Jan. 11, 1861, Victor, "History of the Southern Rebellion," Vol. I., p. 253.

Should your Excellency deem fit, prior to a resort to arms, to refer this matter to Washington, it would afford me the sincerest pleasure to depute one of my officers to accompany any messenger you may deem proper to be the bearer of your demand.

This suggestion of Major Anderson was practically the tender of an armistice for the period of about two days, the time necessary to travel to Washington, with contingent results impossible to calculate. Having already, two days previously, decided against retaliation, it involved him in no additional restraint, but it placed the Government at Washington in the awkward predicament of being compelled to give virtual notice of future relief expeditions during its continuance. Whether or not this point of advantage was perceived by the insurgents, it gave them such manifest opportunities for delay that Major Anderson's truce was eagerly accepted by Governor Pickens; and Attorney-General Hayne, on the part of South Carolina, and Lieutenant Hall, on behalf of the garrison, were forthwith dispatched to Washington almost on the heels of the former messenger from the fort.

CHAPTER IX

THE MILITARY SITUATION AT CHARLESTON

UP to Christmas, squad drill and the manufacture of scaling-ladders had constituted the principal military preparation of the Charlestonians. They had provided by intrigue for the "delivery" of the arsenal, which would supply them with muskets and cartridges; of Sumter and Pinckney, where they would find an abundance of heavy guns. They did not think it possible that these intrigues could be thwarted, or these supplies diverted from their possession and use. When, therefore, Anderson's transfer to Sumter came upon them so unexpectedly, they were for the moment helpless and defenseless. Hence their haste to secure the muskets in the arsenal and the remaining guns in Pinckney and Moultrie; but even possessed of these, their occupancy was only possible through Anderson's forbearance, and the harbor was open to the entrance of any ship.

It was, therefore, with consternation that they received notice on December 31 of the change of régime and policy at Washington, of the commissioners' blunder and failure, of Holt's accession to the War Department, of his coercive purposes, and the alarming information, "We believe reënforce-

ments are on the way." It is scarcely to be supposed that Governor Pickens at Charleston, though leader of an insurrection now five days old, and a military dictator, as no other authority had up to this time ratified his acts, received the news with complacency. He was, as has already been said, a revolutionist of the true type — an unhesitating, unyielding, radical leader. Inaugurated on the 17th of December, he had signalized almost every day of his incumbency by some act of revolutionary hardihood. With the ink of his official oath as Governor of South Carolina and a citizen of the United States scarcely dry, he had, on the 17th, written his letter demanding Fort Sumter of President Buchanan; on the 18th, ordered and equipped the harbor guard-boat; on the 20th, officially told Caleb Cushing there was no hope for the Union; on the 27th, occupied Moultrie and Pinckney; and on the 30th, taken possession of the arsenal.

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Gov. Pickens, Message, Nov. 5, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," pp. 31, 32.

The other leaders of the insurrection were equally profuse of words, but much more cautious and tardy in acts. The chairman, calling the convention to order, had indeed said, "In the outset of this movement I can offer you no better motto than Danton's at the commencement of the French revolution, 'To dare! and again to dare! and without end to dare!'" But with such dramatic quotations on their lips, they were not in headlong haste to thrust their necks into the halter. They coolly tabled a number of belligerent resolutions, including even the Governor's letter notifying them that he had occupied the abandoned forts, perhaps justifying themselves in this latter instance by his reassuring phrase,

"Journal of the Convention of South Carolina," 1860–61, p. 5.

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Pickens to Jamison, Dec. 28, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 252.

"I hope there is no immediate danger of further aggression for the present." The Legislature, in still greater apparent confidence, had taken a holiday adjournment.

The threatening news came to the Governor by telegraph late at night December 31, 1860. They relied so confidently upon intrigue, upon the "negotiation" which the commissioners had gone to Washington to conduct, and especially upon the President's doctrine of non-coercion and policy of non-action, that this new turn of affairs took them as much by surprise as Anderson's movement a few days previous. There was an instantaneous flutter in the military dove-cote. The Governor was ignorant of war, but equally a stranger to fear. At midnight of the expiring year he was busy giving orders about troops, supplies, batteries, bridges, guns. Pinckney and Moultrie were to be defended, merlons raised to protect five heavy guns bearing on Maffitt's channel, temporary bridges constructed to secure a retreat, if necessary, from Sullivan's Island. A battery was as soon as possible to be raised on Sullivan's Island beyond Fort Moultrie, out of the range of the guns of Sumter; and another battery on Morris Island, also beyond the guns of Sumter, was to be erected immediately by Major Stevens of the Citadel Academy, with a detachment of forty cadets. Fort Johnson was to be occupied, and all communication with Sumter, except mails, to be cut off. Major-General Schnierle was directed to carry out these details, and to call into requisition and counsel the valuable aid and coöperation of Brigadier-General Simons.

Simons to Pickens, "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, pp. 174–77. Compare, also, pp. 198, 222, and 250 in explanation of certain errors of date.

In the excitement and panic which followed next day, even the convention was made to realize the necessity for prompt action. That body spent New Year's Day, from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M., in secret debate. The principal result of this long session was to confirm the dictatorship the Governor had now for five days been exercising without law. The ambitious republic, which professed itself so jealous of State and individual rights that it could not endure the grinding Federal despotism, was only eleven days old; and yet it was already driven to this melancholy makeshift:

Convention Proceedings. Charleston "Courier," Jan. 3, 1861.

Resolved, That whenever in the course of the struggle into which the State now seems likely to be drawn, hostilities may be waged or threatened against the city of Charleston or its neighborhood, and the Governor (upon consultation with the Executive Council) may deem the measure necessary, the Governor is hereby authorized to declare and enforce martial law, in whole or in part, in and over Charleston, its harbor, and neighboring villages; all the adjacent islands, including Morris Island, and all other places within five miles of the court-house; to remove thence all persons whose presence he shall consider detrimental to the public service; to prevent the ingress of such persons; to regulate, at discretion, all travel to and forth, and otherwise to govern as in a camp: Provided, that such authority shall be at all times subject to be limited, controlled, or revoked by this convention, or by the General Assembly.

"Journal of the Convention," p. 154.

Brigadier-General James Simons, upon whom a share of the responsibility of the military defense was thrust in so unlooked for and sudden a manner, was a man of candor and courage. Nothing short of these qualities could have induced him, in that hour of shams and atmosphere of bravado, bluntly to tell the Governor unpalatable truths,

CHAP. IX. which he laid before him forthwith, in all their startling significance. Late in the evening of January 1, he wrote him the following report:

GOVERNOR: I have carefully considered the orders extended to me by the major-general, which emanated from your headquarters yesterday, and the plan of military operations and line of defense therein set forth. I cannot sacrifice, to matter of etiquette, questions and issues of such momentous importance as now surround us. I feel it to be my duty to report to you my opinion of the military movements which have been initiated.

First. The line of operations embraces four points:

1. Fort Moultrie.
2. Castle Pinckney.
3. Fort Johnson.
4. Morris Island.

By the map which accompanies these papers it will appear that your lines of communication with these, as at present established, are directly within the range and effective power of Fort Sumter—the citadel of the harbor—controlling every point. At the first return fire from Fort Sumter your lines of communication are utterly cut off with every single post, except, perhaps, Castle Pinckney. Let me simply observe, that you are indebted to the forbearance of the enemy for the liberty of transporting the reënforcements and supplies, which you ordered at midnight, and which are to be sent this day at 2 o'clock to your battery, now in course of erection on Morris Island. A single gun from Fort Sumter would sink your transport and destroy your troops and supplies. These lines of communication are the prime consideration of a general. It is vain to say others will be adopted. It is enough that they do not exist now; and, when the present resources fail, your troops will be wholly isolated, and cut off from each other and the main.

Second. Fort Moultrie:

This post is wholly untenable. Lieutenant-Colonel De Saussure, a brave officer, gave you prompt notice of this

fact on the morning after his occupation. His report, this morning, shows you the irrefragable proof of his first report, after nearly a week's occupation of the post. Moreover, he asks for supplies, which he applied to you for on the 30th ultimo. He urges me to supply these wants at the earliest practicable moment. Suppose he has them, however, there is probably not a single man out of the whole force which he carried down who ever loaded a siege gun, or, perhaps, ever handled a single gun of heavy caliber, munition, or implement mentioned in the report. I know, and state as a fact, that there is no ordnance force in his whole command. His post must, even under the most favorable circumstances, fall to the enemy after a very short and bloody contest.

Suppose they evacuate the post, where will they intrench themselves? Shall they resort to the sand-hills? If the enemy be reënforced by 250 United States artillery, as is reported, he can land 200 men under the guns of Fort Moultrie, and attack Lieutenant-Colonel De Saussure's command—an unequal contest between disciplined veteran troops, commanded by educated and experienced officers, and raw militia who never saw battle.

In the event of discomfiture to these brave young men, how can they make good their retreat from these sand-hills? Will it be said, There will be a causeway to the mainland, or other communication? The answer is: The communication does not exist now, and the issue will be upon us in less than thirty hours.

Third. Fort Johnson:

This post is garrisoned by light infantry or rifles, who never handled a heavy gun, if there be such gun, or any munitions in the dilapidated post they now occupy. At any rate, a few shells from the enemy at Fort Sumter will compel them to retire from their position.

Fourth. Morris Island Battery:

Suppose it completed, which it is not, nor will be in thirty hours. The armament is three 24-pounders. The force is the corps of cadets from the citadel, and a corps of rifles; and these to be reënforced by two more corps of

CHAP. IX. rifles, not one man of whom, probably, ever saw a 24-pounder manipulated or fired.

When the *Harriet Lane* approaches, bows on, the battery may fire a shot or two; never having been tried — the powder, the guns, or the range — it is not even problematical whether they will strike the enemy. She will steam by at fourteen knots per hour, and in fifteen minutes the reënforcements will be landed under the cannon of Fort Sumter.

Why, then, all this preparation and expense, if the work cannot but terminate in disastrous failure?

Suppose, however, the enemy be reënforced, and not fire a gun in reply to the Morris Island battery. He can demolish our other posts when he pleases from one of the most impregnable fortresses in the world, and so our posts live at his will, and remain in our possession at his sufferance.

Suppose, however, we succeed in preventing reënforcements from entering our harbor. This will not prevent the United States Government from enforcing their revenue, for this can be done outside the bar, by a war steamer, as well as inside by the *Harriet Lane*.

Suppose, however, all your plans succeed, and Fort Sumter were in our possession, how would we raise the blockade of the war steamers outside?

If the *Harriet Lane* is not fired into the preparations are unnecessary; and if she is fired into we have commenced open war.

I ask your perusal of the report of Colonel Gwynn to me, this morning. I have no transport at hand to send him, and have so notified him.

I feel it to be my duty, under all the circumstances above mentioned, to express my conviction of the inexpediency of commencing actual hostilities, on our side, in our present wholly unprepared state, with raw, undisciplined troops, without equipments, munitions, or proper arms required to work armaments that need the highest skill and training; nothing but bloody discomfiture must attend the opening campaign.

You will now require me, after this review, to offer a better plan.

Deferentially and with great diffidence, I recommend that a skilled and educated military man be selected for Major-General-in-Chief, to command all the troops, and that he should establish a plan of operations. Meanwhile I would recommend that amplification of the Ordnance and Engineer departments be ordered, and the more effective organization of the Commissariat and Quartermasters' departments.

With great respect, I pray your Excellency, at this moment of great peril, to take into consideration what has been herein submitted, and to lay the matter speedily before a council of war, in accordance with the custom of armies engaged in active operations.

Simons to Pickens, Jan. 1, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, pp. 177–79.

No comment could add to the force and point of the report of General Simons, which showed that on January 1, 1861, the Charleston insurrection was as weak and defenseless as a new-born infant. Officially announced two months before, it had during that whole time consisted of little else than bluster and intrigue. Governor Pickens was stung to the quick by this covert reflection on his own rashness, and replied in a letter next day, defending his course with such excuses as were a virtual acknowledgment of the truths which had been told.

Your extraordinary report I received last night, and have only to say that I do not pretend that the orders and disposition of forces in Charleston harbor are at all perfect or beyond the criticism of military rule. . . It was well known, and sadly felt, as you state, that our troops were raw and inexperienced; but under all the circumstances I had no alternative left but to do what has been done. And if we are to occupy no place because our troops are raw and inexperienced, then we will have to abandon the State, for the same reason, if forces that are regular are ordered to invade it. We calculated that if we were weak, so were our enemies to a certain extent. Their regular force is not strong enough to admit of im-

CHAP. IX.

mediate division or transfer. They would be compelled to call for volunteers also, in the progress of events, and, with the feeling in the country, there would be great difficulty in this operation. The question was, not whether we could maintain our position in Charleston harbor, with the certainty of assistance and reënforcements being thrown in immediately, but whether, in the present peculiar state of the country, and with a weak garrison as to numbers, who are incapable of being divided, or any detachment being sent out from it to occupy any post their guns might drive us from — whether under all these circumstances we were capable of maintaining our position for the present, so as to prevent reënforcements, and to sustain the direct and urgent request from our commissioners at Washington, hoping that every day might change events, so as to enable us to protect the State in the attitude she has assumed of immediate independence.

Pickens to Simons, Jan. 2, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, pp. 180, 182.

Notwithstanding this protest, General Simons found his immediate justification for having bluntly told the truth. An ordnance board to whom the report was submitted "concurred in the positions assumed, together with the conclusion thence deduced," and General Schnierle having suddenly fallen ill, the Governor was compelled to order General Simons to assume command of all the forces and defenses of the harbor.

Nevertheless the Governor maintained his stubbornness in appearance if not in reality. The expected expedition did not come as first announced, and Secretary Thompson had notified him of its permanent postponement. Under this inspiriting "change of events" Governor Pickens made the following indorsement on the report of the ordnance board January 3, 1861: "The board concur in the military positions assumed by General Simons, together with the conclusions thence de-

duced, but leave the council of war to the discretion of myself. 'The conclusions' of that report I consider would be to order troops from Fort Moultrie and Sullivan's Island and Pinckney, and so abandon the attempt to keep out reënforcements, and, in fact, to yield without a struggle every point, and thus break down the spirit of our people, and cover our cause with imbecility and probable ruin. I shall do no such thing, nor shall I yield to any council of war that may drive me to such 'conclusions.'"

Pickens, Indorsement, Jan. 3, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, p. 180.

Such was the self-confessed weakness of the conspiracy at this juncture, which a few months later grew to a continental war. A single armed ship and five hundred recruits, backed by a Presidential will, would manifestly have seriously crippled and might perhaps have effectually crushed this local insurrection.

Major Anderson had not failed to report the movement of the insurgents to construct the battery on Morris Island. "Several steamers have been running to and fro," he wrote, "and this afternoon about eighty soldiers with wheelbarrows, barrels, etc., and some draught horses were landed on Morris Island. They are evidently constructing a battery or batteries there. The lights in the harbor were put out last night." But under the President's conciliation policy he did not feel himself at liberty to interfere with these offensive preparations. Pushed ahead by the unresting will of Governor Pickens, built by the superabundant supply of slave labor, and superintended by the bookish science of Major Stevens and his forty boyish Citadel Academy cadets, this battery was

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 120.

CHAP. IX. able, on January 9, to give the *Star of the West* the warm reception she encountered and to thwart the expedition of relief.

That the insurgent victory was due rather to accident than to juvenile gunnery mattered little to the jubilant conspirators. The daring of Governor Pickens was justified, the spirit of the people was roused, the opening campaign a success, and the cause generally enveloped in a halo of cheap glory. If a detachment of boys could work this wonder in nine days, might not a united and continued effort capture Sumter? No doubt reasoning of this kind dictated Governor Pickens's defiant reply to Anderson; but it also did more. The *Star of the West* had scarcely shown her heels to the Citadel Academy cadets, when the Governor sat down and wrote the following order to his best three engineer officers: "You are ordered to come together immediately, and consider and report the most favorable plan for operating upon Fort Sumter, so as to reduce that fortress, by batteries or other means in our possession; and for this consultation you are authorized to have with you Colonel Manigault, the State ordnance officer."

Pickens to Col. Gwynn, Col. White, and Col. Trapier, Jan. 9, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, p. 208.

The engineer board entered with alacrity into the Governor's views, and on the following day (January 10, 1861) presented him their report, and submitted a plan which they pronounced feasible. The details of that plan with its mortar batteries on Sullivan's Island, at Fort Johnson, at Cummings Point; its heavy gun batteries on Moultrie; the blocking of all entrances to the harbor except Maffitt's channel, and the protection of that entrance by a heavy gun battery, so as to secure as a final

and crowning agency "the slow (but sure) process of starvation," have but little interest for the general reader. It is enough that they considered the plan effective. "We are unanimously and decidedly of the opinion that—discarding all other methods of attack upon that fortress (whether by surprise, by open assault, or by stratagem) as uncertain in their results, and as, even if successful, involving probably much sacrifice of life—our dependence and sole reliance must be upon batteries of heavy ordnance, at least until a deep impression has been made upon the garrison, in its *morale* as well as in its physique, by an incessant bombardment and cannonade of many hours' duration. When this impression shall have been made, and a demand for a surrender refused, we are of opinion that, with its battlements mutilated, its embrasures beaten in, and its garrison weakened by casualties and disheartened by surrounding circumstances, this strong fortress would fall, with comparative ease, before an assaulting party."

Engineers' Report, Jan. 10, 1861. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, pp. 182, 183.

There can be no doubt that the Governor was highly pleased with the report. In the following autumn, he had the perhaps pardonable vanity to inform the Legislature, in an opening message, that his order originated it, and that "upon that plan the batteries were erected which finally did reduce" Sumter. If any doubt arose in his own mind as to the efficacy of this plan it sprung from the question of a single but vital element of success—time. These batteries, these heavy guns, these ponderous mortars, these immense stores of shot and shell, could not be called up by a magician's wand. This patient drill, this long cannonade, and perhaps

Pickens, Message. "South Carolina House Journal," 1861, pp. 32, 33.

CHAP. IX. this tedious process of starvation — would nothing occur during its slow lapse?

At the opportune moment, the very day following this report, came, as the result of the Magrath and Jamison mission to the fort, already recited in the last chapter, the proposal of the commandant "to refer this matter to Washington." In full view of the military situation as Governor Pickens then clearly understood it, and the need of time to perfect arrangements, it is no wonder he eagerly accepted Major Anderson's truce, or that in ten days from that time both the major and Captain Foster reported to the War Department the blocking of the main ship channel by hulks, the erection of extensive batteries, the increased energy and superior work of the insurgents, and, in short, the practical isolation and siege of Fort Sumter.[1]

[1] Anderson to Holt, Jan. 21, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 143. Foster to Totten, Jan. 14, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 138, 139; also Jan. 21, 1861. Ibid., pp. 146-48.

CHAPTER X

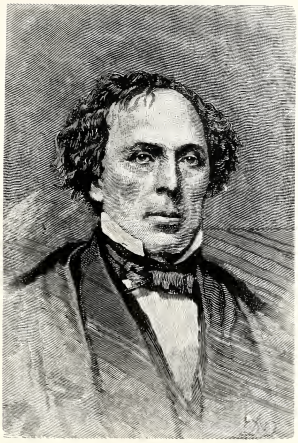
THE NATIONAL DEFENSE

THE conspirators had good reason to sound the note of alarm and show symptoms of dismay at the beginning of the Cabinet régime on December 31, 1860. Henceforth the sway they had exercised over President Buchanan would be to a great extent lost to them. Hitherto, not alone in shaping a policy of non-coercion, and preventing reënforcements, but in numerous minor matters as well, the complicity of Cobb, Floyd, and Thompson had enabled them to turn the varied agencies of the Government against its own life; while active caucuses to inaugurate rebellion had been going on in at least three of the executive departments at Washington.

Floyd, especially, lost no opportunity to favor the conspirators. He sold the Virginia Board of Army Commissioners 5000 muskets; delivered 10,000 others from the Watervliet arsenal, New York, to an agent of South Carolina; and still 5000 others from the Baton Rouge arsenal to the Governor of Alabama. He ordered advanced quotas of arms to a number of Southern States. He sent a Government inspector to inspect a purchase of arms for the Governor of Mississippi. He

CHAP. X. allowed Virginia to have a model musket made at the Springfield armory; to use and take copies of Government patterns, drawings, machines, tools, etc., at Springfield and Harper's Ferry; and arranged to have the Washington navy yard manufacture a battery of howitzers and a lot of fuses for the same State. He furnished Senator Yulee a list of army appointees from Florida. He sent Colonel Hardee to drill and review a camp of instruction for Governor Letcher, of Virginia, and a little later gave him leave of absence practically to go into the service of the rebellion under the State of Georgia. He acquiesced in the acceptance of a militia volunteer guard to surround and ostensibly protect the Charleston arsenal, which guard, acting, doubtless, upon the original design, soon seized and held it for South Carolina. On the day of the Charleston secession ordinance (December 20), without the knowledge of the President, he ordered the transfer from the Pittsburgh arsenal to the Southern coast, where they might be readily seized, of 123 cannon — this on the pretense of arming the fort at Ship Island, not yet completed, and the fort at Galveston, not yet begun. In this latter enterprise, however, he overshot his mark. Columbiads and 32-pounders cannot be secretly moved, and before the order was many days old the President received emphatic telegraphic protests against it from prominent Pittsburgh citizens — a warning from his own State he did not feel at liberty to disregard.

While Floyd, openly professing loyalty, was thus covertly playing into the hands of secession, his two colleagues were similarly busy. Thompson



GENERAL JOHN B. FLOYD.

deemed it consistent with his government duties to go personally to Raleigh as a commissioner of the State of Mississippi to induce the State of North Carolina to secede, and a few days later to publish an open letter in the same behalf. Cobb had likewise employed his official time in writing a six-column secession address, finished and dated two days before his resignation, and printed a few days after.

Dec. 6, 1860. "Washington Constitution." Dec. 13, 1860.

Under the new dispensation these practices instantly came to an end. For the moment Mr. Buchanan was in a patriotic mood, and, under the urgent solicitations of Black, Holt, and Stanton, yielded consent to a number of measures he had for two months obstinately resisted. For the first time since his arrival in Washington, General Scott was permitted to notify commanders of forts and garrisons to be on the alert against surprise; and though this admonition came too late to inspirit and reassure many a wavering officer, it had the direct effect of saving one of the most important military posts in the Gulf. Reënforcements were resolved upon. The policy of defending the national capital was, on Holt's proposal, discussed and adopted. At least one member of the Cabinet placed himself in confidential communication with the leading Republicans and Unionists in Congress, and counsel and warning in behalf of the Government were freely interchanged and faithfully observed. Secessionists began to leave the departments, and conspirators no longer exclusively patrolled the corridors and antechambers of the Executive Mansion. Loyal men might again grasp the President's hand, and by cheering words nerve his feeble courage and despairing faith.

CHAP. X. Preëminent in his opportunities and services at this critical juncture was the new Secretary of War *ad interim*, Joseph Holt, of Kentucky. He had been a lifelong Democrat and a stubborn partisan. As Postmaster-General, and in the earlier phases of the disaffection, he had perhaps been negligent in submitting without more active protest to the absurd doctrine of non-coercion; but now, placed at the head of the War Department, and fully roused to the designs of the conspiracy, he made the most of the remaining opportunities for defense. Under his administration, the War Department was no longer a bureau of insurrection. Plots and plans of arsenals and forts, and reports of their armament and supplies, were refused to conspiring Members and Senators. The issue of advance quotas of arms to disloyal governors was discontinued. The practice of selling Government arms was abandoned. Floyd's order to send the Pittsburgh cannon south was promptly countermanded. The military precautions of General Scott were adopted, and as rapidly as possible carried out. Above all, his moderate firmness in guiding the weak and vacillating will of President Buchanan was most opportune. It was soon put to the test. One of Mr. Holt's first acts was to revoke a piece of gross favoritism which Floyd had ordered to please a prominent secession Senator. The Senator flew into a rage, and wrote a curt note to the President asking if this was with his approbation.

The President, undecided as usual, sent for Mr. Holt, and on his entering the Executive chamber handed him the note. Holt read it in his presence, and immediately said: "Mr. President, I think we

have had enough of this sort of thing. This sounds altogether too much like the crack of the slave-driver's whip. It is a piece of absolute insolence in him to ask such a question. Of course, I understand that everything I do is by your authority—every act I do and every order I give is for you alone and not for myself. I am but your agent and officer, and exercise no power or authority of my own whatever. This is a note which he had no right to address to you." CHAP. X.

"Certainly," said Mr. Buchanan, "I think so too, and I will say so to him."

"Mr. President," replied Holt, "I must ask you to do more. I must ask you to address him a note saying without explanation that this is your own order. For, Mr. President, you know it is that or it is nothing." Holt, Conversation, J. G. N. Personal Memoranda. MS.

Mr. Buchanan did it;[1] and thereafter there was one fire-eater less haunting the Presidential antechambers.

Braced up by such resolute advice, the President held tolerably firm, and the Cabinet régime was gradually consolidated. It formed originally only a minority of the Cabinet, Black, Holt, and Stanton; Toucey, though loyal, being scarcely a positive factor in such emergencies. The affair of the *Star of the West* disclosed the active treachery of Thompson, and drove him out (January 8), no successor being nominated for the Interior Department to 1861.

[1] "With every sentiment of personal friendship and regard, I am obliged to say, in answer to your note of Sunday, that I have full confidence in the Secretary of War; and his acts, in the line of his duty, are my own acts, for which I am responsible."—President Buchanan to Slidell, January 29, 1861. Curtis, "Life of Buchanan," Vol. II., p. 445, note.

CHAP. X. the end of the Presidential term. The imperative representations of New York capitalists to Mr. Buchanan, that they would furnish the Government no more money unless he would consent to put a loyal Secretary in the Treasury Department,[1] also brought about the resignation (on January 9) of Philip F. Thomas, Cobb's successor, a decided, though more quiet, secessionist. On
1861. January 11 the Union element received a strong and valuable accession in the appointment of John A. Dix, of New York, as Secretary of the Treasury. He had been a reactionary Democrat, and had publicly justified the discontent of the South as late
1860. as December 15.[2] Since that date, however, the

[1] "At length the President was given to understand distinctly that not one dollar would be forthcoming from the banks and financial institutions of the metropolis until he should have placed in his Cabinet men on whom the friends of the Government and the Union could depend. The argument is one to which administrations are compelled to yield. The President asked what would satisfy them; and at a meeting of our leading men, held at the Bank of Commerce, it was decided to require of him, as a condition to their support, the appointment of General Dix to a Cabinet position. The understanding among the gentlemen present was that the position should be that of Secretary of the Treasury. . . On the evening of Tuesday, January 8, my father received a dispatch from the President, asking him to come at once to the White House. He went immediately, and was offered the War Department. This he declined, informing Mr. Buchanan, as had been agreed upon, that at that moment he could be of no service to him in any position except that of the Treasury Department, and that he would accept no other post. The President asked for time. The following day he had Mr. Thomas's resignation in his hands, and sent General Dix's name to the Senate; it was instantly confirmed."—Morgan Dix, "Memoirs of John A. Dix," Vol. I., p. 362.

[2] "Resolved, That while we deplore the existing excitement in the Southern States, we do not hesitate to say that there is just ground for it. But we earnestly entreat our Southern brethren to abstain from hasty and inconsiderate action," etc., etc. —Resolutions of a public meeting signed by John A. Dix and many others. Morgan Dix, Vol. I., p. 360.

Charleston secession ordinance, the Sumter incident, and the firing on the *Star of the West* had awakened him to a truer perception of the crisis. Henceforth he knew but one duty,—to oppose rebellion,—and as Secretary of the Treasury he lent his earnest zeal to the service of the Union. A few weeks later he gave utterance to the most stirring battle-cry of this exciting period, telegraphing to one of his revenue officials: "If any one attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot."[1]

Dix to Hemphill Jones, Jan. 29, 1861.

We have already seen how the Cabinet régime planned and dispatched the expedition in the *Star of the West*. Acting under the assumption of success, the President had, on January 3, nominated a new collector for Charleston harbor, a citizen of

1861.

[1] "I decided when I wrote the order to say nothing to the President about it. I was satisfied that, if he was consulted, he would not permit it to be sent. Though indignant at the course of the Southern States and the men about him who had betrayed his confidence,— Cobb, Floyd, and others,— one leading idea had taken possession of his mind, that in the civil contest which threatened to break out, the North must not shed the first drop of blood. This idea is the key to his submission to much which should have been met with prompt and vigorous resistance. . . . I said nothing to the President in regard to it, though he was with me every evening, until Friday, when the members of the Cabinet were all assembled, and the President was about to call our attention to the business of the day. I said to him, 'Mr. President, I fear we have lost some more of our revenue-cutters.' 'Ah!' said he, 'how is that?' I then told him what had occurred down to the receipt of the dispatch from Mr. Jones informing me that Captain Breshwood refused to obey my order. 'Well,' said he, 'what did you do?' I then repeated to him, slowly and distinctly, the order I had sent. When I came to the words 'Shoot him on the spot,' he started suddenly, and said, with a good deal of emotion, 'Did you write that?' 'No, sir,' I said, 'I did not write it, but I telegraphed it.' He made no answer; nor do I remember that he ever referred to it afterward. It was manifest, as I had pre-supposed, that the order would never have been given if I had consulted him."—John A. Dix to Mrs. Blodgett, March 31, 1865. Morgan Dix, Vol. I., pp. 372-3.

CHAP. X.

Pennsylvania, "prepared at every personal risk to do his duty." It was a praiseworthy assertion of authority, and remains a valuable precedent, though by the failure of the expedition his confirmation was rendered useless. Three ships of war were ordered to Pensacola to protect the navy yard there, and a little later a company of regulars was dispatched in the sloop-of-war *Brooklyn* to reënforce Fort Pickens at the same place; an expedition which connects itself with other episodes to be more particularly noticed hereafter.

Ex-Secretary Toucey, Testimony before the Hale Committee, Nov. 18, 1861.

General Scott had vainly urged upon Floyd the reënforcement of the two great national forts at the extreme southern point of Florida. "There is only a feeble company at Key West," he wrote, "for the defense of Fort Taylor, and not a soldier in Fort Jefferson to resist a handful of fillibusters or a row-boat of pirates." Repeated to the new Cabinet, this suggestion was quickly heeded. "By the aid of Secretary Holt (a strong and loyal man) I obtained permission [January 4] to send succor to the feeble garrison of Fort Taylor, Key West, and at the same time a company—Major Arnold's from Boston—to occupy Fort Jefferson, Tortugas Island. If this company had been three days later, the fort would have been pre-occupied by Floridians. It is known the rebels had their eyes upon those powerful forts, which govern the commerce of the Mexican Gulf as Gibraltar and Malta govern that of the Mediterranean. With forts Jefferson and Taylor, the rebels might have purchased an early European recognition."

Gen. Scott to Floyd, Dec. 28, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 112.

1861.

Gen. Scott in the "National Intelligencer," Oct. 21, 1862.

With the rising excitement came multiplied calls for military protection. The superintendent of the

arsenal at Harper's Ferry wrote that he had reason to apprehend an assault. A picked company of sixty-eight men was immediately ordered there from Carlisle Barracks. So, too, in consequence of various warnings, a company of recruits was sent to reënforce Fort McHenry, at Baltimore; others to Fort Delaware; and defensive preparations were begun at Fort Monroe.

Tidings also came of insurrectionary designs upon the arsenal at St. Louis, Missouri. Recognizing at once the value of early precaution in that quarter, the officer commanding the Department of the West received from General Scott very explicit orders on the 26th of January. That important depot contained at the time 60,000 stands of improved arms, one and a half millions of ball cartridges, and 90,000 pounds of powder, several field-pieces and siege-guns, and various supplies, all entirely unprotected. The officer in immediate charge was, there is reason to suspect, then meditating its surrender to the conspiring State authorities. Obeying the urgent instructions of the General-in-Chief, General Harney rapidly concentrated troops, until, by the 19th of February, there were nearly five hundred men, regulars and recruits, at the arsenal. Among these, it is interesting to note, were Captain Nathaniel Lyon and his company. His presence proved invaluable in insuring its final safety; and a few months later he rendered conspicuous service to the Union in the unfolding drama of civil war.

Thomas, Assistant Adjutant-General, to Gen. Harney, Jan 26, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., Series III., p. 69.

Gen. Frost to Gov. Jackson, Jan. 24, 1861. James Peckham, "Life of Lyon," p. 43.

Williams to Lyon, Jan. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., Series III., p. 76.

More important, however, than any of the foregoing were certain combined measures to secure the peace and safety of Washington city, namely,

CHAP. X. the enlistment and organization of the volunteer militia of the District of Columbia, the concentration at the national capital of all the regular troops which could be spared, and the appointment of a Congressional Committee of Investigation. In the early days of January, 1861, there was universal excitement and alarm in Washington. The conspiracy had already made gigantic strides, and popular apprehension outstripped it. The signs of revolution were multiplying. The rash action of South Carolina had become contagious. States were seceding. Delegations were retiring from Congress with ostentation. Forts, arsenals, and custom-houses in the South were being seized. Army and navy officers, of Southern birth and kinship, were resigning to join the rebellion. On the other hand, these movements produced their inevitable counterpart in an eager awakening, an increased vigilance, and a sterner patriotic determination among the people of the Northern States.

The national capital was the natural focus of all this excitement. Here were the representatives of the whole land; daily Congressional debates; nightly caucuses of both parties; an unusual congregation of prominent politicians to seek or render information; Rumor with her busy tongue, and Intrigue with her secret mask. On the whole, Washington was loyal from prudence and interest, but disloyal through personal association and the attraction of social influence. For many years the cotton magnates had given the political tone in Congress, while their wives and daughters held sway in society. For the moment, the capital seemed to lean towards

secession. Truculent harangues in Congress were applauded from the well-filled galleries, and the most daring of the fire-eaters were feasted and flattered. So strong was the Southern drift of local sentiment, that the Federal city began to be confidently looked upon by the conspirators as the prospective capital of a Southern confederacy.[1] Nothing seemed wanting to the early consummation of such a scheme but the secession of Virginia and Maryland, of which the signs were becoming only too abundant. And reasoning from this to plausible consequences, the coolest heads began to fear a popular outbreak to seize upon the buildings and archives of the Government, and, as a final result, forcibly to prevent the inauguration of the President-elect.

Such was the state of things when the Cabinet régime came into power, and this danger formed the subject of their earlier discussions. The President affected not to share these apprehensions. Nevertheless he acknowledged his duty and purpose to preserve the peace, and authorized the necessary precautions. On the 9th of January, Colonel Charles P. Stone, chosen for that duty by General Scott, submitted a memorandum in which he sketched a plan for the defense of Washington, which was adopted, and under which Colonel Stone

Buchanan, Special Message, Jan. 8, 1861. Holt, Report, Feb. 18, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., Series III., p. 399.

[1] The cue for this kind of talk had been given by Iverson, of Georgia, in a speech in the Senate, December 11, 1860, which was greeted by "laughter and applause in the galleries":

"But, sir, so far as the District of Columbia is concerned, I want to say to the people here in all kindness, that if Maryland secedes from the Union and joins us, as she ought to do in my humble conception, and a Southern confederacy be formed, of all the slave States, I see no reason why Washington City should not be continued the capital of the Southern confederacy," etc., etc. —"Globe," December 11, 1860, p. 51.

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was appointed inspector-general and ordered to organize and drill the militia of the District of Columbia. This duty he faithfully discharged, and on the 5th of February following reported the existence of some fourteen volunteer companies, constituting a total of 925 men, "which can be at once called into service"; adding also, "the number of volunteers for service can be doubled within seven days, with proper facilities." These volunteers distinctly avowed Union sentiments, and enlisted to serve and defend the Government. Colonel Stone fully depended upon them; and their enrollment gave great support to the sentiment of loyalty in the community.

Stone, Report, Feb. 5, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., Series III., p. 36.

Not underrating either the moral or military aid of raw levies of militia, General Scott was nevertheless too experienced a soldier to rely exclusively upon them in an emergency. He therefore obtained the President's consent to concentrate at the capital available regular forces to the number of eight companies, a total of about 480 men, comprising four companies of artillery acting as infantry, three companies of horse artillery or flying artillery, and a company of sappers and miners, "very superior soldiers," from West Point, ordinarily employed there to illustrate practical engineering. It was a difficult matter to scrape together this little force, even for so vital a service. There were threats and dangers in all directions. "I was opposed to stripping the sea-board so extensively of troops as it has been stripped of them. I did not think it was necessary," said the general, though "these troops were not drawn off from any exposed frontier. . . I have brought three companies from Kansas. One com-

Gen. Scott, Testimony before the Select Committee of Five. House Report, No. 79. 2d Session, 36th Congress, p. 70.

Ibid., p. 61.

pany has been brought from Plattsburgh in the State of New York. A company that was driven out of the arsenal at Baton Rouge will be here. . . A company from the arsenal at Augusta, Georgia, . . . and we bring two companies from West Point, making eight companies in all." With these regulars the general felt secure. "I regarded the local militia as insufficient to meet any serious danger," said he. "Under a shower of brickbats and stones you can rarely prevent militia from firing. You cannot prevent any new troops from doing so, whether you call them regulars or militia. I do not like to deal in important cases with men who cannot be relied upon to stand and wait for orders," whereas with these companies he thought he could "perhaps go through scenes of extreme peril and not fire a gun or shed a drop of blood." CHAP. X. Gen. Scott, Testimony before the Select Committee of Five, House Report, No. 79, 2d Session, 36th Congress, pp. 64 and 70.

Edwin M. Stanton, appointed Attorney-General on the 20th of December, was, with his ardent and positive nature, one of the most energetic and uncompromising Unionists in the Cabinet. For him, the expulsion of Floyd, the reënforcement of Sumter, and the other military precautions hastily ordered were not sufficient. Chafing under the President's painful tardiness, he turned to Congress as a means for exposing and thwarting the intrigues of the conspirators. His presence in the Cabinet at the date of the South Carolina secession, the Sumter transfer, the commissioners' visit, and his prominent participation in affairs since the Cabinet crisis, had unveiled to him the most searching official and confidential view possible to be obtained. He realized fully how narrowly the President had escaped the disgrace of ordering 1860.

CHAP. X. Anderson back to Moultrie, and how seriously he had compromised his dignity and the authority of the nation in even unofficially receiving the rebel commissioners. He evidently had no abiding faith in the President's firmness. Sacrificing his party attachments to the paramount demands of national safety, he now placed himself in confidential correspondence with Republican leaders in Congress, giving and receiving advice as to the best means of preserving the Government.

1861. The 8th day of January, being a patriotic anniversary, was chosen by Mr. Buchanan to address Congress in the special message heretofore quoted, transmitted to that body on the 9th. As before, it contained a characteristic mixture of true and false logic, of hopeful assertion of purpose, and of shirking excuse. Declaring in one breath his intention to "collect the public revenues and protect the public property," he avowed in the next a virtual abdication of all power and duty, commending the existing "revolution" to Congress, and asserting: "On them, and on them alone, rests the re-

1860. sponsibility." In his annual message (December 3) he had advocated the recognition and protection of property in slaves "in all the common Territories throughout their territorial existence." From this extreme Southern demand he now so far receded as to recommend a compromise "by letting the North have exclusive control of the territory above a certain line, and to give Southern institutions protection below that line."

This state paper is cited here to notice another point. It submitted, without comment, the late correspondence between the President and the

rebel commissioners.[1] No sooner had this special message been read in the House than Mr. Howard, of Michigan, arose and offered a resolution to appoint a committee of five to make immediate inquiry "whether any executive officer of the United States has been or is now treating or holding communication with any person or persons concerning the surrender of any forts, fortresses, or public property of the United States. . . Whether any officer of this Government has at any time entered into any pledge, agreement, or understanding with any person or persons not to send any reënforcements to the forts of the United States in the harbor of Charleston," etc. Sundry other energetic investigations were also included.

"Globe," Jan. 9, 1861, p. 295.

Such proposals are ordinarily mere partisan manœuvres, but this one had a deeper significance. Confidence in Mr. Buchanan was utterly gone; and this resolution, so pointedly questioning the President's dealings with treason, was immediately passed by more than a two-thirds vote—Republicans, Douglas Democrats, and Southern conservatives uniting in its support, showing the most hopeful reaction against the conspiracy yet manifested by either House of Congress. The Committee was appointed, and Mr. Howard, an able and prudent man, made chairman. He has left us an interesting history of its origin and purpose. "That Committee was raised at the request of loyal members of the Cabinet. The resolutions came from them, and were placed in my hands

[1] Excepting the commissioners' final rejoinder, which the President had refused to receive; but Jefferson Davis had supplied this document in the Senate debate, as already stated.

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with a request that I would offer them, and thus become, if they should pass, chairman of the Committee. At first I refused to assume so fearful a responsibility. But, being urged to do so by Members and Senators, I at last consented, on condition that the Speaker would allow me to nominate two members of the Committee. I selected Mr. Dawes, of Massachusetts, and Mr. Reynolds, of New York. Mr. Reynolds was elected as a Democrat, but he was true as steel and a good lawyer. I do not know that Mr. Stanton wrote the resolutions creating the Committee. I did not see him write them. I never heard him say he wrote them. It would be easier, however, to persuade me that Mr. Jefferson did not write the Declaration of Independence than that Mr. Stanton did not write those resolutions."

Howard to Attorney-General Hoar, Feb. 7, 1870. Cited in the "Atlantic," Oct., 1870, p. 467.

With this Committee Mr. Stanton, and perhaps other members of the Cabinet, continued in confidential relation and coöperation.[1] This has been characterized as disrespect and treachery to their

[1] "In regard to February, 1861, I need only say that at the time the secession leaders were all in the Senate and House, with power enough, and only wanting an excuse to get up a resistance in the capital to the declaration of Mr. Lincoln's election and to his inauguration; in other words, to have excuse and opportunity to open the civil war here before the new Administration and new Congress could be in authority to subdue it. I desired to avoid giving them that advantage. I conferred throughout with General Scott, and Mr. Stanton, then in Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet. I presume I conversed with others in a way that seemed to me best calculated to leave the inauguration of a war to the secessionists, and to delay it, in any case, until the new Administration should be in possession of the Government. . . On the 22d of February, in concert with Mr. Stanton, I caused the United States flag to be displayed throughout all the northern and western portions of the United States."—William H. Seward to Schouler, June 13, 1867. William Schouler, "Massachusetts in the Civil War," Vol. I., pp. 41, 42.

chief; but in the face of Mr. Buchanan's repeated neglect, and avowed impotence to resist open insurrection, the act seems laudable. Thus organized and informed, the Howard Committee became a committee of safety and observation, quite as much as of investigation. Its labors took a wide range, and after the lapse of some weeks it submitted five different reports. A majority of its members recommended: 1. A bill to call forth the whole militia to defend and recover forts and other Government property. 2. A bill to close insurrectionary ports. 3. A resolution to censure Secretary Toucey for having precipitately accepted resignations of navy officers; the report also strongly criticizing his failure to call home the navy to put down insurrection. 4. A resolution declaring the President had no power to negotiate with the rebel commissioners—the report declaring that "with full knowledge that the authority of the Government has been set at defiance, its dignity insulted, and its flag dishonored, he yet negotiates with treason and commits the Government to a partial recognition of the revolutionary movement for its destruction." A final report by the chairman also ably refutes the President's theories concerning secession, declaring: "Nor can there be any heed given to any one of the false and deceitful issues attempted to be raised, such as coercing a State—making war upon a State. All these pleas are fallacious, deceitful, and false, if not traitorous." CHAP. X.

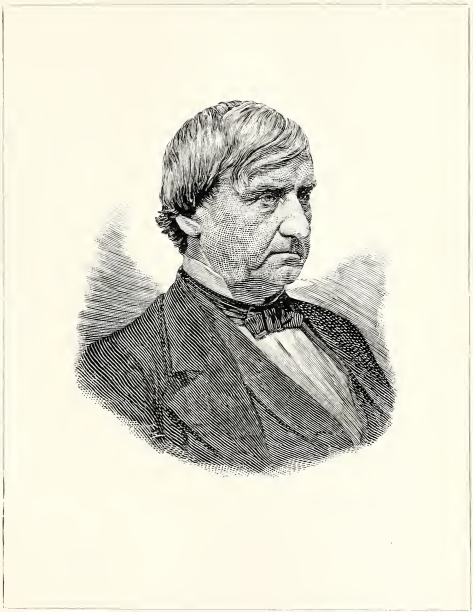
Towards the end of January the Committee had, by an additional resolution, been directed to investigate the rumored plot to seize the capital. After examining many and prominent witnesses they re- 1861.

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ported (February 14) that they had found no substantial proof of such a combination, though the project had been frequently discussed. This investigation and report had a twofold effect. It quieted the apprehensions of the timid, at the same time that it afforded a warning to mischief-makers that the authorities were alert and that such an enterprise would be extremely hazardous.

Could the events of the next three months have been foreseen the testimony elicited would have been more critically scanned and the witnesses more thoroughly examined. Though the plot against Washington and any intent to resist the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln were stoutly denied, there were ample admissions of the public uneasiness, of the widespread disaffection to the Government, of the existence of a belief and hope in the speedy establishment of a Southern confederacy, of significant talk in prominent quarters of buying the public buildings for its use, of military organizations in Baltimore and the country towns of Maryland, of caucuses to precipitate secession there, and of a determination to initiate it by such a pressure upon Governor Hicks of that State, hitherto firmly loyal, as would compel him to convene its Legislature. In fact, the precise condition of things which bred the Baltimore riots in the following April is already clearly portrayed in this testimony taken in January.

While the Howard Committee was yet pursuing its investigations, and as the day for counting the Presidential vote approached, General Scott requested permission from the Secretary of War to bring several additional companies of regulars



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from Fort Monroe to be replaced by recruits. This would augment his regulars to some seven hundred men, which, with the police and the militia, he deemed sufficient for all contingencies. Before the day arrived a confidential arrangement of signals was communicated to the officers, the regular troops being placed under command of Colonel Harvey Brown. General instructions were issued also, in strict confidence, and to officers alone. The militia were charged with the care of the various bridges of the Potomac; the regulars were already stationed at convenient points in the city, and minute orders were given. "The several companies and detachments will have their arms and accouterments so arranged that, by day or night, each man can at once seize his own." The harness and guns were to be ready for prompt service. In case of alarm, every man was to proceed instantly to a designated place: the artillery to their stables; the infantry to their parade grounds; while mounted messengers were ready to convey news to, and orders from, the General-in-Chief.

Gen. Scott to the Secretary of War, Jan. 24, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., Series III., p. 67.

Gen. Scott to Gov. Morgan, Jan. 17, 1861. Ibid., p. 51.

Col. Brown to his officers, Feb. 11, 1861. MS.

Lorenzo Thomas, Assistant Adjutant-General, general instructions, Feb. 12, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., Series III., p. 80.

Happily no alarm occurred. On the 13th of February, an unusually large and brilliant throng filled the galleries of the House of Representatives to witness the proceedings of the Presidential count. Vice-President Breckinridge, one of the defeated candidates, presided over the joint convention of the two Houses; Senator Douglas, another, was on the floor, and moved to dispense with certain tedious routine. The sealed returns of the electoral votes, cast by the chosen colleges of the several States on the 5th of December, were opened and registered. The tellers officially declared the

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CHAP. X. result already known, viz.: That Lincoln had received 180 votes; Breckinridge, 72; Bell, 39; Douglas, 12. Vice-President Breckinridge thereupon announced that "Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, having received a majority of the whole number of electoral votes, is elected President of the United States for four years commencing the 4th of March, 1861."

"Globe," Feb. 13, 1861, pp. 893, 894.

Elsewhere we have shown that Mr. Lincoln was the indisputable choice of the American people in the Presidential election of 1860, for the reason that if the whole voting strength of the three opposing parties had been united upon a single candidate, Lincoln would nevertheless have been chosen with only a trifling diminution of his electoral majority. In the proceedings narrated above has been set forth the complementary fact that his election progressed through every stage of legal procedure, verification, and attestation, recognized and unchallenged, until at its close the principal opposing candidate himself presided over the final inquest and formality, and by official proclamation became the witness of Lincoln's complete constitutional and legal right to exercise the powers and duties of the Presidential office.

With the official count of the electoral votes thus safely and peacefully completed, the next point of possible danger was the inauguration; and Secretary Holt and General Scott wisely determined to keep all available troops in Washington, in order that that public ceremonial might also be accomplished without disturbance, and with its usual simple pageantry. To the secessionists the presence of this slight military force

had been from the first the occasion of angry objection. "Here, sir," said De Jarnette in the House of Representatives on the 10th of January, "in sight of her [Virginia's] own blue hills, in sight of the tomb of Washington, is this ungrateful son [General Scott] planning his campaign and planting his batteries for her subjugation." "I suggest," said Hindman, on the day of the Presidential count, "that the same committee [the committee to wait on the President-elect] be directed to inform General Scott that there is no further need for his janizaries about the Capitol, the votes being counted and the result proclaimed." The next day, February 14, Mr. Branch, member of the Select Committee of Five, offered a resolution declaring the quartering of troops around the Capitol "impolitic and offensive," and that they ought to be removed. Mr. Burnett, of Kentucky, had, on February 11, offered an amendment asking the President "the reasons that have induced him to assemble a large number of troops in this city, and why they are kept here." The amendment passed the House, and being sent to President Buchanan, was by him referred to the Secretary of War. Mr. Holt replied, on the 18th of February, in a long and vigorous report to the President, telling the plotters against the Government more salutary truth about the secession movement than they had been accustomed to hear from the Executive Department.

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"Globe," Feb. 14, 1861, p. 913.

Ibid., Feb. 11, 1861, p. 855.

Its history is a history of surprises and treacheries and ruthless spoliations. The forts of the United States have been captured and garrisoned, and hostile flags unfurled upon their ramparts. Its arsenals have been

CHAP. X. seized, and the vast amount of public arms they contained appropriated to the use of the captors, while more than half a million of dollars found in the mint at New Orleans has been unscrupulously applied to replenish the coffers of Louisiana. Officers in command of revenue cutters of the United States have been prevailed on to violate their trust and surrender the property in their charge, and instead of being branded for their crimes, they and the vessels they betrayed have been cordially received into the service of the seceded States. These movements were attended by yet more discouraging indications of immorality. It was generally believed that this revolution was guided and urged on by men occupying the highest positions in the public service, and who, with the responsibilities of an oath to support the Constitution still resting upon their consciences, did not hesitate secretly to plan and openly to labor for the dismemberment of the republic whose honors they enjoyed and upon whose treasury they were living. . .

At what time the armed occupation of Washington City became a part of the revolutionary programme is not certainly known. . . The earnest endeavors made by men known to be devoted to the revolution, to hurry Virginia and Maryland out of the Union, were regarded as preparatory steps for the subjugation of Washington. . . Superadded to these proofs were the oft-repeated declarations of men in high political positions here, and who were known to have intimate affiliations with the revolution, if, indeed, they did not hold its reins in their hands, to the effect that Mr. Lincoln would not or should not be inaugurated at Washington. . . Impressed by these circumstances and considerations, I earnestly besought you to allow the concentration at this city of a sufficient military force to preserve the public peace from all the dangers that seemed to threaten it. . .

To those, if such there be, who desire the destruction of the republic, the presence of these troops is necessarily offensive; but those who sincerely love our institutions cannot fail to rejoice that by this timely precaution they have possibly escaped the deep dishonor which they must have suffered had the capital, like the forts

and arsenals of the South, fallen into the hands of revolutionists, who have found this great Government weak only because, in the exhaustless beneficence of its spirit, it has refused to strike, even in its own defense, lest it should be the aggressor.

Holt to Buchanan, Feb. 18, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., Series III., pp. 399–401.

But Mr. Buchanan's nerves were too weak for such a healthy response to Mr. Burnett's resolution, and though Mr. Holt, on February 20, wrote him a private note, asking that his report should be allowed to reach the country "simply as the views entertained by the War Department," even this request was not granted by the timid President, who substituted for it a very mild special message, the transmittal of which he delayed till Saturday, March 2, and Mr. Holt's report did not come to the public until specially called for by a House resolution of July 27, 1861.

Curtis, "Life of Buchanan," Vol. II., pp. 492, 493.

Ibid., p. 494.

Meanwhile Representative Daniel E. Sickles, of New York, had offered a resolution providing for celebrating Washington's birthday in the Hall of Representatives, which the House passed, after changing it by an amendment to recommend to the people of the United States to keep the 22d of February as a national holiday. Secretary Holt and General Scott naturally took advantage of the occasion to make a military display, which they specially desired for its political influence, being determined to show plotting secessionists as much of the pomp and circumstance of war as their very slender resources in soldiers would allow. A grand parade of flying artillery, of infantry, of the marine corps, of every scrap and detachment in the city was therefore arranged. On the afternoon of the 21st Secretary Holt issued the necessary orders therefor.

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Ex-President Tyler was at this time in Washington in attendance on the Peace Convention, of which we shall speak hereafter, and was making himself officious in spying out and thwarting military demonstrations in support of the Government; and he now hurried to the Executive Mansion to protest against this parade. About 8 o'clock that night Secretary Holt was surprised to receive a visit from President Buchanan, who, after some casual talk, formally requested his Secretary of War to revoke the orders to the Federal troops to join in the following day's celebration. Holt expressed his unfeigned regret. "However," said he, "you are the Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, and your wishes in the matter must be obeyed. But I greatly fear that the notices have been printed, and that it will be impossible to recall them; nevertheless, I will do all I can to that end."

The revocation was duly communicated to the officers, but could not reach the public, for, as Holt explained, the notices had been printed; and on
1861. the morning of the 22d the streets of Washington showed an unusual degree of activity. The feverish state of the public mind, the notice of the parade, and the prompt appearance on the streets of companies of the District militia, whose movements the President's order did not affect, drew out a large concourse of people.

Secretary Holt was sitting at his desk in the War Department about 10 or 11 o'clock in the forenoon conversing with the President, who had come to him on some business, when Mr. Sickles, the author of the House resolution for the observance of Washington's birthday, brushing unceremoniously past the ushers, rushed into the room and said: "Mr. President, there are ten thousand people out on the streets of Washington to-day to see the parade which was announced, and I have just heard that it has been countermanded, and the report is exciting great indignation; I came to ask whether it is true, and if so whether the parade may not yet be carried out." The President, by this time ashamed of what he had done, turned to Secretary Holt and said to him: "Mr. Secretary, can't you get up this parade?" Mr. Holt promised to try, and hurried to General Scott with the new direction, who was, as might have been expected, also indignant. "What can we do at this late hour?" asked he. "The officers have gone home, and the men are probably scattered." "Well," said Holt, "do the very best you can, and let us make all the display possible." In the afternoon the parade, though diminished in proportions, took place, the column marching past the Executive Mansion, where Buchanan, Scott, Holt, and so much of the Cabinet as still remained loyal appeared and received the marching salute. An official record of the incident might have been lost to history had not Mr. Buchanan on the same day felt it necessary to write a formal note to Tyler, excusing himself for changing his mind and his

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Holt, Conversation, J. G. N. Personal Memoranda. MS.

CHAP. X. orders, and apologizing for having permitted the army and navy to carry the flag of the Union through the streets of the national capital on Washington's birthday.[1]

1 THE PRESIDENT TO MR. TYLER.

"WASHINGTON,
"February 22, 1861.

"MY DEAR SIR: I find it impossible to prevent two or three companies of the Federal troops here from joining in the procession to-day with the volunteers of the District, without giving serious offense to the tens of thousands of the people who have assembled to witness the parade. The day is the anniversary of Washington's birth,— a festive occasion throughout the land,— and it has been particularly marked by the House of Representatives. These troops everywhere else join such processions, in honor of the birthday of the Father of his country, and it would be hard to assign a good reason why they should be excluded from this privilege in the capital founded by himself. They are here simply as a *posse comitatus* to aid the civil authority in case of need. Besides, the programme was published in the 'National Intelligencer' of this morning without my knowledge.

"From your friend,
"Very respectfully,
"JAMES BUCHANAN."

[Curtis, "Life of Buchanan," Vol. II., p. 495.]

CHAPTER XI

THE SUMTER AND PICKENS TRUCE

HAVING briefly grouped together the more important measures of defense adopted by the Cabinet régime, we must recapitulate the events already described, namely: the firing on the *Star of the West* and her retreat; Anderson's threat of retaliation and his failure to keep it; Governor Pickens's demand for the surrender of Sumter and Anderson's refusal; Anderson's proposal to refer the question to Washington and the Governor's acceptance; and finally the departure of the two messengers, who arrived in Washington on the evening of January 13. The *Star of the West* had returned to New York; and the commander of the unfortunate expedition was on the same day writing his official report.

Colonel I. W. Hayne, the Governor's envoy, called on President Buchanan on the following day, the 14th. The President, doubtless already fully informed by Anderson's messenger, appears to have made no difficulty about receiving him in an "informal and unofficial" interview; he declined, however, to hold any conversation with him, and insisted that their transactions must be in writing. Colonel Hayne thereupon gave him notice that he "bore a

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letter from the Governor of South Carolina in regard to the occupation of Fort Sumter," and that he would deliver it the next day.

Hayne to Buchanan, Jan. 31, 1861. House Report, No. 91. Select Committee of Five. 2d Session, 36th Congress, p. 64.

Remembering the advantage he had hitherto derived from his tone of audacity, Governor Pickens persevered in the use of this favorite and usually successful weapon. "I have determined to send to you the Hon. I. W. Hayne, the Attorney-General of South Carolina, and have instructed him to demand the delivery of Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston to the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina. The demand I have made of Major Anderson, and which I now make of you, is suggested because of my earnest desire to avoid the bloodshed which a persistence in your attempt to retain possession of that fort will cause and which will be unavailing to secure to you that possession." Such was the language of the Governor's letter to the President, adding at the close that South Carolina would account for the value of the fort. It had been the unremitting effort of the conspirators to reduce the controversy to a question of dollars and cents, and in this they were much encouraged by the language of the President himself, who in his reply to the rebel commissioners had placed his action on no higher grounds than that it was his "duty to defend Fort Sumter as a portion of the public property of the United States."

Pickens to Buchanan, Jan. 12, 1861. Ibid., p. 70.

Buchanan to the Commissioners, Dec. 31, 1860. W. R. Vol. I., p. 118.

Meanwhile the occurrences at Charleston and Hayne's mission had been the subject of a conference by the Senators from the Cotton States yet in Washington. Not anticipating a reënforcement of Sumter, but trusting in the peaceful consummation of their scheme of secession, they had determined,

in a caucus on January 5, "that the States should go out at once and provide for an early organization of a confederate government not later than 15th February," while they themselves proposed to remain in Congress until the 4th of March to "keep the hands of Mr. Buchanan tied," and defeat hostile legislation. But events were crowding them. They had not entirely succeeded in keeping "the hands of Mr. Buchanan tied." Reënforcement had been attempted despite their vigilance and intrigue. A second effort might succeed. Thompson had been driven out of the Cabinet. And now Governor Pickens's rashness was about to precipitate hostilities and rouse the North. They sent a messenger to Colonel Hayne to remonstrate against this hot haste, which might expose their web of conspiracy to the shock of sudden war. They desired delay until they could consult more fully, and devise further means to "keep the hands of Mr. Buchanan tied."

Yulee to Finigan, Jan. 7, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 443.

Hayne to Buchanan, Jan. 31, 1861. House Report, No. 91. 2d Session, 36th Congress, pp. 64, 65.

Colonel Hayne, having readily joined in their scheme, did not deliver the Governor's letter to the President as he had appointed. Instead thereof, and on the same day, ten of the Senators from the States of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, and Texas prepared an open letter to Colonel Hayne. In diplomatic phrases they requested him to delay the delivery of the Governor's letter to the President. They had assurances, they said, that Sumter was held with no hostile or unfriendly purpose, but "merely as property of the United States." "We represent States," they continued, "which have already seceded from the United States, or will have done so before the 1st of February next, and

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which will meet your State in convention on or before the 15th of that month. Our people feel that they have a common destiny with your people, and expect to form with them, in that convention, a new confederation and provisional government. We must and will share your fortunes—suffering with you the evils of war, if it cannot be avoided, and enjoying with you the blessings of peace if it can be preserved. . . We therefore trust that an arrangement will be agreed upon between you and the President, at least till the 15th of February next, by which time your and our States may in convention devise a wise, just, and peaceable solution of existing difficulties. . . If not clothed with power to make such an arrangement, then we trust that you will submit our suggestions to the Governor of your State for his instructions. Until you have received and communicated his response to the President, of course your State will not attack Fort Sumter, and the President will not offer to reënforce it."

Wigfall and others to Hayne, Jan. 15, 1861. House Report, No. 91. 2d Session, 36th Congress, p. 58.

This letter was written on January 15, and to give an air of deliberation and dignity to a correspondence invented purely for the purpose of consuming time, two days were allowed to elapse for its pretended consideration. On the 17th Colonel Hayne prepared a reply. "I am not clothed with power to make the arrangement you suggest," he wrote, "but provided you can get assurances with which you are entirely satisfied, that no reënforcements will be sent to Fort Sumter in the interval, and that public peace will not be disturbed by any act of hostility towards South Carolina, I will refer your communication to the authorities. . . If your

proposition is acceded to you may assure the President that no attack will be made on Fort Sumter until a response from the Governor of South Carolina has been received and communicated to him."

Hayne to Wigfall and others, Jan. 17, 1861. House Report, No. 91. 2d Session, 36th Congress, p. 60.

A plain evidence that this whole correspondence was nothing but a scheme of delay is afforded in the fact that it took these Senators two days more (until January 19) to write a note of half a dozen lines, submitting it to the President, and asking its consideration. Mr. Buchanan fell easily into the trap of dilatory diplomacy. Though undoubtedly bound by Anderson's truce of the 12th, of which he received notice on the 13th, he could, according to its terms, have ended it by a return messenger to Charleston. The Cabinet was apparently in a mood to send a second relief expedition and reënforce Sumter at all hazards; for Secretary Black in a forcible letter of inquiry to General Scott asked on January 16:

What obstacles exist to prevent the sending of such reënforcements at any time when it may be necessary to do so? . . . Major Anderson has a position so nearly impregnable that an attack upon him at present is wholly improbable and he is supplied with provisions which will last him very well for two months.

In the meantime Fort Sumter is invested on every side by the avowedly hostile forces of South Carolina. It is in a state of siege. . . If the troops remain in Fort Sumter without any change in their condition, and the hostile attitude of South Carolina remains as it is now, the question of Major Anderson's surrender is one of time only. . . The authorities of South Carolina are improving every moment, and increasing their ability to prevent reënforcement every hour, while every day that rises sees us with a power diminished to send in the requisite relief. . . I am persuaded that the difficulty of relieving Major Anderson has been very much magnified

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to the minds of some persons. . . The *Star of the West* did pass the battery and did overcome the difficulties of the navigation, meeting with no serious trouble from either cause. They have tried it; we can say *probatum est;* and there is an end of the controversy. I am convinced that a pirate, or a slaver, or a smuggler who could be assured of making five hundred dollars by going into the harbor in the face of all the dangers which now threaten a vessel bearing the American flag, would laugh them to scorn. . . Would the South Carolinians dare to fire upon any vessel which Major Anderson would tell them beforehand must be permitted to pass on pain of his guns being opened upon her assailants? But suppose it impossible for an unarmed vessel to pass the battery, what is the difficulty of sending the *Brooklyn* or the *Macedonian* in? . . . I admit that the state of things may be somewhat worse now than they were a week ago, and are probably getting worse every day; but is not that the strongest reason that can be given for taking time by the forelock?

Black to Gen. Scott, Jan. 16, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 140–142.

Clearly Secretary Black was in an altogether different frame of mind from that in which, as Attorney-General, he penned his famous opinion on coercion. If the current of events had educated him into a logic so faultless and an enthusiasm so eager, it is fair to assume that the patriotic Holt, the belligerent Dix, and the impulsive Stanton entertained substantially identical views. Unfortunately the contemporary records are very meager. There is a dispatch from Holt to Anderson of the same date with the letter quoted above. He is told that he rightly designates the firing into the *Star of the West* as an "act of war," without provocation. That his "forbearance to return the fire is fully approved by the President. . . Your late dispatches, as well as the very intelligent statement of Lieutenant Talbot, have relieved the Govern-

ment of the apprehensions previously entertained for your safety. In consequence it is not its purpose at present to reënforce you. The attempt to do so would no doubt be attended by a collision of arms and the effusion of blood — a national calamity which the President is most anxious if possible to avoid. . . Whenever, in your judgment, additional supplies or reënforcements are necessary for your safety, or for a successful defense of the fort, you will at once communicate the fact to this department, and a prompt and vigorous effort will be made to forward them."

Holt to Anderson, Jan. 16, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 140.

This was perhaps as little as could in magnanimity be said to a brave and conscientious commander; on the other hand it was doubtless all that could be obtained from a President once more taking counsel of his fears instead of his duty.

Printed in Curtis, "Life of Buchanan," Vol. II., pp. 452-454.

We learn from Mr. Buchanan's own memorandum that, on the afternoon of this same 16th of January, Senator Clement C. Clay, of Alabama, called upon him on behalf of the seceding Senators, and, after some general talk about Fort Sumter, turned the conversation upon Major Anderson's truce. Premising that there was a truce agreed upon so long as Colonel Hayne was there (to which the President assented), Clay went on to say that the Senators wanted Hayne "to remain a few days and submit a proposition to the Government of South Carolina to agree that Major Anderson should be placed in his former position," and that the truce "might be extended until the meeting at Milledgeville, or even till the 4th of March." Mr. Buchanan replied in substance that he could consider no proposition unless it were in writing, that he would not with-

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The correspondence between the Senators and Colonel Hayne was sent to the President. Two more days were lost in considering and discussing it, and on January 22 he instructed Mr. Holt to reply: "The President has no authority to enter into such an agreement or understanding; as an executive officer he is simply bound to protect the public property, so far as this may be practicable, and it would be a manifest violation of his duty to place himself under engagements that he would not perform this duty either for an indefinite or a limited period. At the present moment it is not deemed necessary to reënforce Major Anderson, because he makes no such request, and feels

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quite secure in his position. Should his safety, however, require reënforcements, every effort will be made to supply them. In regard to an assurance from the President 'that the public peace will not be disturbed by any act of hostility towards South Carolina,' the answer will readily occur to yourselves. To Congress and to Congress alone belongs the power to make war, and it would be an act of usurpation for the Executive to give any assurance that Congress would not exercise this power, however strongly he may be convinced that no such intention exists."

Holt to Fitzpatrick, Mallory, and Slidell, Jan. 22, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 150.

Both parties could derive comfort from this reply: the President that he had rejected the suggested arrangement "until the 15th of February"; the Senatorial cabal that he had practically granted it by entertaining their mediation, in disavowing any present intention to reënforce Sumter, and in tacitly adopting and indefinitely prolonging Anderson's truce. Neither are we to forget the undercurrent of interviews, solicitations, and private manipulations which were again working upon the scanty courage of President Buchanan. The scheme of dilatory diplomacy was succeeding. The month of January was rapidly slipping by during this parade of etiquette, this interchange of request and refusal, this bandying of theory and argument. Meantime the tide of rebellion was rising day by day. Batteries were building at Charleston; forts were being seized by order of the Governors of the Cotton States; the South was becoming a vast camp; a rebellious military league was preparing to unite in provisional government at Montgomery, Alabama.

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The Senatorial cabal took care to continue and prolong the correspondence. They sent Mr. Holt's letter to Colonel Hayne, and he in turn went through the dumb show of referring it to Charleston. This communication, he said, was far from satisfactory. But since they expressed their confidence that Sumter would not be reënforced, nor the public peace disturbed, he would still withhold the Governor's letter, "and refer the whole matter to the authorities of South Carolina."

Hayne to Wigfall and others, Jan. 24, 1861. House Report, No. 91, 2d Session, 36th Congress, p. 63.

Pending the reference, we must notice another episode which now combined itself with this Senatorial intrigue. One of the most important naval and military stations of the United States was that of Pensacola, Florida. Here was a large and valuable navy yard; near it, on the main land, Fort Barrancas, built for a garrison of 250 men, but occupied by only a nominal garrison of 46 men under Lieutenant Adam J. Slemmer; Fort McRae, built for a war garrison of 650 men, but occupied by a single ordnance-sergeant; and on Santa Rosa Island, immediately opposite, Fort Pickens, built for a garrison of 1260 men, entirely empty. These were all strong and defensible works, and among the first whose occupation was originally recommended by General Scott (October 29, 1860). Hence, when under the Cabinet régime he received permission to act, he wrote to Lieutenant Slemmer (January 3): "The General-in-Chief directs that you take measures to do the utmost in your power to prevent the seizure of either of the forts in Pensacola Harbor by surprise or assault—consulting first with the commander of the navy yard, who will probably have received instructions to coöperate

with you." Secretary Toucey sent a similar order to Commodore Armstrong, in command of the navy yard. CHAP. XI.

These orders arrived on the 9th, Lieutenant Slemmer, young, ardent, and patriotic, immediately called upon Armstrong, who, having served his country half a century, was slow from age and infirmity, and indifferent through the influence of two or three of his disloyal subordinate officers. Nevertheless the lifelong habits of strict discipline and the peremptory instructions just received, induced him to place the steamer *Wyandotte*, of six guns, and the storeship *Supply*, as also thirty ordinary seamen from the yard, at the service of the lieutenant. With this help Slemmer now repeated the strategy of Anderson. Spiking the guns and destroying the remaining powder in Forts Barrancas and McRae, he transferred his command, with all available supplies, to Fort Pickens, on Santa Rosa Island. The 9th, the 10th, and the 11th of January were occupied in this work, and the transfer was substantially completed, notwithstanding the efforts of the two or three subordinate officers of the navy yard, who were in complicity with the rebels, to delay and thwart the movement. 1861.

Lieutenant Slemmer was not a moment too quick. The Florida Convention passed an ordinance of secession on the 10th, and two days afterwards a regiment of Florida and Alabama volunteers, headed by two commissioners, under authority of the Governor of Florida, appeared at the navy-yard gate and demanded its surrender. There were a few hasty formalities, Commodore

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House Report, No. 87, 2d Session, 36th Congress. Also Slemmer Report, Feb. 5, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 334–342.

Armstrong first managing to destroy his signal books. Then the flag was hauled down, and the navy yard, as well as the marine hospital and the two abandoned forts, were occupied by the rebels. Slemmer's promptness, however, had saved Fort Pickens and the two ships.

A considerable rebel force was shortly afterwards concentrated to take it; but its leader, Colonel Chase, was a former engineer officer, and had himself built the fort. Knowing its strength he explained that he would not risk an assault upon it with less than five thousand men, and submitted to an imputation of cowardice, with which he was taunted at a council of war, rather than make a futile attack.

The prompt and gallant course of Lieutenant Slemmer was like a little gleam of sunshine in the overshadowing gloom of defection and treason in the South. The telegraph was already in the hands of the rebels, and the news only reached Washington after a lapse of some days, and then through private channels. Secretary Toucey had indeed, in anticipation of danger, ordered several ships to Pensacola—the *St. Louis*, of twenty guns, from Vera Cruz, on December 24; the *Macedonian*, of twenty-two guns, from Portsmouth, on January 5; the *Sabine*, of fifty guns, from Vera Cruz, on January 9. But none of these arrived in time. It was now determined to send immediate reënforcements to Slemmer to enable him to hold Fort Pickens. The *Brooklyn*, which returned to Norfolk after her useless mission of succor to the *Star of the West*, was therefore ordered to take on board a company of regulars from Fort Monroe, under command

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 214.

Ex-Secretary Toucey, Testimony before the Hale Committee, Nov. 18, 1861. Senate Report, No. 37, 2d Session, 37th Congress, p. 234.

of Captain Vogdes, of the artillery, and proceed on this errand. The orders were issued on the 21st, and she sailed from Hampton Roads on the 24th of January.

Thomas to Dimick and Vogdes, Jan. 21, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 351, 352.

At this juncture the antagonistic sentiments of loyalty and treason were convulsing the Legislature of Virginia, then in extra session at Richmond. Among other temporizing expedients, that body appointed ex-President John Tyler and Judge John Robertson commissioners to procure promises from the general Government on one hand, and the seceding States on the other, to abstain "from any and all acts calculated to produce a collision of arms," during a certain Peace Convention of the States, proposed and urged by Virginia, of which we shall speak in a future chapter. On this mission Mr. Tyler reached Washington and held an interview with Mr. Buchanan on the 24th of January. He found him in a mood of mixed despondency and stubbornness. He said "he could give no pledges; that it was his duty to enforce the laws, and the whole power rested with Congress. He complained that the South had not treated him properly; that they had made unnecessary demonstrations by seizing unprotected arsenals and forts, and thus perpetrated acts of useless bravado, which had quite as well been left alone." But the ex-President talked him into a more complaisant humor. The States, he said, would account for the public property they had seized. This and other arguments soothed Mr. Buchanan; he promised to refer Tyler's mission to Congress, with a strong recommendation to that body to "avoid the passage of any hostile legislation." Mr. Tyler was

Vogdes to Thomas, Jan. 31, 1861. Ibid., p. 356.

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Tyler to Gov. Letcher, "National Intelligencer," Feb. 4, 1861.

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quick to note the impression he had made. "A moment's reflection satisfied me that if the message contained the recommendation to Congress to abstain from hostile legislation, I was at liberty to infer a similar determination on his part of a state of quietude."

Tyler to Letcher, "National Intelligencer," Feb. 4, 1861.

On the following day Mr. Tyler was chatting familiarly with Secretary Black and Attorney-General Stanton, who were making him a call of ceremony, when a dispatch was handed him that the *Brooklyn* had sailed with troops from Norfolk. He handed the dispatch to his visitors, but they at once became discreetly non-committal. "I am attached to the law department," said Stanton, "and not in the way of knowing anything about it." Secretary Black said, "he had heard and believed that the *Brooklyn* had sailed with some troops, but he did not know when she sailed, or to what point she was destined." But the ex-President was not to be put off. He wrote a hurried note to Mr. Buchanan, asking to be informed "on what day the *Brooklyn* received her orders, on what day she sailed, and whether she has recruits for any Southern port, and if so, for which?" His persistent inquisitiveness was only partially satisfied. At midnight he received a note in reply, in which Mr. Buchanan told him that her orders were issued on the Monday or Tuesday preceding; that "she goes on an errand of mercy and relief," and that "her movements are in no way connected with South Carolina." All of which information Tyler transmitted by telegraph next morning to his co-commissioner Judge Robertson, at Charleston.

Tyler to Buchanan, Jan. 25, 1861. "National Intelligencer," Feb. 4, 1861.

Buchanan to Tyler, Jan. 25, 1861. Ibid.

This much being known it was easy enough to divine the destination of the *Brooklyn*. Her orders, however, were still a subject of uncertainty. The ships long since ordered to Pensacola were arriving. Together the forces began to assume formidable proportions. "The fleet before Fort Pickens could upon an emergency have thrown five or six hundred men into the fort without including the company from Fort Monroe." Might not the *Brooklyn* carry instructions to Lieutenant Slemmer, or some other officer of known energy, to assume the offensive, and retake or destroy the navy yard and the two strong forts on the mainland? It was a critical moment for the revolting States. Now, if ever, they needed a few weeks of undisturbed consolidation. Even the impetuous Governor of South Carolina was clamorous for quiet and for speedy organization. "Urge Mississippi," he wrote to his commissioner, "to send delegates to the Montgomery meeting of States at as early a day as possible—say 4th February—to form immediately a strong provisional government. It is the only thing to prevent war; and let that convention elect immediately a commander-in-chief for the seceding States."

Ex-Secretary Toucey, Testimony before the Hale Committee, Nov. 18, 1861. Senate Report, No. 37, 2d Session, 37th Congress, p. 235.

Gov. Pickens to Jackson, Jan. 19, 1861. "National Intelligencer," Jan. 30, 1861.

The Senatorial cabal therefore added their own redoubled efforts to those of ex-President Tyler to "keep the hands of Mr. Buchanan tied." One of their number (Mr. Mallory) had hurried to Pensacola to inspect the situation. From him there now came a dispatch, dated January 28, to Senators Slidell, Hunter, and Bigler—thus shrewdly coupling the influence of a Pennsylvania Democrat to that of the leading conspirators—"with an urgent

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request that they would lay it before the President. This dispatch expressed an ardent desire to preserve the peace, as well as the most positive assurance from himself and Colonel Chase that no attack would be made on the fort if its present status should be suffered to remain." Under these combined importunities the fortitude of Mr. Buchanan broke down. Despite his repeated declarations,—through Mr. Holt's note of January 22—in his conversation with Mr. Tyler, January 24—and again in his special message to Congress, January 28,—that he would make no pledges, he once more bound himself in what may for convenience be called the Fort Pickens truce. By his direction the following joint instructions from the Secretaries of War and Navy were on the 29th of January telegraphed to the combined forces at Pensacola Harbor: "Upon receiving satisfactory assurances from Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase that Fort Pickens will not be attacked, you are instructed not to land the company on board the *Brooklyn*, unless said fort shall be attacked, or preparations made for its attack. The provisions necessary for the supply of the fort you will land. The *Brooklyn* and the other vessels of war on the station will remain, and you will exercise the utmost vigilance, and be prepared at a moment's warning to land the company at Fort Pickens, and you and they will instantly repel any attack on the fort."

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 215.

"Globe" Jan. 28, 1861, pp. 600, 601.

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"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 216.

Mr. Buchanan asserts that this arrangement received "the approbation of every member of his Cabinet." It would be difficult to reconcile this statement with their other acts and opinions, except upon a single hypothesis: that perhaps they

Ibid.

tolerated it as his stubborn resolve, in preference to some more pernicious and compromising decision. But the assertion is positively contradicted by Mr. Stanton, who distinctly states that Judge Black, General Dix, and himself "had opposed that order."[1] Mr. Buchanan also declares that General Scott "expressly approved this joint order before it was issued," and in corroboration quotes from a private note written by Mr. Holt to himself of that date: "I have the satisfaction of saying that on submitting the paper to General Scott he expressed himself entirely satisfied with it, saying there could be no objection to the arrangement in a military point of view or otherwise." General Scott on the other hand disavows all knowledge of the joint instruction, and all recollection of such an interview with Mr. Holt.

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 218. Gen. Scott in the "National Intelligencer," Oct. 21 and Nov. 12, 1862.

These differences form a curious historical dispute, but they do not change the essential character of the act. Whether or not the President's decision was sustained by official advice, it remains a glaring instance of Executive vacillation, and a deplorable surrender of almost vital military advantages,

[1] "Your favor, with the continuation of the historical sketch, was duly received. Last evening Judge Black and General Dix met at my house and consulted together in regard to it. . . Speaking of the order to the *Brooklyn* not to disembark the forces sent to Pickens, unless the fort were attacked, you mention it as having been made with the entire unanimity of your Cabinet and the approval of General Scott. That he approved it is fully shown by Mr. Holt's note to you; but our recollection is, that in the Cabinet it was opposed by Judge Black, General Dix, and myself."—Stanton to Buchanan, July 16, 1861. "North American Review," November, 1879, p. 481.

Another letter of Stanton to Buchanan, March 1, 1862, MS., repeats the statement, saying: "It was well known to yourself and every member of the Cabinet then present that both Judge Black and myself had earnestly opposed that order and argued strongly against it."

CHAP. XI. which embarrassed not only his own, but also the succeeding Administration. General Scott has left us a conclusive professional criticism of the measure:

It was known at the Navy Department that the *Brooklyn*, with Captain Vogdes on board, would be obliged in open sea to stand off and on Fort Pickens, and in rough weather might sometimes be fifty miles off. Indeed, if so at sea, the fort might have been attacked and easily carried before the reënforcement could have reached the beach (in open sea), where alone it could land.

Gen. Scott, "Autobiography," Vol. II., p. 625.

Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Holt, and myself were all landsmen and could know but little of the impossibility of landing troops on an open sea beach with a high wind and surf. Mr. Toucey, Secretary of the Navy, with officers about him of intelligence and nautical experience, ought to have said plumply that if Vogdes was not to land except in case of attack upon Fort Pickens, he might as well have remained at Fortress Monroe, as the prohibition placed the fort, so far as he was concerned, at the mercy or (as the event showed) on the want of enterprise on the part of the rebel command at Pensacola.

Gen. Scott in the "National Intelligencer," Nov. 12, 1862.

The Fort Pickens truce concluded, the Senatorial cabal permitted Colonel Hayne to resume the duties of his mission to the President concerning Fort Sumter. Their manipulation of this negotiation is once more revealed by a comparison of dates in the correspondence. Colonel Hayne referred the matter to Governor Pickens on January 24; the Governor wrote his instructions in reply on the 26th; but in order not to embarrass the Fort Pickens transaction, the ordinary twenty-four hours' transmission was stretched out to four days. On January 31 Colonel Hayne directed his first official communication to the President. After stating the occasion of delay, he said:

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You will perceive that it is upon the presumption that it is solely as property that you continue to hold Fort Sumter, that I have been selected for the performance of the duty upon which I have entered. I do not come as a military man to demand the surrender of a fortress, but as the legal officer of the State,—its attorney-general,—to claim for the State the exercise of its undoubted right of eminent domain, and to pledge the State to make good all injury to the rights of property which arise from the exercise of the claim. South Carolina, as a separate, independent sovereign, assumes the right to take into her own possession everything within her limits essential to maintain her honor or her safety, irrespective of the question of property, subject only to the moral duty requiring that compensation should be made to the owner. . . Repudiating as you do the idea of coercion, avowing peaceful intentions, and expressing a patriot's horror for civil war and bloody strife among those who once were brethren, it is hoped that on further consideration you will not, on a mere question of property, refuse the reasonable demand of South Carolina, which honor and necessity alike compel her to vindicate.

Hayne to Buchanan, Jan. 31, 1861. House Report, No. 91, 2d Session, 36th Congress, pp. 64–68.

He concluded by setting forth that either the assertion or exercise of the right to send reënforcements to Sumter would be regarded as a declaration of war. The noteworthy feature of this missive is, however, that Governor Pickens's characteristic urgency was all at once abated. If the President were not prepared to give an immediate answer, he might send it within a reasonable time to Charleston, and Hayne might close his mission and return.

It was nearly a week later that the President gave his reply through Secretary Holt, who wrote on February 6:

The proposal then, now presented to the President, is simply an offer on the part of South Carolina to buy Fort Sumter and contents as property of the United

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States, sustained by a declaration, in effect, that if she is not permitted to make the purchase she will seize the fort by force of arms. . . The title of the United States to Fort Sumter is complete and incontestable. Were its interests in this property purely proprietary, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, it might probably be subjected to the exercise of the right of eminent domain; but it has also political relations to it, of a much higher and more imposing character than those of mere proprietorship. It has absolute jurisdiction over the fort and the soil on which it stands. This jurisdiction consists in the authority to "exercise exclusive legislation" over the property referred to, and is therefore clearly incompatible with the claim of eminent domain now insisted upon by South Carolina. This authority was not derived from any questionable revolutionary source, but from the peaceful cession of South Carolina herself, acting through her Legislature under a provision of the Constitution of the United States.

Holt to Hayne, Feb. 6, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 166, 167.

This seems to have ended the argument on the subject. A few days later Colonel Hayne, imitating the rebel commissioners, sent a splenetic epistle to the President and left the city. The Administration, acting on the theory that Mr. Holt's reply of February 6 terminated Anderson's truce, turned their attention anew to a second relief expedition to Sumter. Several plans were discussed, and one apparently adopted. The evidence as to its origin and preparation is vague and conflicting.

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 205.

Buchanan in the "National Intelligencer," Nov. 1, 1862.

Gen. Scott, "Autobiography," Vol. II., pp. 621, 622.

"Mr. Buchanan's Administration," p. 210.

Adjutant-General to Col. Scott, Feb. 21, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 179.

Captain Ward, of the navy, was to take three or four small steamers, belonging to the coast survey, and endeavor to make his way to Anderson, with supplies and reënforcements. Mr. Buchanan claims to have initiated it on the 31st of January; an order concerning it, dated February 21, shows that its time of sailing was even then uncertain. The governing causes in this instance may perhaps be best

inferred from a letter of Holt to Anderson, February 23, which discloses an abandonment of the attempt:

> A dispatch received in this city a few days since from Governor Pickens, connected with the declaration on the part of those convened at Montgomery, claiming to act on behalf of South Carolina, as well as the other seceded States, that the question of the possession of the forts and other public property therein had been taken from the decision of the individual States, and would probably be preceded in its settlement by negotiation with the Government of the United States, has impressed the President with a belief that there will be no immediate attack on Fort Sumter, and the hope is indulged that wise and patriotic counsels may prevail and prevent it altogether. The labors of the peace Congress have not yet closed, and the presence of that body here adds another to the powerful motives already existing for the adoption of every measure, except in necessary self-defense, for avoiding a collision with the forces that surround you.

Holt to Anderson, Feb. 23, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 183.

Dilatory diplomacy had done its allotted work. While Mr. Buchanan refused a truce in theory, he granted one in fact. Between the 12th of January and the 6th of February the insurrection at Charleston worked day and night in building batteries and preparing men and material to attack Sumter. In other States the processes of secession, seizure, drill, equipment, and organization had also been going on with similar activity. Receiving no effective discouragement or check, the various elements of rebellion had finally united in a provisional congress at Montgomery, which, two days later, perfected a provisional government for the rebellion. There can be no severer criticism of this delusive policy of concession and inaction than

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the course and argument of Governor Pickens, as shown in a letter written by him to the president of the new provisional congress at Montgomery, on the 13th of February, on being informed that it had taken charge of the "questions and difficulties" between the Government and the rebellion:

> I am perfectly satisfied that the welfare of the new confederation and the necessities of the State require that Fort Sumter should be reduced before the close of the present Administration at Washington. . . Mr. Lincoln cannot do more for this State than Mr. Buchanan has done. . . If war can be averted, it will be by making the capture of Fort Sumter a fact accomplished during the continuance of the present Administration, leaving to the incoming Administration the question of an open declaration of war.

Pickens to Cobb, Feb. 13, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 254–6.

This, then, was to be the harvest of conciliation — of the "wise, just, and peaceful solution," which the Senatorial cabal had promised — of "a patriotic horror for civil war and bloody strife," which Colonel Hayne had invoked — of the allurements of accommodation which Governor Pickens had so temptingly blended with his threats of violence and assault. Having lulled Mr. Buchanan into confidence, he proposed its sudden and secret violation, and in the same breath with his encomiums on peace, officially advised the shedding of blood, not upon any present necessity, but for the prospective gain of an improved vantage-ground towards the new Administration. Prudential reasons deferred the scheme for the moment. Six weeks later it was adopted and enacted by the provisional government of the conspiracy.

CHAPTER XII

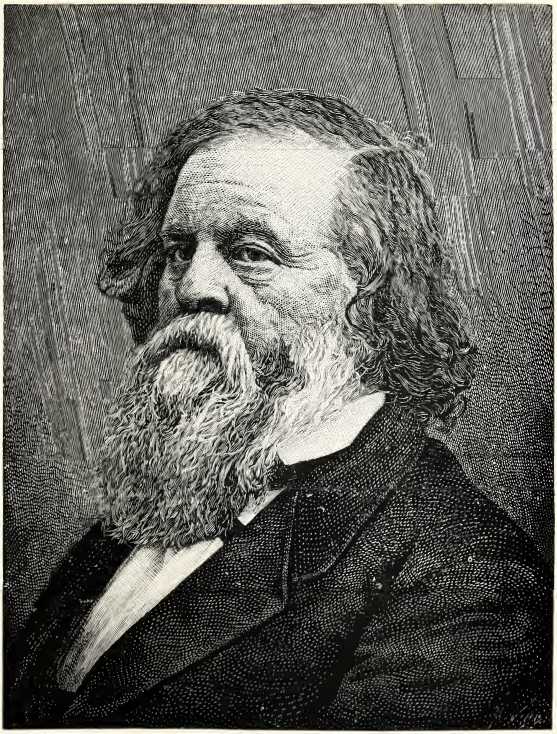
THE COTTON "REPUBLICS"

IN the main the secession incidents and proceedings enacted in South Carolina were imitated and repeated in the other Cotton States. Their several Governors initiated the movement by early official action—proclamations, messages, and orders. The office-holders at each State capital formed a convenient local junto of conspiracy. The programme in each case ran through essentially the same stages. There was first the meeting of the Legislature, prompted and influenced by the State officials and the Senators and Representatives in Congress. Then under a loud outcry of public danger which did not exist, hasty measures to arm and defend the State—large military appropriations and extensive military organization. Next an act to call a convention, ostensibly to consult public opinion, but really for the occasion to rouse and mislead it. In each of the Cotton States the Breckinridge Democracy, the most ultra of the three factions, was largely in the majority. Again, the long political agitation had brought into power and prominence the most radical leaders of this extreme party.

These leaders were generally disunionists at heart, even where they had not been active and persist-

CHAP. XII. ent conspirators. They now took up with alacrity the task of electing a secession convention. That the people were not with them a month before the Presidential election is proved by the replies of the several Governors to South Carolina, which are cited in a previous chapter. Nothing but the election itself had occurred to change that feeling; no threat, no act, no law, no catastrophe. Had governors and officials remained silent, the people would have felt no want and seen no danger. But when official action began the agitation, first by proclamations, then by legislative enactments, and lastly by forcing the issue upon the people through an election for delegates, there came an inevitable growth and culmination of excitement. In this election it was the audacious, the ambitious, the reckless element which took the lead, gathered enthusiasm, and organized success.

It must be remembered that this result was reached under specially favoring conditions. The long slavery discussion had engendered a brooding discontent, and the baseless complaint of sectional injustice had grown through mere repetition from clamor into belief. The Presidential election left behind it the sharp sting of defeat. Not in form and in law, but nevertheless in essential characteristics, the South was controlled by a landed aristocracy. The great plantation masters dominated society and politics; there was no diffused and healthy popular action, as in the town-meetings of New England. Even the slaves of the wealthy proprietors spoke with habitual contempt of the "poor white trash" who lived in mean cabins and hoed their own corn and cotton.



GENERAL HOWELL COBB.

Except in Georgia the opposition to the secessionists' programme was either hopelessly feeble or entirely wanting. The Bell and Douglas factions had bitterly denounced Lincoln and the Republicans during the Presidential campaign. Disarmed by their own words, they could not now defend them. The seaboard towns and cities of the South, jealous of the commercial supremacy of the North, anticipated in independence and free trade a new growth and a rich prosperity. Over all floated the constant dream of Southern Utopias—an indefinite expansion southward into a great slave empire. Under these various causes the election in most instances went by default. CHAP. XII

Three special agencies coöperated with marked effect to stimulate the movement. Very early each Cotton State sent commissioners to each of the other Southern States, and in every case the most active and zealous secessionists were of course appointed. These commissioners attended, harangued, and intrigued with the various deliberative assemblies, and thus constituted a network of most industrious propagandism. Another potent influence was the assembling of military conventions, that is, convocations of the militia captains, majors, colonels, and would-be generals, to spur on or intimidate lagging Legislatures and conventions. Finally, the third and most effective piece of machinery was the State delegations in Congress assembled in Washington City at the beginning of December, 1860. and sending a running fire of encouragement or orders home to the capitals of their States.

Even with all this organization acting intelligently and persistently for a common end, from two

CHAP. XII. to three months were required to work up the people of the Cotton States to an acquiescence in the rebellion the conspirators had for years been planning. Without being exactly of contemporaneous date, it happened that in general the month of November witnessed the assembling of the Legislatures and the making of necessary laws and appropriations. The month of December was mainly occupied by the election of delegates to the State conventions. In this stage the voice of central authority from Washington was begun to be utilized.

While the election excitement was at its highest ferment, there came from Washington, under date
1860. of the 14th of December, the revolutionary circular, signed by about one-half the Southern Senators and Representatives in Congress, quoted elsewhere. This circular announced that argument was exhausted, that hope was extinguished, that the Republicans would grant nothing which would or ought to satisfy the South, and that the honor, safety, and independence of the Southern people required immediate separate State secession, and the organization of a Southern Confederacy.

The effect of a Congressional firebrand of such dimensions thrown upon the inflammable temper of the Cotton States at such a juncture may be easily imagined. Their people could not know that no single assertion in this circular was warranted by the facts; that Congress had not deliberated; that the compromise committees had not reported, and that the Republicans had in no shape presented or declared an ultimatum. The circular had been issued for a purpose, and served that end com-

pletely. Few Southern voters or speakers could dare to stand up and deny in Georgia or Alabama the accusation made by these "honorable" signers in Washington. CHAP. XII.

But the central cabal did not stop with this single *pronunciamiento*. By this time the revolution, both local and central, had gained an accelerated momentum, and was rushing to its climax. Non-coercion was promised, Cass was driven from the Cabinet, the President was overawed, Congress was demoralized. Secession had secured a free path, and counted on an easy victory. The programme seems to have been to attain separation by easy stages during the remainder of Mr. Buchanan's term, and not to organize the new Confederacy till after the 4th of March.

But about New Year's the central conspiracy received a serious check. There was a Cabinet crisis. Buchanan momentarily asserted himself. Floyd was in turn driven from the Cabinet, the Unionists gained control of it, and Holt was made Secretary of War. This portended loyalty, decision, energy, reënforcements. Immediately there came a shower of telegrams and orders from the Washington fire-eaters to the Cotton-State leaders, proclaiming danger and urging action. The central cabal was called together, deliberated earnestly, and perfected and hastened the plot. At a caucus held on January 5 (in one of the rooms of the Capitol building itself, it is said), the decisive and final revolutionary programme committed itself to the following distinct points and plan: First. Immediate secession. Second. A convention at Montgomery, Alabama, not later than the 1861.

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15th of February, to organize a Confederacy. Third. That, to prevent hostile legislation under the changed and loyal impulses of the President and his reconstructed Cabinet, the Cotton-State Senators should remain awhile in their places, to "keep the hands of Mr. Buchanan tied." Finally, and most important of all, the caucus appointed a committee, consisting of Senators Jefferson Davis, Slidell, and Mallory, "to carry out the object of this meeting."[1] The future chief of the great

[1] Senator Yulee, of Florida, to Joseph Finegan, Esq.:

"WASHINGTON, Jan. 7, 1861.

"MY DEAR SIR: On the other side is a copy of resolutions adopted at a consultation of the Senators from the seceding States — in which Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, and Florida were present. The idea of the meeting was that the States should go out at once, and provide for the early organization of a Confederate Government, not later than 15th February. This time is allowed to enable Louisiana and Texas to participate. It seemed to be the opinion that if we left here, force, loan, and volunteer bills might be passed, which would put Mr. Lincoln in immediate condition for hostilities; whereas by remaining in our places until the 4th of March, it is thought we can keep the hands of Mr. Buchanan tied, and disable the Republicans from effecting any legislation which will strengthen the hands of the incoming Administration. The resolutions will be sent by the delegation to the president of the convention. I have not been able to find Mr. Mallory this morning. Hawkins is in Connecticut. I have therefore thought it best to send you this copy of the resolutions.

"In haste, yours truly,

"D. L. YULEE.

"JOSEPH FINEGAN, Esq.,
"'Sovereignty Convention,'
"Tallahassee, Florida."

The following are the resolutions referred to:

"*Resolved* 1. That in our opinion each of the Southern States should, as soon as may be, secede from the Union.

"*Resolved* 2. That provision should be made for a convention to organize a Confederacy of the seceding States, the convention to meet not later than the 15th of February, at the city of Montgomery, in the State of Alabama.

"*Resolved* 3. That in view of the hostile legislation that is threatened against the seceding States, and which may be consummated before the 4th of March, we ask instructions whether the delegations are to remain in Congress until that date for the purpose of defeating such legislation.

"*Resolved* 4. That a committee be and are hereby appointed, con-

rebellion was chosen to preside over its primary organization. CHAP. XII.

If there had been any hesitation in the several State conventions about taking the final plunge, we may suppose that it disappeared when the programme outlined in this central caucus of January 5, at Washington, was transmitted. We find that nearly the whole secession movement very speedily followed. Mississippi passed her ordinance on January 9, Florida on January 10, Alabama on January 11, Georgia on January 19, Louisiana on January 26, and Texas, where peculiar conditions existed, on February 1. 1861.

Immediately connected with the passage of these secession ordinances, and in some instances even preceding them, another step in the insurrectionary scheme was taken. Each Governor who organized the revolution in his State, now finding a little army of impulsive volunteers and ambitious officers at his nod and beck, ordered two or three regiments to the nearest fort or arsenal, where an ordnance-sergeant or an attenuated infantry or artillery company of Federal soldiers was representing the Government title rather than the Government power. The insurgents demanded possession, and made a display of force. The officer in charge yielded to the in-

sisting of Messrs. Davis, Slidell, and Mallory, to carry out the objects of this meeting."

"The copy of these resolutions, forwarded by Senator Mallory January 6, 1861, to the president of the Florida Convention, shows that they were adopted on the 5th of that month, and that they were signed by Messrs. Davis and Brown, of Mississippi; Hemphill and Wigfall, of Texas; Slidell and Benjamin, of Louisiana; Iverson and Toombs, of Georgia; Johnson, of Arkansas; Clay, of Alabama, and Yulee and Mallory, of Florida." [W. R. Vol. I., pp. 443–44.]

CHAP. XII. evitable. He received the demand for surrender to the State; he complied under protest. There was a salute to the flag, peaceable evacuation, and he was allowed unmolested transit home as a military courtesy.

By this process there was a quick succession of captures through which all the military strongholds and depots in the Cotton States, excepting Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, Fort Pickens in Pensacola harbor, Fort Taylor at Key West, and Fort Jefferson on Tortugas Island, passed to the occupation and use of the rebellion, giving it a vantage-ground for defense, and a store of war material for offense, which for the first time since the Presidential election gave the revolution a serious and formidable strength. We have thus far described the secession movement throughout the South in its general aspect. It is worth while to glance at some of its features more in detail.

The State of Florida was the most zealous follower of South Carolina. She has a magnificent geographical area, which, with a climate favorable to a class of sub-tropical products, is enough to make her eventually the garden State of the South. But this immense domain was virtually a wilderness, notwithstanding that her earliest permanent settlement was almost three centuries old. Her white population did not reach the ratio of one Representative in Congress.[1] There was not a single town of three thousand inhabitants within her borders. She therefore became an easy prey to her ultra pro-

[1] The population of Florida in 1860 was: white, 77,748; free colored, 932; slave, 61,745; total, 140,425. The ratio of representation for Members of Congress, from 1852 to 1863, was 93,423. [Spofford, "American Almanac," 1878, p. 170.]

slavery leaders, who were the first to applaud and second the Charleston insurrection. "Florida is with the gallant Palmetto State," wrote her Governor, November 9; and his message to the Legislature, November 26, clamored for "secession from our faithless, perjured Confederates." Under the manipulations of such an executive, backed by the equally aggressive advice and exertions of her two United States Senators, prominent among the conspirators at Washington, she went through the forms of a convention and the passing of a secession ordinance, January 10. Her Governor, with total disregard of authority, had already seized the arsenal at Appalachicola on January 5, Fort Marion and the ordnance depot at St. Augustine on the 7th, as well as a schooner belonging to the Coast Survey. There were, in the arsenal, no arms, but 500,000 musket cartridges, 300,000 rifle cartridges, and 50,000 pounds of gunpowder. On the 8th he ordered the seizure of the navy yard and unoccupied forts at Pensacola, which was accomplished on the 12th. However insignificant in her political power, the gain of Florida was nevertheless of great military and strategical value to the rebellion.

CHAP. XII. 1860. 1861.

In Mississippi, the revolutionary sentiment had long been fostered by her most able and influential politicians. Jefferson Davis, eager to wear the mantle of Calhoun, had two years before announced the new rebellion. His speech at Vicksburg, November 27, 1858, is thus reported in the "Daily Mississippian."

> Before concluding his remarks, he would anticipate the interrogatory which his audience might be disposed to propound to him, in view of the fast growing strength of

CHAP. XII. the abolition party, as to what policy he would recommend in the event of the triumph of that party in 1860. He was for resistance—stern resistance. Rather than see the Executive chair of the nation filled by a sworn enemy of our rights, he would shatter it into a thousand fragments before he had an opportunity of taking his seat. . . The Government is at an end the very moment that an abolitionist is elected to the Presidency.

The Governor of Mississippi also was one of the most advanced revolutionists in the South. He declared himself ready for action as early as August 30, 1860.

I assure you that I do sympathize and expect to continue to act with those who dare all and hazard all, rather than see Mississippi become a dependent province of a Black Republican government, and hold her constitutional rights by the frail tenure of Black Republican oaths. When sparks cease to fly upwards, Comanches respect treaties, and wolves kill sheep no more, the oath of a Black Republican might be of some value as a protection to slave property.

With Jefferson Davis in the Senate to conspire and advise, and Governor Pettus at home to order and execute, the fate of Mississippi could not long remain in doubt. The Legislature had in the previous winter provided a military fund of $150,000. Early in October the State made a purchase of arms, which at Jefferson Davis's request, and with Floyd's concurrence, were obligingly inspected by a Government officer. The Legislature was
1860. convened to meet, November 26, to consider "the propriety and necessity of providing surer and better safeguards for the lives, liberties, and property of her citizens than have been found or are to be hoped for in Black Republican oaths." Commissioners to other States were appointed, and an

election ordered, in pursuance of which a convention met, January 7, and passed a secession ordinance on January 9, 84 yeas to 15 nays. The proceedings, as in other States, were secret and precipitate. Military organization was stimulated to the utmost, and on the 20th the unfinished fort on Ship Island and the marine hospital on the Mississippi River were seized by the insurrectionists at the Governor's orders. CHAP. XII. 1861.

The State of Alabama had by her dominant partisanship on the slavery question been carried farther towards revolt than the other Cotton States. Her Legislature, on February 24, 1860, with but two dissenting voices, provided by joint resolution that in case of the election of a Republican President, the Governor should at once by proclamation order an election of delegates to a convention "to consider and do whatever in the opinion of said convention the rights, interests, and honor of the State of Alabama requires [*sic*] to be done for their protection." A fund of $200,000 was appropriated for "military contingencies"; and the Governor was further authorized to send delegates to any future convention of the slave States.

A week after the November elections, the Governor in a public letter announced that he would exercise this power to inaugurate revolution as soon as the choice of Lincoln should be made certain by the vote of the electoral college on December 5. In the same letter he made a labored argument that Alabama ought to secede at once and "coöperate afterwards." His proclamation was in due time issued, and the delegates were elected on December 24. A spirited canvass seems to have 1860.

CHAP. XII. been made. Judge Campbell, of the United States Supreme Court, addressed the voters in an earnest letter against disunion. Partisans separated themselves into three groups designated respectively as "submissionists," "coöperationists," and "straight-out secessionists." The southern half of the State, embracing the cotton-lands and strong slave counties on the Gulf, was intensely revolutionary; the northern end, reaching up towards the commerce of the free States, was, or believed itself to be, conservative and union-loving; and the final popular decision was supposed to hang in considerable doubt.

1861. The meeting of the convention at Montgomery, January 7, soon dispelled this idea. On the first day it unanimously adopted a resolution declaring in substance that "Alabama cannot and will not submit to the Administration of Lincoln and Hamlin." That any of the members after such a vote should have hesitated to commit themselves to the full scope of the conspirators' programme, shows the confused perception of their own attitude and intention. They did not appear to realize how helplessly they were drifting in the current of rebellion. Upon such material the radical secessionists concentrated their influence. Outside pressure gathered in overwhelming force. Telegrams poured in upon them in profusion. "They came so thick and fast, they seemed like snowflakes to fall from the clouds," said one of the members. Crowds besieged the doors. The Governor had on January 4, without warrant, seized Mount Vernon arsenal and Forts Morgan and Gaines at Mobile, and had caused the banks to suspend payment,

and he now asked to be justified in these usurpations. News arrived that Florida and Mississippi had seceded. Application was made for military help to seize Pensacola. In the midst of the excitement came telegrams of the firing on the *Star of the West* at Charleston, and its attending incidents. CHAP. XII.

Before these combined influences conservative resolves and combinations gave way, and an ordinance of immediate secession was prepared. The ubiquitous Yancey, fresh from his Northern disavowals of the "Scarlet Letter," was on hand in the rôle of leading conspirator, and came near "precipitating revolution" in the convention itself, by his flaming declamation. The "coöperationists" were pleading for delay, when he indiscreetly threatened the penalties of treason against any factious minority which should venture to disobey an ordinance of secession. The northern members flared up under the taunt. "Will the gentleman go into those sections of the State and hang all who are opposed to secession? Will he hang them by families, by neighborhoods, by counties, by Congressional districts? Who, sir, will give the bloody order? . . . Are these to be the first-fruits of a Southern Republic?" "Coming at the head of any force which he can muster," replied another member, "aided and assisted by the Executive of this State, we will meet him at the foot of our mountains, and there with his own selected weapons, hand to hand, and face to face, settle the question of the sovereignty of the people."

The flurry was quieted, however, and the ordinance reported on the third day of the session. The

CHAP XII. conservatives endeavored to substitute a project of a slave-State convention and a basis of settlement with the North, but it was voted down, 54 to 45. After this the radicals had easy sailing, and on
1861. January 11 the ordinance passed, 61 to 39. It is touching to read the expressions of regret, of doubt, of protest, with which the opposition members reluctantly gave in their adhesion, and parted from their Government and their flag, under the final and fallacious promptings of State pride and the baneful heresy of paramount State allegiance. And this lingering sorrow of delegates was followed in many localities by the lingering condemnation and remonstrance of their constituents. Four weeks later Hon. Jere. Clemens wrote from Huntsville: "There is still much discontent here at the passage of the ordinance of secession, but it is growing weaker daily, and, unless something is done to stir it up anew, will soon die away;" adding, also, "Last week Yancey was burned in effigy in Limestone." But it was all of no avail; the people writhed helplessly in the toils of their false leaders.

The State of Georgia was then, and is still, regarded as the Empire State of the South. Her action, therefore, became an object of the greatest solicitude. Her leading men were known to be divided in sentiment. The North looked with some confidence there for a conservative reaction; but they were leaning on a broken reed. With all their asseverations of loyalty, the Unionists of that State were such only upon impossible conditions. "As a Union man," wrote B. H. Hill, in September, "I shall vote in November. As a Union man I shall

hope for the right. As a Southern man I shall meet the enemy and go with my State." Alexander H. Stephens, equally unsound in his allegiance, was ultra-radical on slavery. He believed it the normal condition of the negro, and looked forward to its spread into every State in the Union. Supporting Douglas, he repudiated "Squatter Sovereignty." Herschel V. Johnson was an old-time "resistance" advocate. This kind of leadership was *quasi* disunion, especially under the assaults of aggressive and uncompromising revolutionists like Toombs, Iverson, Cobb, and Governor Brown. CHAP. XII.

Nevertheless, the popular voice, which sometimes restrains the rashness of leaders, was yet in doubt, and compelled a policy of slow approaches to insurrection. Governor Brown, therefore, in his message of November 8, went only to the extent of recommending retaliatory legislation, and that the State should be armed. The vote at the Presidential election had been: Breckinridge, 51,889; Bell, 42,886; Douglas, 11,590. The statutes required a majority vote for electors, hence there was no choice by the people. In conformity with law, the Legislature was obliged to appoint them; and accordingly it chose (January 29) a college favorable to Breckinridge. In the interim the Legislature was convulsed with the topics of the hour. Stephens made a famous plea for union; Toombs an equally fervid harangue for disunion. 1860. 1861.

Meanwhile the members had listened to an insidious suggestion apparently midway between the two extremes. "The truth is, in my judgment," writes Stephens, "the wavering scale in Georgia was turned by a sentiment, the key-note to which was given in

CHAP. XII. the words—'We can make better terms out of the Union than in it.' It was Mr. Thomas R. R. Cobb who gave utterance to this key-note in his speech before the Legislature two days anterior to my address before the same body. This idea did more, in my opinion, in carrying the State out, than all the arguments and eloquence of all others combined." A formidable outside pressure in the shape of a military convention, and a large secession caucus was also organized and led by Governor Brown. The Legislature could not resist the impetuous current. A military appropriation of one million dollars was
1860. made November 13, and a convention bill passed on the 18th.

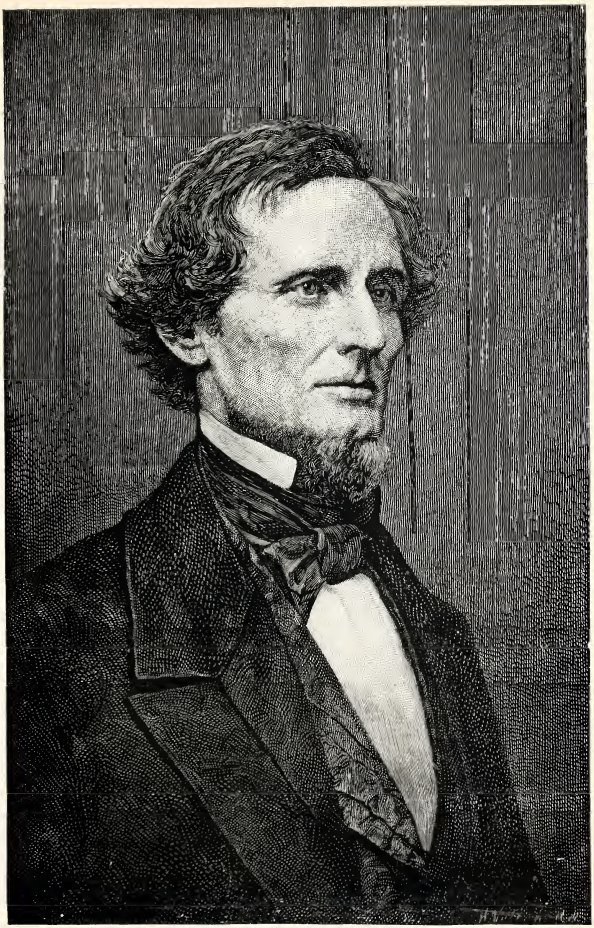
Perhaps the most hotly contested election campaign which occurred in any Southern State now took place for the convention, in the course of which fifty-two members of the Legislature joined in a "coöperation" address, urging a conference of Southern States instead of immediate secession.
1861. The vote was cast January 2, and, encouraged by apparent success, Governor Brown on the following day ordered the seizure of Fort Pulaski, and placed the telegraph under surveillance. The convention assembled at Milledgeville on January 16, and the respective factions mustered their adherents for the combat. The struggle was short and decisive. In place of a brief and direct secession resolution the conservatives offered to substitute a proposition to hold a Southern conference at Atlanta; also setting forth certain "indispensable" amendments to the Constitution of the United States. It is almost needless to say they were exacting and advanced to a degree not before sug-

gested in any quarter. The "Georgia platform," hitherto proclaimed by Mr. Stephens as his creed, was left far behind. That was a simple affirmance of the settlement of 1850. These new "guarantees" embraced provisions which would in practice have legalized slavery in the free States. There was no more hope that the North would accept them than that it would set up a monarchy. CHAP. XII.

Radical as was this alternative, the straight-out secessionists would not even permit a vote to be taken upon it. The secession resolution was rushed through under the previous question, 166 yeas to 130 nays. On the following day an inquiry into the election for delegates was throttled with similar ferocity, 168 to 127. After this all opposition broke down, and on January 19 the secession ordinance was passed, 208 yeas to 89 nays. It was finally signed by all the delegates but six, and even those promised their lives and fortunes to the cause. Governor Brown, on January 24, set up the cap-sheaf of insurrection by sending six or seven hundred volunteers to demand and receive the surrender of the Augusta arsenal, declaring with sarcastic etiquette in his demand that "the State is not only at peace, but anxious to cultivate the most amicable relations with the United States Government." 1861.

The State of Louisiana followed in the main the action of the already mentioned Cotton States, except that it was more tardy. Her Governor and her Senators in Congress were as pronounced as the other principal conspirators, but her people, as a whole, were not yet quite so ripe for insurrection. "The State of Louisiana," wrote one of the secession emissaries, "from the fact that the

CHAP. XII. Mississippi River flows through its extent and debouches through her borders, and that the great commercial depot of that river and its tributaries is the city of New Orleans, occupies a position somewhat more complicated than any other of the Southern States, and may present some cause of delay in the consummation and execution of the purpose of a separation from the Northwestern States, and the adoption of a new political status." Here as elsewhere, however, the executive sword was thrown into the vibrating scale. First, the Governor's proclamation calling an extra session of the Legislature to meet December 10; then, on the plea of public danger, an appropriation to arm the State; next, on pretext of consulting public opinion, a convention bill; then, having volunteers, the seizure of Baton Rouge barracks and arsenal (January 10), and Forts Jackson and St. Philip (January 15), and other Federal property; and, finally, the terrorism of loud-mouthed revolution. When the convention met, January 23, the tide was already as irresistible as the waters of the Mississippi. A proposition for a slave-State conference was voted down, 106 to 24; another, to "provide for a popular vote," defeated by 84 to 43, and on
1861. January 26, some of the "coöperation" delegates having prudently silenced their scruples, the secession ordinance was passed, 113 yeas to 17 nays. Two exceptional incidents occurred in the action of Louisiana. One was the unanimous adoption of a resolution recognizing "the right of the free navigation of the Mississippi River and its tributaries by all friendly States bordering thereon," and also "the right of egress and ingress of the



JEFFERSON DAVIS.

mouths of the Mississippi by all friendly States and powers." The other was that one of her Federal Representatives, John E. Bouligny, remained true to his oath and his loyalty, and continued to hold his seat in Congress to the end of his term — the solitary instance from the Cotton States.[1] CHAP. XII.

It is a significant feature in the secession proceedings of the six Cotton States which first took action, that their conventions in every case neglected or refused to submit their ordinances of secession to a vote of the people for ratification or rejection. The whole spirit and all the phenomena of the movement forbade their doing so. From first to last the movement was forced, not spontaneous, official, not popular; and its leaders could not risk the period of doubt which a submission of the ordinances would involve, much less their rejection at the polls. To this general rule Texas, the seventh seceding State, formed an exception. Governor Houston opposed secession, and as long as possible thwarted the conspirators' plans. By a bolder usurpation than elsewhere, they nevertheless assembled an independent and entirely illegal convention, passed an ordinance of secession, February 1, and held an election to ratify or reject it, February 23. Long before this they had in 1861.

[1] Another instance of unswerving Louisiana loyalty is worth recording. James G. Taliaferro, delegate from the parish of Catahoula, though a Virginian by birth and a slaveholder, presented to the convention a vigorous protest against the ordinance of secession (which, however, it would not enter on its journal), and not only refused to sign the ordinance, but refused his allegiance to the Confederate States. After the war he became president of the Constitutional Convention, which, under the Reconstruction Acts, restored Louisiana to the Union, and was, when he died in 1876, a Judge of the Supreme Court of the State.

CHAP. XII. substance joined the State to the rebel Confederacy, and the popular vote showed a nominal majority for secession, though the partial returns, and the voting amid a local revolution, afforded no trustworthy indication of popular sentiment.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MONTGOMERY CONFEDERACY

FOLLOWING the successive ordinances of secession passed by the Cotton States, their delegations withdrew one by one from Congress. In this final step their Senators and Representatives adopted no concerted method, but went according to individual convenience or caprice; some making the briefest announcement of their withdrawal, others delivering addresses of considerable length. These parting declarations contain nothing of historical interest. They are a mere repetition of what they had said many times in debate: complaints of Northern aggression and allegations of Northern hostility; they failed to make any statement or acknowledgment of aggressions and hostility on the part of the South against the North. The ceremony of withdrawal, therefore, was formal and perfunctory; pre-announced and recognized as a foregone conclusion, it attracted little attention from Congress and the public. Only two cases were exceptional — that of Mr. Bouligny, the Representative from Louisiana, who, as already mentioned, remained loyal to the Union and retained his seat in the House; and that of Senator Wigfall, of Texas, who, radically and outspokenly

CHAP. XIII. disloyal, yet kept his seat in the Senate, not only through the remainder of Mr. Buchanan's term, but even during the special session, assembled according to custom, to confirm the nominations made by the new President immediately after his inauguration.

One of the remarkable coincidences of the secession conspiracy is, that on the same day which witnessed the meeting of a Peace Convention in Washington, to deceive and confuse the public opinion of the North with discussion of an impossible compromise, the delegates of the seceded States convened at Montgomery, Alabama, to consolidate rebellion and prepare for armed resistance. It is not impossible that this was a piece of strategy, purposely designed by the secession leaders; for the Washington peace conference, despite its constant avowals of a desire to promote union, was originated and managed by the little clique of Virginia conspirators whose every act, if not preconceived, at least resulted in treasonable duplicity.

The secession conventions of the Cotton States had appointed delegates equal in number to their former Senators and Representatives in Congress. These met in Montgomery, Alabama, on the 4th day of February, 1861, to form a Southern Confederacy. The Washington caucus, it will be remembered, suggested the 15th of the month. But such had been the success, or, rather, the want of opposition to the movement, that it was probably considered advisable to hasten the programme, and instead of only having preliminary secession complete by the 4th of March, to finish the whole structure of an

independent government before the inauguration of Lincoln. Thus far Mr. Buchanan had not offered the slightest impediment to the insurrection; it might reasonably be inferred that this inaction on his part would continue to the end of his term. Mr. Lincoln would be powerless until officially invested with the executive duties, and thus the formal organization of a Southern Confederacy could proceed at convenient leisure and in perfect immunity from disturbance. CHAP. XIII.

The meeting at Montgomery had its immediate origin in the resolutions of a committee of the Mississippi Legislature, adopted January 29; and it is another evidence of the secret and swift concert of secession leaders, that in six days thereafter the delegates of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida were assembled for conference. The delegates from Texas joined them later on. An organization was effected by choosing Howell Cobb chairman, and the body called itself a Provisional Congress, though it was merely a revolutionary council, invested with no direct representation of the people, but appointed by the secession conventions. Its reactionary spirit was shown in returning to the antiquated and centralizing mode of voting by States. This same rule under the old Congress of the Confederation had produced nothing but delay and impotence, and earned deserved contempt; and these identical delegates, after incorporating the rule in their provisional scheme of government, immediately rejected it when framing their permanent one. We may infer that they employed it at the moment, because it was admirably suited to 1861.

CHAP. XIII. the use of cliques and the purposes of intrigue. Very little more than half the delegates of four States could carry a measure, and the minority of total membership could exercise full power of legislation. A project of government was perfected
1861. on February 8, and the name of the "Confederate States of America" was adopted.

This first project was provisional only, to serve for one year; and the Provisional Congress retained legislative power for the same period. The temporary continuance of certain United States laws and officials was provided for. On the following day (February 9) it elected Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, President, and Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, Vice-President, of the new Confederacy. The body then set itself more seriously at work to prepare a permanent constitution which should go into effect a year later. This labor it completed and adopted on the 11th of March. In their permanent constitution, as in the provisional one, they adhered closely to the letter and spirit of the Constitution of the United States, making few changes other than those which the pretensions and designs of the rebellion made essential.

"The new constitution professed to be established by 'each State acting in its sovereign and independent character,' instead of simply by 'we the people.' It provided that in newly acquired territory 'the institution of negro slavery, as it now exists in the Confederate States, shall be recognized and protected by Congress and by the Territorial Government'; also for the right of transit and sojourn for 'slaves and other property,' and the right to reclaim 'slaves and other persons' to

service or labor. It did not, as consistency required, provide for the right of secession, or deny the right of coercion; on the contrary, all its implications were against the former and in favor of the latter; for it declared itself to be the supreme law of the land, binding on the judges in every State. It provided for the punishment of treason; and declared that no State should enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation, grant letters of marque and reprisal, coin money, lay duties, keep troops or ships of war in time of peace, make any compact with another State or with a foreign power;—a sweeping practical negation of the whole heretical dogma of State supremacy upon which they had built their revolt." CHAP. XIII. Nicolay, "The Outbreak of Rebellion."

Stephens, being a member of the Congress, was sworn into office as Vice-President February 10. Davis, with becoming modesty, remained absent during the election; being sent for, he arrived and was formally inaugurated on February 18. His inaugural address presents few salient points. In later times he has disavowed the fiery and belligerent harangues the newspapers reported him to have made on his way to assume his new duties. Perhaps the most important announcement of his inaugural was the opinion that the new Confederacy might welcome the border slave States; "but beyond this," he continued, "if I mistake not the judgment and will of the people, a reunion with the States from which we have separated is neither practicable nor desirable." 1861.

Mr. Davis, in his "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," written fifteen years after the war, takes some pains to make the very remark-

CHAP. XIII. able assertion that the South did not rebel, secede, and fight to preserve and extend slavery, but only to maintain "the equality of the States." The generation which fought the war needs no proof of the incorrectness of this declaration; but the historian of the future, without such contemporary knowledge, may think this claim, so gravely put forth by the leader of the South, possesses some critical value. It is therefore worth a moment's attention.

Of what did the "equality of the States" consist? 1. In a portion of local sovereignty and independence. 2. Of a Federal representation in government. 3. Of Federal rights of citizenship.

An attempt to specify the details of rights and privileges embraced under these three general heads would fill a volume. They include: A right to territorial area, to State boundaries, to a State constitution, to State laws, to a governor and executive officers, a legislature, a judiciary, to senators and representatives in Congress, to Presidential electors, to elections, to taxation, to police, to a portion of eminent domain, to State and national citizenship, and no end of other powers and incidents.

Out of this mass of equal rights, or "equality" as he would call it,—equality local, equality national in government, equality individual under national laws,—he as a member of the Committee of Thirteen, in the crisis of the secession controversy, made but one distinct allegation of privation or denial, namely, the right to take slave property into Federal Territories and national protection for it when there.

If Mr. Davis could show that the North claimed the right for itself and denied it to the South, his claim, meager—almost microscopic—as it is, would be proved. But his argument totally fails when it is remembered that the North freely permitted and guaranteed to the South every property right in the Territories which she claimed for herself, and that she only denied to the South, as she denied to herself, property right in slaves anywhere except under exclusive State jurisdiction.

So much for theory. But what of practical and popular belief as the basis of popular action in secession and rebellion? It would be impossible to repeat the multitude of assertions of Southern writers, speakers, addresses of officials, and formal resolutions of parliamentary and legislative bodies. On this point we must be content to let Mississippi, in her secession convention assembled, refute the afterthought of the ex-President of the rebel Confederacy. In her "Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Induce and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union," she said:

> Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery — the greatest material interest in the world. . . A blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin. We must either submit to degradation, and the loss of property worth four billions of money, or we must secede from the Union.

CHAP. XIII.

"Journal of the State Convention," 1861, pp. 86, 87.

This was adopted, Saturday, January 26, 1861, by the convention assembled at Jackson, Mississippi, which ordained secession. If we needed any comment on this formal announcement by the convention of Mississippi, one is conveniently furnished in the address of the commissioner whom that State sent to urge Georgia to secede. Said he:

> Mississippi is firmly convinced that there is but one alternative. This new union with Lincoln Black Republicans and free negroes, without slavery; or, slavery under our old constitutional bond of union, without Lincoln Black Republicans or free negroes either, to molest us.[1]

These formulas of the paramount value of the "institution" so abound in the literature of the secession period that it seems a waste of space to quote others; and yet there is one of such prominence and authority that we cannot forbear to add it. The Vice-President of the Confederate States, Alexander H. Stephens, chosen, like Davis, because he felt the desire and could speak the hope of the South, made a speech in Savannah a few weeks after his inauguration, in which he explained the benefits and improvements of the new "Confederate" constitution. In this he said:

> The prevailing ideas entertained by him [Jefferson] and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in *principle*, socially, morally, and

[1] Address made by William L. Harris, Commissioner of the State of Mississippi, to the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Georgia. Delivered December 17, 1860.— "Journal of the State Convention" of Mississippi, 1861, p. 205.

politically. . . Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. . . The substratum of our society is made of the material fitted by nature for it, and by experience we know that it is best, not only for the superior, but for the inferior race, that it should be so. It is, indeed, in conformity with the ordinance of the Creator. It is not for us to inquire into the wisdom of his ordinances, or to question them. For his own purposes he has made one race to differ from another, as he has made "one star to differ from another star in glory." The great objects of humanity are best attained when there is conformity to his laws and decrees, in the formation of governments as well as in all things else. Our Confederacy is founded upon principles in strict conformity with these laws. This stone which was rejected by the first builders "is become the chief of the corner"—the real "corner-stone"—in our new edifice.

Henry Cleveland, "Life of Alex. H. Stephens," pp. 721–3.

Superficially, it appeared that the new government had been agreed upon among the leaders, with unusual harmony and unanimity; and such is the impression conveyed in the books written many years after by the two principal chiefs. But plausible reports have come down by tradition, that no previous legislative body had ever developed an equal amount of jealousy and bitterness to that which manifested itself in the Provisional Congress; that there were more candidates for President than States in the Confederacy, Georgia alone having furnished four aspirants, and that the rivalry between Toombs and Cobb in fact brought about the selection of Davis, who had openly ex-

CHAP. XIII. pressed his preference for the post of General-in-Chief of the future rebel armies. Cobb might indeed dispute the prize of leadership with Davis, and especially with Toombs, who was, of all the candidates, least suited for such a position. It was Cobb who was the master spirit of secession intrigue in Buchanan's Cabinet; it was Cobb who carried the wavering Georgia Convention into secession; it was Cobb who reappeared as the dominating power in the Montgomery Congress. Practically, it was Cobb who by recent secret manipulations had made the Confederacy possible, and erected the Confederate constitution. He might without vanity aspire to become its chief officer; yet with a truer recognition of the fitness of things, the choice of the delegates fell upon Davis, who, for a longer period and with deeper representative characteristics, had been the real embodiment and head of the conspiracy.

Jefferson Davis was born in Christian (afterwards Todd) County, Kentucky, June 3, 1808. Soon afterwards his father removed to Mississippi; but the boy was sent to complete the education begun by home and academic studies, to Transylvania University, where he remained till the age of sixteen. Appointed in that year a cadet at the Military Academy at West Point, he received the thorough training of that institution, graduating in June, 1828; he was then attached to the army, and served as a lieutenant of infantry in the Black Hawk war and other campaigns against the Indians. He resigned his military commission in 1835, having attained the grade of first lieutenant of dragoons. Returning to Mississippi, he se-

cluded himself in plantation life, devoting his time largely to political studies calculated to qualify him for a public career. In 1843 he launched himself on the tide of Mississippi politics, by a speech in the Democratic State Convention, which attracted considerable notice. From the first he became a central party figure in his State, was made a Presidential elector in 1844, and chosen a Representative in Congress in 1845. When the Mexican war broke out, Davis's military training and experience naturally carried him into the campaign as colonel of a volunteer regiment called the Mississippi Rifles; and he rendered valuable service and won deserved distinction in the storming of Monterey and the battle of Buena Vista. Returned from the war, the Governor of Mississippi appointed him to the United States Senate to fill a vacancy. When the next Legislature met, it confirmed the Governor's choice by electing him for the remainder of the term; and a subsequent Legislature reëlected him for the full term succeeding. CHAP. XIII.

From the beginning to the end of his public career Davis posed as a disciple of Calhoun and an advocate of the extreme doctrine of States rights. His maiden speech in the Mississippi Convention of 1843 was to recommend Calhoun as an alternative Presidential candidate; his parting address on leaving the Senate in 1861 drew a contrast between Calhoun as the advocate of nullification, and himself as the advanced defender of secession. So also, when President Polk offered him a commission as brigadier-general of volunteers, to reward his military service in Mexico, the Quixotism which

CHAP. XIII. was a marked feature of Davis's character moved him to employ the incident for the ostentatious championship of States rights. He declined the offer, his biographer says, "on the ground that no such commission could be conferred by Federal authority, either by appointment of the President or by act of Congress."

His next States-rights exploit occurred in 1851. A strong party in Mississippi, violently opposing the compromise measures of 1850, organized a resistance movement in that State, and undertook upon that issue to elect General Quitman governor in 1851. A preliminary election, however, in the month of September, showed them to be some seven thousand votes in the minority; whereupon Quitman withdrew from the contest. Jefferson Davis immediately resigned his full term in the United States Senate and took up the canvass for Governor of Mississippi, which Quitman had abandoned. Davis's short campaign was brilliant but unsuccessful; he was beaten about one thousand votes by Henry S. Foote, the Union candidate, who had also resigned the remainder of his Senatorship to make the contest.

The defeat appeared to have a salutary influence upon Davis's politics, but it proved transient. In the Presidential campaign of 1852 a forlorn-hope of the States-rights fanatics nominated Quitman for President. Davis, with a wiser calculation, forsook his reckless friends and supported Pierce; and for this adhesion Pierce gave him a seat in his Cabinet as Secretary of War. The history of the Kansas trouble shows how faithful he was in this position to pro-slavery interests; and when

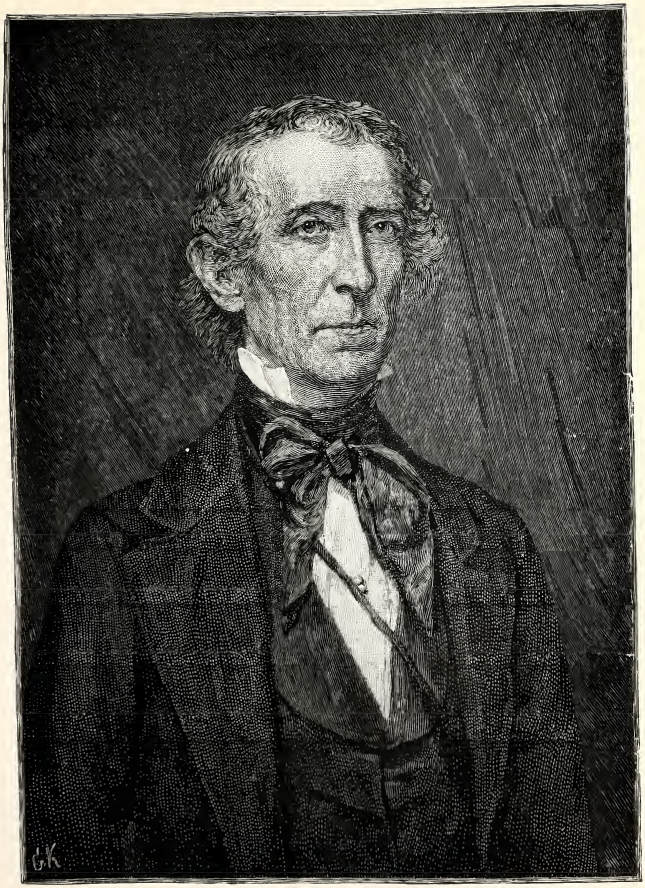
Buchanan succeeded Pierce he again became a Senator for Mississippi, and assumed the leadership of the ultra-Democrats. Years afterwards he explained that in abandoning for a while his extreme course, he was conforming his actions to the decision which Mississippi pronounced in 1851 in favor of the Union. "His opinions," he said, "the result of deliberate convictions, he had no power to change." When, therefore, he entered the Cabinet of President Pierce in 1853 as Secretary of War, and when again on the accession of President Buchanan the Legislature of Mississippi returned him to the Senate, he was, by his own declaration, and by the evidence of his subsequent words and deeds, only an acting Unionist, who at heart cherished the belief of Federal usurpation, and hoped and labored for the hour of confederated State resistance. CHAP. XIII.

It may not be without interest to call attention at this point to a few coincidences in the careers of Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln. They were both born in Kentucky — Davis in the southwestern, Lincoln near the central part of the State. They were both near the same age, Davis being less than nine months the elder. Both were taken in their early years from their birthplaces — Davis's parents emigrating south to Mississippi, Lincoln's north to Indiana and Illinois. Both were soldiers in the Black Hawk war — Davis as lieutenant of regulars, Lincoln as captain of volunteers. Both were candidates for Presidential electors in 1844. Both were soon elected to Congress — Davis in 1845, Lincoln in 1846. Both were successful politicians and popular orators. Both were instinc-

CHAP. XIII. tively studious, introspective, self-contained. Both rose to distinction through the advocacy of an abstract political idea. Both became the chiefs of opposing sections in a great civil war.

These are the only points of resemblance, and the contrasts running through their lives are bold and radical. It is unnecessary to present them in detail; they are comprehended and expressed in their opposing leaderships. If chance or fate had guided their parents to exchange their routes of emigration from Kentucky; if Lincoln had grown up on a Southern cotton plantation, and Davis had split rails to fence a Northern farm; if the tall Illinois pioneer had studied trigonometry at West Point, and the pale Mississippi student had steered a flat-boat to New Orleans, education might have modified but would not have essentially changed either. Lincoln would never have become a political dogmatist, an apostle of slavery, a leader of rebellion; Davis could never have become the champion of universal humanity, the author of a decree of emancipation, the martyr to liberty. Their natures were antipodal, and it is perhaps by contemplating the contrast that the character of Davis may be best understood.

His dominant mental traits were subtlety and will. His nature was one of reserve and pride. His biographers give us no glimpse of his private life. They show us little sympathy of companionship, or sunshine of genial humor. Houston is reported to have said of him that he was "as ambitious as Lucifer and as cold as a lizard." His fancy lived in a world of masters and slaves. His education taught him nothing but the law of sub-



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ordination and the authority of command. A Democrat by party name, he was an aristocrat in feeling and practice. He was a type of the highest Southern culture and most exclusive Southern caste. In political theory he was a sophist, and not a logician. With him, "consent of the governed" in a State was truth; "consent of the governed" in a Territory was error. "Rebellion" in a State must be obeyed; "rebellion" in a Territory "must be crushed." Constitutional forms in Kansas in the interest of slavery were sacred law; constitutional forms in the Union in the interest of freedom were flagrant usurpation. A majority in a State was enthroned freedom; a majority in the nation was insufferable despotism. But even his central dogma became pliant before considerations of self-interest. In his own State, a majority of seven thousand against Quitman in September he treated as a dangerous political heresy to be overthrown by his personal championship. A majority of one thousand against himself in November he affected to regard as a command to stultify his own opinions. His beliefs were at war with the most essential principles of American government. He denied the truth of the Declaration of Independence, denied the right of the majority to rule, denied the supremacy of the national Constitution. His narrowness was of that type which craved the exclusion of Northern teachers and the official censorship of school-books to keep out "Abolition poison." It was in perfect keeping with his character, and in perfect illustration of the paradoxical theories of his followers, that, holding the lash over fifty or a hundred slaves, or exercising an inflexible

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CHAP. XIII. military dictatorship over nine millions of "his people," he could declaim in fervid oratory against the despotism of a majority.

One of his most salient traits was the endeavor to maintain a double position on the question of disunion. His leadership of the "resistance" party in Mississippi in 1850–51 gave him a conspicuous starting-point as an instigator of sedition, and while laboring then and afterwards to unite the South in extreme political demands, and in armed preparation for war against the Union if those demands were not complied with, he as constantly declared that he was no disunionist. Of course he could do this only by setting at defiance the plainest meaning of words and the clearest significance of acts. As the slavery contest drew to its culmination, his recklessness of assertion and antagonism of declaration on these points reached an extreme entitling them to be classed among the curiosities of abnormal mental phenomena. As a blind man may not be held responsible for his description of a painting, or a deaf-mute be expected to repeat accurately the airs of an opera, so we can only explain Jefferson Davis's vehement denial of the charge of hypocrisy and conspiracy through a whole decade, by the supposition that he was incapable of understanding the accepted meaning of such words as "patriotism," "loyalty," "allegiance," "faith," "honor," and "duty." On no other hypothesis can we credit the honesty of convictions and sincerity of expression of sentiments so diametrically opposed as the following, which occur in the same speech:

> Neither in that year [1852], nor in any other, have I ever advocated a dissolution of the Union, or a separa-

tion of the State of Mississippi from the Union, except as the last alternative, and have not considered the remedies which lie within that extreme as exhausted, or ever been entirely hopeless of their success. I hold now, as announced on former occasions, that whilst occupying a seat in the Senate I am bound to maintain the Government of the Constitution, and in no manner to work for its destruction; that the obligation of the oath of office, Mississippi's honor and my own, require that, as a Senator of the United States, there should be no want of loyalty to the Constitutional Union. . .

Whether by the House [of Representatives] or by the people, if an Abolitionist be chosen President of the United States, you will have presented to you the question of whether you will permit the Government to pass into the hands of your avowed and implacable enemies. Without pausing for your answer, I will state my own position to be that such a result would be a species of revolution by which the purposes of the Government would be destroyed, and the observance of its mere forms entitled to no respect. In that event, in such manner as should be most expedient, I should deem it your duty to provide for your safety outside of a Union with those who have already shown the will, and would have acquired the power, to deprive you of your birthright and reduce you to worse than the colonial dependence of your fathers. . . As when I had the privilege of addressing the Legislature a year ago, so now do I urge you to the needful preparation to meet whatever contingency may befall us. The maintenance of our rights against a hostile power is a physical problem and cannot be solved by mere resolutions. Not doubtful of what the heart will prompt, it is not the less proper that due provision should be made for physical necessities. Why should not the State have an armory for the repair of arms, for the alteration of old models so as to make them conform to the improved weapons of the present day, and for the manufacture on a limited scale of new arms, including cannon and carriages; the casting of shot and shells, and the preparation of fixed ammunition?[1]

[1] Jefferson Davis, speech at Jackson, Mississippi, Nov. 11, 1858. In the "Daily Mississippian," Nov. 15, 1858.

CHAP. XIII. That man is not to be envied whose reason can be quieted by a casuistry capable of discovering consistency between these and analogous propositions. From declarations of this quality he could prove his record black or white, as occasion demanded, and, in face of direct threats of secession in Mississippi, deny in the United States Senate, without wincing, that he had avowed disunion sentiments.

Montgomery having witnessed the glories of such an inauguration pageant as could be extemporized, Davis proceeded to the appointment of his Cabinet. Robert Toombs, of Georgia, was made Secretary of State; C. G. Memminger, of South Carolina, Secretary of the Treasury; L. P. Walker, of Alabama, Secretary of War; S. R. Mallory, of Florida, Secretary of the Navy; J. H. Reagan, of Texas, Postmaster-General; and J. P. Benjamin, of Louisiana, Attorney-General. Various acts of the Provisional Congress authorized the new executive to continue the organization of the provisional government of the Confederate States. A regular army of about 10,000 men was ordered to be established; a navy of 10 steam gun-boats authorized to be constructed or purchased; 100,000 volunteers for 12 months authorized to be enlisted, and existing State troops to be received into the provisional army. A loan of $15,000,000 was authorized, and an export duty on cotton of $\frac{1}{8}$ cent per pound levied, to pay principal and interest. Among the first executive acts, Davis assumed control of military operations in the several seceded States; and his Secretary of War
1861. (March 9) made a requisition for 11,000 volunteers, for contingent service at Charleston, Pensa-

cola, and other points. Agents were dispatched to Europe to purchase material of war; and to obtain if possible a recognition of the Confederate States by foreign powers. As a matter of the greatest immediate necessity, a commission of three persons was appointed to proceed to Washington, to bring about the peaceful acquiescence of the United States in the dismemberment of the Union.

CHAPTER XIV

FAILURE OF COMPROMISE

CHAP. XIV. WE have seen under what discouraging circumstances the House Committee of Thirty-three entered upon its allotted work of preparing a Congressional compromise. The extreme Southern members had in advance announced the futility of any such effort, while the central cabal of the conspirators, in open contempt of the Dunn resolution, 1860. issued their secession manifesto of December 14. Nevertheless, the committee continued to meet from time to time, and with commendable industry attacked the chaos of conflicting propositions referred to it by the House, or submitted by its members. But a very few meetings rendered it evident that its labors were foredoomed to failure. Two of the members, Boyce, of South Carolina, and Hawkins, of Florida, refused to attend even a single session. Reuben Davis, of Mississippi, attended, to carry out his purpose, which, as announced openly in the House, was to act as a spy upon its proceedings, and to "prevent its being made a means of deception" to "arrest the present noble and manly movements of the Southern States." After the occupation of Sumter and the accession of the Cabinet régime, with its change of policy and

"Globe," Dec. 10, 1860, p. 59.

its earnest efforts in defense of the Union, the members of the Committee from the Cotton States, with the exception of Hamilton, of Texas, absented themselves in a body. In so far, therefore, as it concerned the seceding States, the proceedings became a mere formality, since the faction designed to be conciliated refused to take part in or to be bound by its transactions. CHAP. XIV.

If this manœuvre on the part of the malcontents was designed to produce discord between the Republicans and the Union Members from the border States, it failed of its object. The chairman, Thomas Corwin, was by nature a peacemaker, genial, eloquent, witty, and eminently conservative in temper and purpose. There were radically different views in the Committee, which all discussion failed to harmonize in any effective shape, but the deliberations were amicable, and furnished throughout no occasion for disruption or explosion. The general effect upon the border-State men was undoubtedly good, and convinced them better than could have been done in the open House, or by mere personal intercourse, that the "Black Republicans" were not so terrible as they had been painted.

The border-State men were, for the most part, sincere Unionists. The only danger in their case was that they might take fright at merely imaginary intentions of radicalism ascribed so freely and so gratuitously by the South to the North. This danger the labors of the Committee helped to dissipate, and, on the other hand, the designs of the fire-eaters themselves were cleverly unmasked by its proceedings. Charles Francis Adams, the Massachusetts member, submitted a resolution on

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the 8th of January, affirming "that the peaceful acquiescence in the election of a Chief Magistrate in accordance with every legal and constitutional requirement is the paramount duty of every good citizen of the United States." One would have thought that so simple and so sound a declaration could encounter no objection; but the uncertain temper of the times in matters of political faith and duty is illustrated in the fact that the Virginia member at once moved to amend by reducing the positive term, "paramount duty," to the phrase, "high and imperative duty." It was thus modified to meet tender Southern susceptibilities. But many who believed themselves conservatives shrank from even this diluted loyalty. Seven members from slave States entered on the journal of the Committee their refusal to vote for it, on the ground that it did not tend to promote adjustment or contemplate Congressional action.

Journal of the Committee, House Report, No. 31, 2d Session, 36th Congress.

The sessions of the Committee, doubtless hastened by the secession of State after State during the first fortnight of the new year, came to a termination with the report of the chairman on the 14th of January, 1861. With the explanation that, though not unanimous, a majority of a quorum had in each instance been obtained, he submitted to the House a series of six propositions, as follows:

First. A series of declaratory resolutions, affirming in substance: 1. Slavery exists by law and usage in fifteen States, and we recognize no outside authority to interfere with it. 2. The fugitive-slave law should be faithfully executed. 3. There is no cause for a dissolution of the Union. 4. States must observe their constitutional obligations. 5. The Union must be preserved. 6. Personal liberty bills and kindred legislation should be revised,

and all rights of traveling or sojourning citizens of other States should be secured. 7. John Brown raids should be prevented. CHAP. XIV.

Second. A joint resolution requesting all States to revise their statutes and repeal all laws in conflict with, or tending to hinder or embarrass, the fugitive-slave law.

Third. A bill to amend the fugitive-slave law, giving the fugitive a jury trial in the State from which he fled, with aid of counsel and process for procuring evidence at the cost of the United States, and to be delivered to claimant, or returned to the place of arrest, according to judgment, at the expense of the United States.

Fourth. A bill to amend the act for the rendition of fugitives from justice, giving Federal judges, instead of governors of States, authority to act on requisitions.

Fifth. A bill to admit New Mexico as a State with or without slavery.

Sixth. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, to the effect that no amendment to interfere with slavery within the States shall originate with any non-slave-holding State, or become valid without the assent of every one of the States composing the Union.

House Report, No. 31, 2d Session, 36th Congress.

These propositions had undoubtedly been adopted in committee by the surrender of strong prejudices and feelings, and as between members assenting to them formed a substantial compromise. But accompanying this report of the chairman were no less than seven minority reports, signed in the aggregate by fourteen members, dissenting from the main report upon grounds verging towards either extreme of the general dispute. Add these fourteen dissenters to the habitual absentees, representing the Cotton States, and it at once became manifest that the apparent majority report was in reality only an opinion of a minority of the Committee, and that, as a practical fact and truthful basis of legislation, the Committee should simply

CHAP. XIV. have reported its inability to reach any mature and binding conclusion. This view of the matter was tacitly taken by the House of Representatives, since these propositions were not brought to a vote in that body until near the close of the session, long after Congressional compromise ceased to have any virtue as a healing remedy.

While Mr. Corwin's report was purely negative, while it shrank from truth and danger, and so far from doing good was calculated still further to mislead the public into a false confidence, his contact with the rebel sentiment in the Committee had fully informed and awakened him to the startling signs of rebellion. He communicated his forebodings in a private letter, two days afterwards, to the President-elect:

> I have been for thirty days in a Committee of Thirty-three. If the States are no more harmonious in their feelings and opinions than these thirty-three representative men, then, appalling as the idea is, we must dissolve, and a long and bloody civil war must follow. I cannot comprehend the madness of the times. Southern men are theoretically crazy. Extreme Northern men are practical fools. The latter are really quite as mad as the former. Treason is in the air around us everywhere. It goes by the name of patriotism. Men in Congress boldly avow it, and the public offices are full of acknowledged secessionists. God alone, I fear, can help us. Four or five States are gone, others are driving before the gale. I have looked on this horrid picture till I have been able to gaze on it with perfect calmness. I think, if you live, you may take the oath.

Corwin to Lincoln, Jan. 16, 1861. MS.

And at this point the sincere but despairing statesman, not daring to trust himself in expressing his evident loss of faith in the Union, abruptly changes the subject.

The Senate Committee of Thirteen fared no better. It will be remembered that it was ordered by vote of the Senate on December 18, and appointed by the Vice-President on the 20th. The announcement of the Committee brought Senator Jefferson Davis to his feet, with a request that the Senate would excuse him from serving. "The position which I am known to occupy," he said, "and the position in which the State I represent now stands, render it altogether impossible for me to serve upon that Committee with any prospect of advantage." The Senate voted to excuse him; but on the following day, to the general surprise, it was moved to reconsider this vote in order that he might serve. Several Republicans pressed for an explanation of this change of purpose, when it came out that his "friends from his section of the country," "entertaining the same opinions" with himself, had caucused with him on the subject and had prevailed upon him to withdraw his objections and go on the Committee. This action, although strange at the time, becomes intelligible enough when we remember that it occurred on and following the day of the South Carolina secession ordinance, while Mr. Buchanan was deliberating on Governor Pickens's letter demanding Sumter, and while Floyd was writing his surrender instructions; in short, when the conspirators' intrigue was in its most promising stage of progress. This being the situation, it was their manifest policy, not only to keep a position which might furnish them useful information, but also lure on the Administration with the tempting bait of compromise and to throw upon the Republicans and the North the burden of rejecting

"Globe," Dec. 20, 1860, p. 158.

Ibid.

"Globe," Dec. 21, p. 182.

CHAP. XIV. proffers of peace and good-will. That Davis did not himself originally see the point was probably owing to a want of some information about the events occurring thick and fast, at the moment he made his objection; that he appreciated the force of the advice is shown by his ready acceptance of it.

It needed but little deliberation to develop the irreconcilable antagonism of principles and purposes which existed in the Committee; and the record of its proceedings is of historical interest only so far as it shows the individual positions of such members as reduced their political schemes to writing and submitted them for its action. The following is believed to be a fair and brief summary of the proposed constitutional amendments in the order in which they were presented:

TOOMBS'S PLAN.

Recognition and protection to property in slaves everywhere except as limited and prohibited by State laws; surrender of fugitive slaves without writ of *habeas corpus* or jury trial; no enactment of Congressional laws concerning slavery without consent of a majority of Senators and Representatives from slave-holding States; no alteration of these or other constitutional provisions on slavery (except of the African slave trade) without consent of each and every slave State.

JEFFERSON DAVIS'S PLAN.[1]

Property in slaves shall stand on the same footing in all constitutional and Federal relations as other property.

[1] The following from the official journal of the Committee of Thirteen (Senate Report, No. 288, 2d Session, 36th Congress) is the full text of the proposition submitted by Jefferson Davis: "Resolved, That it shall be declared by amendment of the Constitution, that property in slaves, recognized as such by the

CRITTENDEN'S PLAN.

1. Restoration and extension of the Missouri Compromise line; no abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia without compensation and voters' consent, or during its existence in Virginia and Maryland; no other Congressional prohibition or abolition of slavery; right of transportation and compensation for rescued fugitives; no future constitutional amendment to affect this or other slavery provision.

2. Certain amendments of fugitive-slave law; complete suppression of the African slave trade.

3. Prohibition of slavery north of 36° 30′; power to divide New Mexico at the discretion of Congress, and admit States thus formed, with or without slavery.

DOUGLAS'S PLAN.

The *status* of each Territory, as now existing by law, to remain unchanged; to be admitted as a State, with or without slavery, on attaining 50,000 population; each Territory in the mean while to have a delegate in the House and a delegate in the Senate; no further acquisition of territory, except by a two-thirds vote of each House of Congress, its *status*, when acquired, to remain unchanged until it attains 50,000 population, then to become a Territory; the judicial power and the fugitive-slave law to apply to Territories and new States.

No elective or office-holding franchise for the African race; power to acquire territory for colonization at Government expense; no power to abolish slavery in Federal places within slave States; no abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia without compensation or voters' consent, or during its existence in Virginia and Maryland; no Congressional prohibition of transportation;

local law of any of the States of the Union, shall stand on the same footing in all constitutional and Federal relations as any other species of property so recognized; and, like other property, shall not be subject to be divested or impaired by the local law of any other State, either in escape thereto or of transit or sojourn of the owner therein; and in no case whatever shall such property be subject to be divested or impaired by any legislative act of the United States or of any of the Territories thereof."

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complete suppression of the African slave trade; compensation for rescued fugitives; no future constitutional amendments on slavery.

SEWARD'S PLAN.

No constitutional amendment to authorize Congress to abolish slavery in States; jury trial for fugitives; Congress to request a revision of obnoxious State legislation.

BIGLER'S PLAN.

Extension of line of 36° 30′, with slavery and provision for four States south of it, and freedom and provision for eight States north of it; no abolition in the District of Columbia while slavery exists in Maryland or Virginia; no future slavery amendments.

RICE'S PLAN.

Repeal all territorial governments; divide the Federal Territories by the line of 36° 30′; call that portion north of it the "State of Washington," and that south of it the "State of Jefferson"; make provision in each case that whenever any portion within an area of 60,000 square miles contains 130,000 inhabitants, a new State may be formed and admitted, with such boundaries as Congress may prescribe.

Senate Report, No. 288, 2d Session, 36th Congress.

Without examining in detail the votes on these varied and conflicting propositions, it is enough to say that not a single one of them commended itself to the Committee as a practical basis of compromise; and, after four meetings, the chairman reported to the Senate on the 31st of December, 1860, "that the Committee have not been able to agree upon any general plan of adjustment."

Ibid.

So far, therefore, from bringing about harmony of views and action, the labors of the Committee of Thirteen had served only to define and sharpen political differences. Notwithstanding all this dis-

couragement, however, the idea of compromise was clung to with tenacity. The declared conviction of parties as they stood admitted of no arrangement; but it was argued that extreme views should not be permitted to plunge the country into civil war. The necessity for agreement was freely conceded, but the embarrassment of the situation lay in the difficulty of defining who it was that held the extreme views which were to be abandoned. CHAP. XIV.

The politicians and representative men of the border States were naturally most anxious and officious in the interest of a compromise. The border States had a close interest and sympathy with the South because, like them, they possessed the institution of slavery, and were therefore sensitive to whatever touched or threatened its welfare or safety. But they were also bound to the North by advantages of commerce and intercourse; and their personal and political relationships extended alike to each section. Moreover, they rightly divined that in case of a conflict they would be apt to become the heaviest sufferers, since their soil must be the inevitable battlefield. To these motives were added that of appreciating the varied benefits of the general Government, and the patriotic one of sincerely entertaining a deep-seated attachment to the Union.

It has been stated that Boteler, of Virginia, and Powell, of Kentucky, were the originators of these two committees of Congress. The real leader of the compromise movement in its larger aspects was Senator John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky. His seventy-two years made him venerable in appear-

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ance. He had been, in addition to holding lesser offices, a member of two Cabinets, Governor of his State, and six times Senator of the United States; his full sheaf of political honors justly rendered him a man of national rank and authority. Without the brilliant qualities of Clay, he was deemed the most acceptable successor of that eminent statesman; and he now hoped to repeat the latter's memorable public service in stilling the great political storm of 1850.

Three days after the report of the Committee of Thirteen, Mr. Crittenden once more brought forward his compromise plan, previously submitted both to the Senate and to the Committee, which declared: "That provision ought to be made by law, without delay, for taking the sense of the people, and submitting to their vote the following resolutions as the basis for the final and permanent settlement of those disputes that now disturb the peace of the country and threaten the existence of the Union." "Sir," said he, in explanation, "it may be that we are spell-bound in our party politics and in opinions which they have generated and fastened and bound upon us against our will; but I appeal with confidence to that great source from which we derive our power. When the people are in danger, and the people's institutions, I appeal with confidence to them. If we are at fault, if we cannot combine the requisite majority here to propose amendments to the Constitution, which may be necessary to the settlement of our present difficulties, the people can. Give us their voice and their judgment, and they will be our safest guides."

"Globe," Jan. 3, 1861, p. 237.



HOUSE IN WHICH LINCOLN LIVED WHEN HE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT.

Considering Mr. Crittenden's representative character, his far-reaching political influence, his unconditional devotion to the Union, his honorable record against the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise, and against the Lecompton fraud, his condemnation of the heresy of secession and non-coercion, and, in addition to all, his persuasive eloquence in private and in public, great hopes were for a while entertained that his name and figure would become a successful rallying point for agreement. Persons who thought this, however, failed to note the well-defined attitudes into which the contending parties had separated. Mr. Crittenden's plan was brought to a test vote on the 16th of January, two days after the report of the House Committee of Thirty-three. Its main feature was the reënactment of the Missouri Compromise, which had been repealed at Mr. Douglas's instance, and the application of its provisions to all remaining Federal territory — that is, that slavery should exist south of the line 36° 30′ and be prohibited north of it. The resolutions also provided that the prohibition should extend to future acquisitions north of the line; and upon motion of Mr. Powell, an amendment was adopted that slavery should also exist in future acquisitions south of it. It had been argued in favor of the plan that it definitely settled the *status* of all Federal territory; but under this amendment the plan became what would be simply the preliminary chapter of a new conflict between the sections for a new balance or preponderance of power through annexation. This was pouring oil on the fire instead of quenching it.

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CHAP. XIV. The Republican Senators, and the Republican party that had won the Presidential victory at the November election upon the distinct issue of "no extension of slavery," could not accept the proposition in this shape; they could not even do so without the Powell amendment. They were compelled to insist that the South must submit to the legally expressed will of the majority. To recede from this was not only the destruction of the Republican party; it was the abandonment of government. The Republican Senators therefore laid down their ultimatum in an amendment offered by Mr. Clark, of New Hampshire, to strike out the Crittenden resolutions and amendment, and substitute the following declaration:

> That the provisions of the Constitution are ample for the preservation of the Union and the protection of all the material interests of the country; that it needs to be obeyed rather than amended; and that an extrication from our present dangers is to be looked for in strenuous efforts to preserve the peace, protect the public property, and enforce the laws, rather than in new guarantees for particular interests, compromises for particular difficulties, or concessions to unreasonable demands.
>
> That all attempts to dissolve the present Union, or overthrow or abandon the present Constitution, with the hope or expectation of constructing a new one, are dangerous, illusory, and destructive; that in the opinion of the Senate of the United States no such reconstruction is practicable, and, therefore, to the maintenance of the existing Union and Constitution should be directed all the energies of all the departments of the Government, and the efforts of all good citizens.

"Globe," Jan. 16, 1861, p. 404.

If the Republicans were not willing to accept the Crittenden compromise, the extreme Southern Senators were still less so. Upon the question being

taken in the Senate, six of the latter refused to vote, and thus took upon themselves the responsibility of effectually killing the Crittenden resolutions by allowing the Clark substitute to be adopted —yeas, 25; nays, 23. The conspirators acted on the assumption that their plans were now sufficiently ripe to enable them to venture on so bold an expedient.

"Globe," Jan. 16, 1861, p. 409.

Mr. Crittenden was greatly cast down by the result, but not yet entirely despondent. Notice was given of a motion to reconsider the vote; and on the following day he telegraphed to friends in North Carolina, "In reply, the vote against my resolutions will be reconsidered. Their failure was the result of the refusal of six Southern Senators to vote. There is yet good hope of success." The conspirators were, however, not only better informed, but inflexibly resolved that so far at least as they were concerned the veteran statesman's prediction should not be verified.

McPherson, p. 39

Compromise, thus twice defeated, was nevertheless so prevalent an idea, or rather seemed so necessary an expedient, that it once more made its appearance in a new shape, and again for a season claimed the attention of the country and of Congress, through the deliberations of an assembly, somewhat anomalous in character and authority, known to history as the "Peace Convention." The particulars of its origin have never been made public, though it is stated that the call was mainly the work of ex-President Tyler. On the 19th of January the Legislature of Virginia passed a series of resolutions inviting the other States of the Union to send commissioners to meet in Wash-

Henry A. Wise, "Seven Decades," p. 271.

1861. L. E. Chittenden, "Peace Convention," p. 9.

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ington on the 4th day of February "to unite with Virginia in an earnest effort to adjust the present unhappy controversies, in the spirit in which the Constitution was originally formed, and consistently with its principles, so as to afford to the people of the slave-holding States adequate guarantees for the security of their rights." One of the resolutions suggested the Crittenden plan as a basis of such adjustment. If the convention should recommend amendments to the Federal Constitution, it was to communicate them to Congress for the purpose of having the same submitted by that body to the several States for ratification. The resolutions further provided that in the mean while ex-President Tyler should call upon President Buchanan, and Judge John Robertson should visit the seceded States, to induce both parties to abstain from a collision of arms.

Chittenden, "Peace Convention," pp. 9, 10.

The result of Tyler's mission has already been mentioned. Buchanan, professing to have no authority to bind the hands of the Government, nevertheless gave an implied promise by sending a special message to Congress, transmitting the Virginia resolutions, and asking that body to abstain from legislation calculated to produce a collision of arms during the contemplated convention. Judge Robertson's visit to the seceded States proved worse than barren. The Cotton States were all willing enough to promise to keep the peace, because they had already made their movements seizing the forts and arsenals, and were now standing on the defensive. As to commissioners, they proposed to send them to Montgomery instead of Washington. The replies made by Governors and

Legislatures were framed, not to promote union, but to work on the sympathies of Virginia for rebellion, and had their intended effect. Starting out as an apostle, Robertson came home a pervert. "So far as my opportunities have enabled me to judge," says his report, "the people and authorities of the Southern Confederacy are resolved, inflexibly and with unparalleled unanimity, to meet all the consequences of the step they have taken. Judging from the same opportunities, I believe that at this time they ardently desire to be reunited with the States whose institutions, interests, rights, and feelings are similar to their own — with those States and with them only. For Virginia, most especially, they express and manifest the highest respect and deference. They are, to a far greater extent than I had ever conceived, by birth bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. Her ancient fame they regard as their rightful inheritance."

Robertson to Gov. Letcher, Feb. 25, 1861. Virginia Senate Journal and Documents, Extra Session, 1861.

When the Peace Convention organized, commissioners from fourteen States, namely, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, and Kentucky, appeared to take their seats. At subsequent periods, seven additional States, Tennessee, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Maine, Illinois, and Kansas, also sent commissioners; so that before the close of the proceedings twenty-one States were represented, some of the commissioners having been appointed by the Legislatures and others by the Governors. The body was not only respectable in the standing and talents of its members, but comprised many names highest in leader-

Chittenden, pp. 18, 19, 465, 466.

CHAP. XIV. ship: Lot M. Morrill, of Maine; George S. Boutwell, of Massachusetts; David Dudley Field, of New York; Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey; David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania; Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland; George W. Summers, of Virginia; James Guthrie, of Kentucky; Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio; Stephen T. Logan, of Illinois; James Harlan, of Iowa, and others. But from the first it was a half-hearted, lame, and deceptive movement. The very conditions of its existence crippled and paralyzed it. The call was "to afford to the people of the slave-holding States adequate guarantees for the security of their rights." The Northern States denied any such necessity. They thought they saw in this scheme only a new effort on the part of the slave-holding interest to extort that which it had failed to gain at the polls, and by the subsequent threat and movement of secession. There was considerable hesitation in sending Northern delegates, and it was finally done merely to parry misconstruction and the imputation of sectional hostility. The representation was incomplete — California, Oregon, Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin were absent from the North; the seven seceded States and Arkansas from the South. The assemblage had neither legal authority nor full popular confidence. It adopted the absurd and illogical method of voting by States, thereby reducing its representative character at least one-half, and setting each separate delegation into active discord. It developed all the usual weaknesses of deliberative bodies, irrelevant talk, personal jealousy, and parliamentary tricks. Its worst derelictions, however, were the prevailing vices of

the period, want of candor, and the evasion of palpable and overshadowing issues. CHAP. XIV

Ex-President Tyler was called to preside over the convention, and Guthrie, of Kentucky, placed at the head of the leading committee. By February 15 this committee reported a series of propositions to form a constitutional amendment, the chief feature of which was a reënactment of the Missouri Compromise; in other words, to divide the present Territories by the parallel of 36° 30′, prohibiting slavery north and permitting it south of that line, and imposing such restrictions upon the acquisition of new territory as to amount to a virtual interdiction. These, with a number of secondary features and several minority reports and amendments, were debated until the 27th, when these main features of the committee's project were substantially adopted by the close vote of nine States in the affirmative and eight States in the negative. According to this vote it seemed that the convention had agreed upon the Crittenden plan, but the result was only an apparent one. The previous afternoon, February 26, had demonstrated the failure of the convention; for on that day a test vote was taken and the line of 36° 30′ rejected, eight to eleven—Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Tennessee voting aye, and Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Virginia voting no. 1861. Chittenden, p. 43. Ibid., pp. 440, 441. Ibid., p. 438.

The sentiment and attitude of the members may be classified under four heads. 1. A very small minority of Southerners demanding extreme con-

CHAP. XIV. cessions to slavery and, as the alternative, bent on secession. 2. Republicans who demanded acquiescence in Lincoln's election. 3. Southern unionists asking moderate guarantees for slavery, but who could not promise that granting them would bring back the seceded States. 4. Northern unionists willing to concede almost anything for compromise. This divergence of opinion rendered the action of the convention wholly negative. Every proposition met abundant objection but no sufficient support. Troublesome queries were thrust aside, not answered. The convention would vote neither on the right of secession nor the duty of coercion.

All these circumstances, of course, lessened the public interest in its final action. The deliberations were held with closed doors; but the substance of its daily proceedings found report in the leading newspapers. The rejection of the line of
1861. 36° 30′ on February 26 was the logical termination of its labors; and precisely what produced the reversal of its action, and the adoption of that identical plan on the following day, has never been satisfactorily explained. The journals show that the vote of Illinois was changed; the vote of New York not counted, upon merely technical grounds; and the vote of Missouri not cast, the reasons not being given. An adjourned evening meeting and some informal caucusing which intervened, both of which are mentioned, may have had their occult influence. At all events the change of attitude and the adoption of a positive proposition was merely formal and reflected neither the conviction nor will of the convention; the affirmative vote being less than a majority of the States represented.

Nevertheless it was treated as a genuine compromise. A hundred guns were fired to celebrate the event, and the proposed amendment was gravely transmitted to Congress. Only five days of the session yet remained and the House refused even to receive it. In the Senate it elicited some debate, and Mr. Crittenden assumed its championship, moving to substitute it for his own renewed and pending proposition. The Senate, however, clearly understood its worthlessness and, by ayes 7, noes 28, voted down the amendment. CHAP. XIV.

"Globe," Mar. 2, 1861, p. 1405.

CHAPTER XV

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

CHAP. XV. THOUGH the efforts for compromise which we have related failed in the specific form in which they were presented to Congress, they were not entirely barren of result. At a point where it was least expected, they contributed to the adoption by Congress of a measure of adjustment which might have restored harmony to the country if the movement of the Cotton States had not been originated and controlled by a conspiracy bent upon rebellion as its prime and ultimate object.

The report of the Committee of Thirty-three was
1861. made about the middle of January, but at that time none of its six propositions, or recommendations, commanded the attention of the House. The secession stage of the revolution was just culminating. All was excitement and surprise over the ordinances of the Cotton States, and the seizure, without actual collision or bloodshed, of the several Southern forts and arsenals. The retirement of the Southern Members of Congress, and the meeting of the revolutionary leaders to unite and construct their provisional government at Montgomery, prolonged what was to the public a succession of dramatic and spectacular incidents, resembling the move-

ments of a political campaign rather than the serious progress of a piece of orderly, business-like statesmanship.

The North could not yet believe that the designs of the Cotton-State hotspurs were so desperate. The more conservative Congressmen from the North and from the border States still hoped that good might come if an effort of conciliation and compromise were once more renewed. Accordingly, near the close of the session (February 27, 1861), Mr. Corwin, Chairman of the House Committee of Thirty-three, brought forward one of the propositions which had been reported more than a month before from his Committee. The original report proposed, in substance, an amendment of the Constitution providing that any constitutional interference with slavery must originate with the slave States, and have the unanimous assent of all the States to become valid. Mr. Corwin, by an amendment, changed the phraseology and purport to the following:

ART. 13. No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere within any State with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State.

This amendment was adopted by the House on February 28, yeas 133, nays 65; the Senate also passed it during the night preceding the 4th of March, though in the journals of Congress it appears dated as of March 2. The variation is explained by the fact that the legislative day of the journal frequently runs through two or more calendar days. In that body the vote was, yeas 24,

"Globe," 1861, p. 1285.

Ibid., p. 1403.

CHAP. XV. nays 12, and it was approved by President Buchanan, probably only an hour or two before the inauguration of his successor.

Mr. Lincoln alluded to this amendment in his inaugural address, reciting its substance and giving it his unreserved approval. "I understand," he said, "a proposed amendment to the Constitution — which amendment, however, I have not seen — has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that, holding such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable." The new Administration soon after transmitted this joint resolution to the several States to receive their official action. But nothing came of it. The South gave no response to the overture for peace, and in the North it was lost sight of amid the overshadowing events that immediately preceded the outbreak of hostilities.

While no practical benefit grew out of the constitutional amendment, other measures were adopted by Congress, which proved of value later in the struggle. The retirement of the Southern Members gave the Republicans a certain power of legislation in both branches, though under conditions which required them to be circumspect and conservative. Indeed, their policy during this stormy and difficult period was to remain strictly on the defensive. They must wait patiently until

Mr. Buchanan's term should expire, and until Mr. Lincoln could be inaugurated and assume control of the executive functions. We find, therefore, in the Congressional debates only so much party assertion as declared that they would not recede from the position taken by the party and indorsed by the people in the Presidential election. Indeed, it may be said that they did not fully maintain their position. They consented to the passage of the bills organizing the new Territories of Colorado, Dakota, and Nevada, without insisting that they should contain a prohibition of slavery. While this might be regarded as an important concession, and was claimed by Douglas as an abandonment of the Chicago platform, yet by this moderation they perhaps also secured the admission of Kansas into the Union as a free State, which greatly strengthened their power in the Senate.

So, again, on the other hand, they yielded a point to which perhaps it might have been more prudent to adhere. The Select Committee of Five and the Military Committee of the House had recommended three measures of considerable present and prospective importance. One was a bill to provide for calling forth the militia, designed to supply the President with military power to execute the laws. Another to provide for the collection of duties on board a ship, where the custom-house could not be used, was intended to meet pending difficulties in Charleston harbor. Another was a proposition to amend the force bill of 1795. If these acts had become laws, they might, perhaps, have furnished the incoming Administration with at least a part of the legal authority for which Lincoln was obliged

CHAP. XV. to call the special session of 1861. But the Republican Senators and Representatives adhered to their course of inaction, and abstained from passing these bills, with the double view of avoiding sectional irritation, and to leave the new Administration free to develop its own policy.

Mr. Buchanan's Administration had been as unfortunate in its financial management as in its treatment of the slavery question. "No nation has ever before been embarrassed from too large a surplus in its treasury," said he in his inaugural address. His Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Cobb, soon removed this "embarrassment." When he took charge of the department the treasury was full to overflowing; when he abandoned it to go into secession, even the Senators and Representatives in Washington could not get enough cash on their salaries to pay their board bills.

"To-day," says the Washington correspondent of the New York "Tribune," under date of December 6, 1860, "the Speaker's warrants on the treasury in favor of the pay of Members of Congress were presented and refused for a want of funds." This disgraceful state of affairs was brought to light by a selfish device invented by some of the Members, in the scramble for pocket-money. Under date of December 7, the same paper relates: "Some Members of the House of Representatives were sharp enough to get the Speaker's certificates for pay and mileage, and present them personally at the treasury, instead of collecting them through the Sergeant-at-Arms — thus securing their own dues, while others have been denied even *pro rata*, the Secretary already acknowledging an exhaustion of

means." The speech of the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, on December 10, confirms the newspaper statement. "Members are aware," said he, "that the Government has not been able to pay, for the last week or two, our own salaries, and many other demands at New York and other places." We look in vain in the reports of Secretary Cobb for any proper explanation of this descent of the Government within four years from abundance to bankruptcy. The financial revulsion of 1857, the Utah expedition, and the secession movement are mentioned, but they do not afford a clear solution of the problem. Mr. Cobb dryly states the figures, and leaves the public to form its own opinion. His reports show that on July 1, 1857, the public debt was only $29,060,386.90, and that the balance in the treasury was $17,710,114.27. On July 1, 1860, the public debt, permanent and temporary, was $64,769,703.08, and the balance in the treasury only $3,629,206.71. The actual liabilities of the Government had been increased $49,790,223.74; in other words, the public debt had been nearly trebled during three years of peace and almost normal prosperity. Thus the public credit was already undermined long before the secession panic exerted any influence. From July 1, 1860, onward, the decline was quick and disastrous. On September 8, 1860, Secretary Cobb negotiated ten millions of five per cent. ten-year bonds at par and a slight premium.[1] But this, his last financial transaction, failed in part; only $7,022,000

"Globe," 1860–61, p. 42.

Annual Report Secretary of the Treasury, 1857.

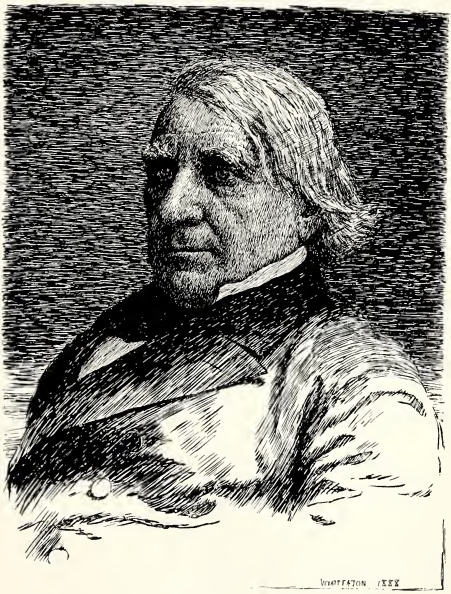
Ibid., 1860.

Bayley, "U. S. National Loans, Tenth Census," p. 150.

[1] Under act of June 22, 1860. In exact figures the rate was at from par to 1.45 per cent. premium. See Bayley, "U. S. National Loans, Tenth Census," p. 73.

CHAP. XV. was actually paid in; the remaining bidders refused to fulfill their engagements. His report of December 5, 1860, recommending an unconditional pledge of the public lands for an issue of treasury notes, was calculated to alarm rather than reassure capitalists. Three days afterwards he resigned to embark in active rebellion. Congress, on December 17, authorized an issue of ten millions of treasury notes, at rates of interest offered by the lowest responsible bidder, but did not pledge the public lands.

Mr. Cobb's successor (Philip F. Thomas, appointed December 12, 1860), also a secessionist, and thereby ill-suited to strengthen the public credit, advertised five millions of these treasury notes. The bids were opened on December 28, 1860, when, in addition to the revolutionary reports from the Cotton States, the rumor of a conspiracy by the rebels to seize Washington and the public archives was prevalent. The desperate straits of the Government are shown in the first response by the capitalists. Less than half the amount advertised was bid for at all. Only $121,100 was bid for at rates under ten per cent.; $39,000 at ten and under twelve; $1,787,000 at twelve; and from twelve the remaining bids ran up to thirty-six per cent. The whole offer would have proven a substantial failure had not a few patriotic gentlemen in New York (not losing sight of their financial advantage) used personal solicitation to make up a combination bid for a million and a half at twelve per cent., on the condition, however, that the sum should be used four days later to pay the January interest on the public debt, which would otherwise have suf-



ELIHU B. WASHBURNE.

fered default. This half-financial, half-patriotic exertion of a few leading banking firms saved the national credit from dishonor; and the newspapers once more sharply contrasted from what height to what depth it had sunk by recalling the fact that at the beginning of Buchanan's Administration, Secretary Cobb bought up the six per cents of 1868 at sixteen per cent. premium, in order to get rid of the surplus in the treasury. Seeing the resolute action of these bankers in the crisis, other capitalists so far recovered from their panic that they now came forward and by private agreement upon twelve per cent. interest took the balance of the five millions for which, a few days before, they had been too timid to bid at all.

Financial Article, N. Y. "Tribune," Dec. 29, 1860.

Ibid., Jan. 1, 1861.

In the new Cabinet complications at this juncture Secretary Thomas in turn resigned, and on January 11, 1861, President Buchanan, upon financial compulsion as related, appointed John A. Dix, then postmaster at New York, to succeed him. Personally acquainted with New York merchants and bankers, Mr. Dix could make a stronger appeal to their interest to support the Government with financial aid. A new five million offer of treasury notes (the remainder authorized by the act of December 17, 1860) had been advertised before Thomas's resignation. Dix meanwhile assumed the duties of the Treasury Department, and inspired public confidence by his personal worth and openly declared loyalty. The bids were opened January 19, 1861, and exhibited a decided improvement of financial credit. More than twelve millions were bid for, at rates of interest ranging from 8¾ to 20 per cent., the bulk being from 10

CHAP. XV. Financial Article, N. Y. "Tribune," Jan. 21, 1861.

to 12 per cent. Dix awarded $3,230,000 at rates of interest under 11, and the remainder at 11 per cent. The public liabilities, maturing and current, were now, however, accumulating with such rapidity that he was compelled to recommend a new loan. An act of February 8, 1861, authorized him to issue twenty-five millions of six per cent. ten to twenty years' bonds. Eight millions were advertised and awarded to bidders on February 23. Financial courage had so far returned that fourteen millions were bid for and at rates which enabled him to sell the whole eight millions at an average of a trifle over 9½ per cent. discount.[1]

Ibid., Feb. 25, 1861.

These financial struggles of the Government, which occurred before the revolutionary crisis had fairly set in, are related to show that a measure of legislation grew out of them which had an important influence in sustaining its power when the storm of war soon after burst. The free-trade doctrines of the Democratic party had, with the success of that party in electing Presidents Pierce and Buchanan, also resulted in the enactment by Congress of the low tariff of March 3, 1857. The Republicans had long alleged that the policy of this act would impoverish the treasury, and now when the Government revenues had steadily fallen behind its expenditures, at the rate of about twenty millions a year, their complaint appeared to be well founded.

Whatever difference of views might exist about financial cause and effect, there could be none that

[1] In exact figures the bonds were sold at an average of 90.47⅝. See Bayley, "U. S. National Loans, Tenth Census," p. 151.

some radical measure to replenish the treasury was imperative. The Morrill Tariff Bill, as it was called, was pending in Congress. A year before it was passed by the House, but defeated in the Senate. It was now urged by its friends with new zeal. The members from the seceding States had been among its sturdiest opponents; but when in January they retired from their seats in the House and Senate, the adoption of the measure became practicable. The Morrill Tariff Act was accordingly passed and signed by President Buchanan on March 2, 1861. It was a comprehensive measure, raising the duties on imported merchandise from an average of nineteen to an average of thirty-six per cent., and had the double effect of materially increasing the customs receipts and stimulating the productive energies of the country. It went into operation on the 1st of April, and thus its quickening and strengthening help came just at the opportune moment, when the nation was compelled to gird up its loins for a gigantic war.

1861.

But the law was not alone confined to the subject of the tariff. Two important financial provisions were embodied in it: one gave the President authority to borrow ten millions additional, either in the form of bonds or treasury notes, and another permitted him to "substitute treasury notes for the whole, or any part of the money which he was authorized to borrow by previous acts." When a few days later Lincoln became President, and Chase Secretary of the Treasury, they could look with a little less dizziness into the financial gulf already open, and constantly widening before their vision, remembering that by the terms of this act

Bayley, "U. S. National Loans, Tenth Census," p. 77.

CHAP. XV. they had power to issue about forty millions of treasury notes without further legislation, namely, a balance of $13,000,000 under the act of June 22, 1860; a balance of $17,000,000 under the act of February 8, 1861; and the $10,000,000 directly provided for in the Morrill Tariff Act.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

AMONG the first congratulations which poured in upon Mr. Lincoln after his election was a terse greeting from ex-Governor Chase, dated November 7, that admirably expressed the prevalent feeling. "You are President-elect. I congratulate you and thank God. The great object of my wishes and labors for nineteen years is accomplished in the overthrow of the slave power. The space is now clear for the establishment of the policy of freedom on safe and firm grounds. The lead is yours. The responsibility is great. May God strengthen you for your great duties."

Chase to Lincoln, Nov. 7, 1860. R. B. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 364.

Day after day confirmed the completeness of the Republican victory, and two weeks after election the city of Springfield was in the blaze and glory of a great celebration to signalize the result. Projected merely as a local jubilee, it called to the city crowds of rejoicing strangers. Though he had not said a public word during the campaign, Mr. Lincoln could not on this occasion refuse the sound of his voice to the huge torch-light procession and the crowds of his neighbors and friends whose shouts called him to the door of his modest home.

CHAP. XVI. It was not the voice of partisan exultation, however, but of patriotic liberality. He said:

> Friends and fellow-citizens, please excuse me on this occasion from making a speech. I thank you in common with all those who have thought fit by their votes to indorse the Republican cause. I rejoice with you in the success which has thus far attended that cause. Yet in all our rejoicings, let us neither express nor cherish any hard feelings towards any citizen who by his vote has differed with us. Let us at all times remember that all American citizens are brothers of a common country, and should dwell together in the bonds of fraternal feeling.

We will perceive hereafter how in this simple utterance of his opening Presidential career he struck the key-note of blended firmness and charity, which was to become the characteristic of his Administration.

Springfield now became, for some months, the Mecca of American politics. Casual visitors tarried for a few hours to shake hands with the newly chosen chief; correspondents of leading newspapers established temporary headquarters from which to send their readers pen-pictures of his personal appearance, his daily habits, his home and public surroundings, and to catch the flying and often contradictory rumors of his probable intentions. Artists came to paint his portrait, ambitious politicians to note new party currents, and veteran statesmen to urge the adoption of favorite theories or the advancement of faithful adherents.

To all appearance Lincoln remained unchanged. In the unpretending two-story frame house which constituted his home, his daily routine continued as before, except that his door was oftener opened

to welcome the curious visitor or to shelter the confidential discussion of ominous occurrences in national affairs. His daily public occupation was to proceed to the Governor's office in the State-house, to receive the cordial and entirely unceremonious greetings of high and low,— whosoever chose to enter at the open door,— and in the interim to keep himself informed, by means of the daily-increasing budget of letters and newspapers, of the events of the country at large, and to give directions to his private secretary as to what replies should be made to important communications. Beyond the arrival of distinguished visitors, there was in all this no sign of elevation and rulership; he was still the kind neighbor and genial companion, who had for every one he met the same bearing which for a quarter of a century had made his name a household synonym of manly affection, virtue, and honor. CHAP. XVI.

Under this quiet exterior and commonplace routine he was, however, already undergoing most anxious and harassing labors. Day by day the horizon of politics gathered gloom, and the theory of secession became the theme of every newspaper and the staple question of his daily visitors. Even upon theories Lincoln maintained a prudent reserve. Nevertheless his qualified comments to friends were prompt and clear.

"My own impression is," said he (November 15), "leaving myself room to modify the opinion if upon a further investigation I should see fit to do so, that this Government possesses both the authority and the power to maintain its own integrity. That, however, is not the ugly point of this 1860.

CHAP. XVI.

matter. The ugly point is the necessity of keeping the Government together by force, as ours should be a government of fraternity." Later (December 13) he formulated his opinion a little more in detail. "The very existence," said he, "of a general and national government implies the legal power, right, and duty of maintaining its own integrity. This, if not expressed, is at least implied in the Constitution. The right of a State to secede is not an open or debatable question. It was fully discussed in Jackson's time, and denied not only by him, but by the vote of Congress. It is the duty of a President to execute the laws and maintain the existing Government. He cannot entertain any proposition for dissolution or dismemberment. He was not elected for any such purpose. As a matter of theoretical speculation it is probably true, that if the people, with whom the whole question rests, should become tired of the present Government, they might change it in the manner prescribed by the Constitution."

J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

The secrets of the incipient rebellion, and the treachery and conspiracy of a portion of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, which have been so fully laid bare from data only since become accessible, neither Mr. Lincoln nor any one save the actors themselves had then means of knowing. But in addition to other current sources of information the confidential letters of Captain Abner Doubleday, second in command at Fort Moultrie, written to the captain's brother in New York, were, so long as mail communication remained, forwarded to the President-elect, giving him an inside view of matters at that critical post.

Most important, however, in influence, and most valuable in possible as well as actual consequences, were the correspondence and confidence which established themselves at an early day between Mr. Lincoln and General Scott. The general was evidently somewhat proud of his famous "Views," written to President Buchanan under date of October 29, 1860, as a political suggestion. He transmitted a copy of the same to the President-elect, as he had done to many other gentlemen of prominence. A brief acknowledgment was written in reply (November 9): "Mr. Lincoln tenders his sincere thanks to General Scott for the copy of his 'Views, etc.,' which is received; and especially for this renewed manifestation of his patriotic purposes as a citizen, connected as it is with his high official position and most distinguished character as a military captain." CHAP. XVI.

Lincoln to Gen. Scott, Nov. 9, 1860. MS.

The delicate compliment and dignified reserve made their impression on the old hero. Called to Washington about the middle of December, and smarting under the neglect of Secretary Floyd and the discouraging indifference of President Buchanan, his hopes turned toward the elect of the people at Springfield.

It was at this juncture (December 17) that a friend of long standing called upon the general, and in a confidential and frank interview learned from his own lips the alarming dangers of the Government — the neglect of the Administration to send reënforcements, the defenseless situation of Fort Moultrie, and that Sumter, the key of Charleston harbor, lay at the mercy of a mob. "None of his suggestions or recommendations have been acted upon, and of course he is powerless to do 1860.

CHAP. XVI. anything further, but his heart is sound and true. 'I wish to God,' said he, 'that Mr. Lincoln was in office.' He continued, 'I do not know him, but I believe him a true, honest, and conservative man.' Then he asked earnestly, 'Mr. Washburne, is he a *firm* man?' I answered that I had known you long and well and that you would discharge your duty, and your whole duty, in the sight of the furnace seven times heated. He then said resolutely and hopefully, 'All is not lost.'"

Washburne to Lincoln, Dec. 17, 1860. MS.

In response to this patriotic expression of the general, the return mail carried the following letter from Lincoln to Washburne, dated December 21: "Last night I received your letter giving an account of your interview with General Scott, and for which I thank you. Please present my respects to the general, and tell him, confidentially, I shall be obliged to him to be as well prepared as he can to either *hold* or *retake* the forts, as the case may require, at and after the inauguration."

Lincoln to Washburne, Dec. 21, 1860. "North American Review," Nov., 1885, p. 460.

A little later Mr. Lincoln again sent messages of esteem and confidence to the general by Senators Cameron and Baker, who made visits to Springfield. "I have seen General Scott," writes Cameron in reply (January 3), "who bids me say he will be glad to act under your orders in all ways to preserve the Union. He says Mr. Buchanan at last has called on him to see that order shall be preserved at the inauguration, in this District; that for this purpose he has ordered here two companies of flying artillery, and that he will organize the militia and have himself sworn in as a constable. The old warrior is roused, and he will be equal to the occasion."

Cameron to Lincoln, Jan. 3, 1861. MS.

This statement was repeated in an autograph note from the general himself on the following day: "Lieutenant-General Scott is highly gratified with the favorable opinion entertained of him by the President-elect as he learns through Senators Baker and Cameron, also personal friends of General S., who is happy to reciprocate his highest respect and esteem. The President-elect may rely with confidence on General S.'s utmost exertions in the service of his country (the Union) both before and after the approaching inauguration."

The general then mentions in detail the measures just taken, under the reorganized Cabinet and the accession of Mr. Holt, to countermand the shipment of the Pittsburgh guns, to send reënforcements to Fort Jefferson, and to secure the safety of Washington for the Presidential count and the approaching inauguration. "Permit me," wrote Mr. Lincoln in reply, January 11, "to renew to you the assurance of my high appreciation of the many past services you have rendered the Union, and my deep gratification at this evidence of your present active exertions to maintain the integrity and honor of the nation."

Gen. Scott to Lincoln, Jan 4, 1861. MS.

Lincoln to Gen. Scott, Jan. 11, 1861. MS.

The President-elect was further gratified to receive about the same time from the veteran General Wool a letter of uncompromising loyalty. "Many thanks," Lincoln wrote in reply, January 14, "for your patriotic and generous letter of the 11th instant. As to how far the military force of the Government may become necessary to the preservation of the Union, and more particularly how that force can best be directed to the object, I must chiefly rely upon General Scott and yourself.

CHAP. XVI. It affords me the profoundest satisfaction to know, that with both of you judgment and feeling go heartily with your sense of professional and official duty to the work."

Lincoln to Wool, Jan. 14, 1861. MS.

Meanwhile trusty friends in Washington, both in and out of Congress, had kept Lincoln informed by letter of public events occurring there, so far as they were permitted to come to the knowledge of Republicans: how the Cabinet was divided, how the message was scouted, the bold utterances of treason, the growing apprehensions of the public. But general opinion was still in a hopeful mood. "Mr. Mann," wrote one, "who stated that he knew you personally, requested me to say that he had seen the Union dissolved twice — once when Southern Members of Congress refused for three days to occupy their seats — and that it all ended in smoke. He did not appear the least alarmed about the secession movement, but others, particularly Thurlow Weed and Horace Greeley, expressed great anxiety."

Trumbull to Lincoln, Dec. 2, 1860. MS.

These were influential names, and it may be well to cite their own words. "I am anticipating troubles," wrote Mr. Weed, December 2, "not generally apprehended by our friends. I want the North to be sure she is right and then to go ahead."

Weed to Swett, Dec. 2, 1860. MS.

Some days later he wrote further: "In consultation yesterday with several friends, it was thought best to invite the Governors of several States to meet in this city on Thursday of next week, so that, if possible, there should be harmony of views and action between them. It occurred to me that you should be apprised of this movement. Of course it is to be quiet and confidential. I have

been acting without knowledge of your views, upon vital questions. But I find it safe to trust the head and heart when both are under the guidance of right motives. I do not want you to be saddled with the responsibilities of the Government before you take the helm. On the question of preserving the Union, I am unwilling to see a *united* South and a *divided* North. Nor is such an alternative necessary. With wisdom and prudence we can unite the North in upholding the supremacy of the Constitution and laws, and thus united, your Administration will have its foundation upon a rock. . ."

Weed to Lincoln, Dec. 11, 1860. MS.

To this Mr. Lincoln replied as follows on the 17th of December:

Yours of the 11th was received two days ago. Should the convocation of Governors of which you speak seem desirous to know my views on the present aspect of things, tell them you judge from my speeches that I will be inflexible on the territorial question; that I probably think either the Missouri line extended, or Douglas's and Eli Thayer's popular sovereignty, would lose us everything we gain by the election; that filibustering for all south of us, and making slave States of it would follow, in spite of us, in either case; also that I probably think all opposition, real and apparent, to the fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution ought to be withdrawn.

I believe you can pretend to find but little, if anything, in my speeches, about secession. But my opinion is, that no State can in any way lawfully get out of the Union without the consent of the others; and that it is the duty of the President and other Government functionaries to run the machine as it is.

T. W. Barnes, "Weed Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 310.

Horace Greeley, editor of the New York "Tribune," not only had similar fears, but, what was much worse, by his editorials encouraged the South

CHAP. XVI. to hope for peaceable disunion. He wrote (November 30): "Webster and Marshall and Story have reasoned well; the Federal flag represents a government, not a mere league; we are in many respects one nation from the St. John to the Rio Grande; but the genius of our institutions is essentially Republican and averse to the employment of military force to fasten one section of our Confederacy to the other. If eight States, having five millions of people, choose to separate from us, they cannot be permanently withheld from so doing by Federal cannon."

N. Y. "Tribune," Nov. 30, 1860.

"There is a pretty general belief here that the Cotton States will go out of the Union," wrote a correspondent from Washington. "One South Carolina Member is sorry for the condition of things in his State — is at heart opposed to disunion; but I will not mention his name lest it should by some means get into the newspapers. Orr was forced into the secession movement against his will. This I have from good authority, and yet the statement may be a mistake. It is hard to get at the exact truth."

Gurley to Lincoln, Dec. 3, 1860. MS.

From another Mr. Lincoln received information as to the course of his party friends: "A good feeling prevails among Republican Senators. The impression with all, unless there be one exception, is, that Republicans have no concessions to make or compromises to offer, and that it is impolitic even to discuss making them. . . I was a little surprised that the House voted to raise a committee on the state of the Union. . . Inactivity and a kind spirit is, it seems to me, all that is left for us to do, till the 4th of March."

Trumbull to Lincoln, Dec. 4, 1860. MS.

"I have never in my life," wrote Mr. Corwin, Chairman of the Committee of Thirty-three (December 10), "seen my country in such a dangerous position. I look upon it with great alarm, but I am resolved not to be paralyzed by dismay. Our safety can only be insured by looking the danger full in the face and acting with calm dignity in such way as [that] if possible we may ride out the storm."

Corwin to Lincoln, Dec. 10, 1860. MS.

These few extracts out of a multitude indicate the current and character of the reports which reached Mr. Lincoln from various quarters. The hopes of the more sanguine were, unfortunately, not realized. The timid grew more despondent, the traitors bolder, and the crisis almost became a panic. Business men and capitalists of the Eastern States were beginning to exert a pressure for concessions to avert civil war, under which stanch Republicans were on the point of giving way. The border States, through their presses and their public men, implored a compromise, but their entreaty was uniformly directed to the Republicans to make concessions, and more often to justify than to denounce disunion. Some of the conspirators themselves adroitly encouraged this effort to demoralize the North by a pretense of contrition. "South Carolina, I suppose," wrote a friend to Mr. Lincoln, "will try on her secession project. Perhaps some of the Cotton States will follow. Their number will not be large. Indeed, I know that some of the heretofore most rabid secessionists now tremble before the brink on which they stand. They would retreat without trying the experiment if they had not kindled a fire at home

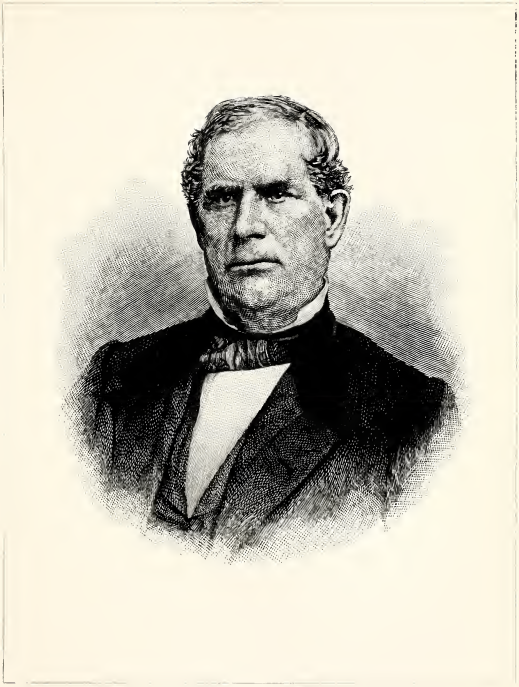
CHAP. XVI. which is beyond their control. This, in substance, Jefferson Davis stated to Fitch no longer ago than yesterday." The profession did not well accord with the signing of the conspirators' secession address by that Senator only three days before. "I listened yesterday to Mr. Crittenden's speech," wrote another friend, "in support of his proposed compromise. In my opinion he is one of the most patriotic and at the same time mischievous of the Southern Senators. . . After Mr. Crittenden, Mr. Johnson, of Tennessee, took the floor. . . His simple declaration that the supposed wrongs must be settled inside of the Union is worth a hundred-fold more than all the patriotic wailing of the antediluvian Crittendens."

Fogg to Lincoln, Dec. 17, 1860. MS.

Williams to Lincoln, Dec. 19, 1860. MS.

There were plenty of correspondents to announce and describe the present and impending dangers, but none to furnish a solution of the difficulty. There was no end of wild suggestion, and that too from prominent men ordinarily capable of giving counsel. One, as we have seen, was for accepting disunion. Another thought a letter or proclamation from the President-elect would still the storm. A third wanted him to drop down into Washington "with a carpet-sack." A fourth advised him to march to the capital with a hundred thousand "wide-awakes." Still a fifth proposed he should create a diversion by the purchase of Cuba.

It was a providential blessing that in such a crisis the President-elect was a man of unfailing common sense and complete self-control. He watched the rising clouds of insurrection; he noted the anxious warnings of his friends. He was neither buoyed up by reckless hopes, nor cast down by ex-



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aggerated fears. He bided his time, grasped at no rash counsels or experiments, uttered neither premature cry of alarm nor boast of overweening confidence. He resisted pressing solicitations to change his position, to explain his intention, to offer, either for himself or the great national majority which chose him, any apology for his or their high prerogative exercised in his election. CHAP. XVI.

It must not, however, be inferred from the foregoing that Mr. Lincoln shut himself up in total silence. To discreet friends, as well as to honorable opponents, under the seal of confidence, he was always free to repeat his well-formed convictions, and even in some degree to foreshadow his probable course. It is gratifying to note in this connection, especially since it evinces his acute judgment of human nature, that in few instances was such confidence violated during the whole period of his candidacy and official life. By unnoticed beginnings he easily and naturally assumed the leadership of his party in the personal interviews and private correspondence following the election. He was never obtrusive or dictatorial; but in a suggestion to one, a hint to another, a friendly explanation or admonition to a third, he soon gave direction, unity, and confidence to his adherents.

William Cullen Bryant, for instance, was strongly opposed to Mr. Seward's going into the Cabinet. Lincoln wrote him a few lines in explanation, which brought back the following qualified acquiescence: "I have this moment received your note. Nothing could be more fair or more satisfactory than the principle you lay down in regard to the formation of your council of official advisers. I shall always

CHAP. XVI. be convinced that whatever selection you make it will be made conscientiously."

Bryant to Lincoln, Jan. 3, 1861. MS.

Mr. Greeley was, as we have seen, indulging in damaging vagaries about peaceable secession, and to him Lincoln sent a word of friendly caution. Greeley wrote a statement of his views in reply, but substantially yielded the point. He said a State could no more secede at pleasure from the Union than a stave could secede from a cask. That if eight or ten contiguous States sought to leave, he should say, "There 's the door — go!" But, "if the seceding State or States go to fighting and defying the laws, the Union being yet undissolved save by their own say-so, I guess they will have to be made to behave themselves. . . . I fear nothing, care for nothing, but another disgraceful back-down of the free States. That is the only real danger. Let the Union slide — it may be reconstructed; let Presidents be assassinated, we can elect more; let the Republicans be defeated and crushed, we shall rise again. But another nasty compromise, whereby everything is conceded and nothing secured, will so thoroughly disgrace and humiliate us that we can never again raise our heads, and this country becomes a second edition of the Barbary States, as they were sixty years ago. 'Take any form but that.'"

Greeley to Lincoln, Dec. 22, 1860. MS.

On this point Lincoln's note had reassured his shrinking faith. The "Tribune" announced that Mr. Lincoln had no thought of concession, and thenceforward that powerful journal took a more healthy and hopeful tone.

Hon. William Kellogg, the Illinois Representative on the Committee of Thirty-three, wrote to him

for instructions as to the course he should pursue. Under date of December 11, Mr. Lincoln replied:

Entertain no proposition for a compromise in regard to the extension of slavery. The instant you do they have us under again: all our labor is lost, and sooner or later must be done over. Douglas is sure to be again trying to bring in his "Popular Sovereignty." Have none of it. The tug has to come, and better now than later. You know I think the fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution ought to be enforced — to put it in its mildest form, ought not to be resisted.[1]

Lincoln to Kellogg. Dec. 11, 1860. MS.

It is evident that Lincoln was at this time not without serious apprehension that the threats and movements of secession might induce some of the less sturdy Republicans to listen to appeals for concession; for on December 13 he repeated this monition to his friend Washburne in Congress, with added emphasis:

Your long letter received. Prevent as far as possible any of our friends from demoralizing themselves and their cause by entertaining propositions for compromise of any sort on slavery extension. There is no possible compromise upon it but what puts us under again, and all our work to do over again. Whether it be a Missouri line or Eli Thayer's popular sovereignty, it is all the same. Let either be done, and immediately filibustering and extending slavery recommences. On that point hold firm as a chain of steel.

Some weeks later Kellogg visited Lincoln to further urge his views of compromise on the Presi-

[1] It would have been well had his advice been followed. Under the pressure of the disunionists and of the border-State men, Kellogg's firmness gave way, and he announced his willingness to recede from the Republican declarations. The change only sacrificed his consistency. He lost his friends and gained no followers. His concession was spurned by the disunionists; and being a large and corpulent man, the wits of the day made themselves merry by dubbing his apostasy the "Mammoth Cave."

CHAP. XVI. dent-elect. As a result of that visit Lincoln wrote the following letter to Seward on February 1:

> On the 21st ult. Hon. W. Kellogg, a Republican Member of Congress of this State, whom you probably know, was here in a good deal of anxiety seeking to ascertain to what extent I would be consenting for our friends to go in the way of compromise on the now vexed question. While he was with me I received a dispatch from Senator Trumbull, at Washington, alluding to the same question and telling me to await letters. I therefore told Mr. Kellogg that when I should receive these letters posting me as to the state of affairs at Washington, I would write to you, requesting you to let him see my letter. To my surprise, when the letters mentioned by Judge Trumbull came they made no allusion to the "vexed question." This baffled me so much that I was near not writing you at all, in compliance with what I had said to Judge Kellogg. I say now, however, as I have all the while said, that on the territorial question — that is, the question of extending slavery under the national auspices — I am inflexible. I am for no compromise which assists or permits the extension of the institution on soil owned by the nation. And any trick by which the nation is to acquire territory, and then allow some local authority to spread slavery over it, is as obnoxious as any other. I take it that to effect some such result as this, and to put us again on the high road to a slave empire, is the object of all these proposed compromises. I am against it. As to fugitive slaves, District of Columbia, slave trade among the slave States, and whatever springs of necessity from the fact that the institution is amongst us, I care but little, so that what is done be comely and not altogether outrageous. Nor do I care much about New Mexico, if further extension were hedged against.

Lincoln to Seward, Feb. 1, 1861. MS.

We shall describe somewhat in detail the formation of Lincoln's Cabinet, and will only mention here that on December 13 he began that work by tendering the post of Secretary of State to Mr. Seward, which offer was accepted December 28.

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The correspondence between these eminent men affords an interesting view of the beginnings of the new Administration. "Mr. Weed finding it not inconvenient to go West," wrote Seward, December 16, "I have had some conversation with him concerning the condition and the prospect of public affairs, and he will be able to inform you of my present unsettled view of the subject upon which you so kindly wrote me a few days ago. I shall remain at home until his return, and shall then in further conference with him have the advantage of a knowledge of the effect of public events certain to occur this week."

Seward to Lincoln, Dec. 16, 1860. MS.

Thurlow Weed, the editor of the "Albany Evening Journal," who held a unique position as the intimate friend of Seward and as a politician of unrivaled influence in the State of New York, went to Springfield and had several interviews with the President-elect. There is no record of these conferences; but it is likely that Mr. Weed urged on those occasions, as he did on all others, the utmost forbearance, conciliation, and concession to the South. To employ his favorite formula, he wanted Republicans "to meet secession as patriots and not as partisans." The sentiment and the alliteration were both pleasing; but Lincoln, trained in almost life-long debate with Douglas, the most subtle juggler in words ever known to American politics, was not a man to deal in vague phrases. He told Mr. Weed just what he would concede and just how far he would conciliate—drew him a sharp and definite line to show where partisanship ends and where patriotism begins. When Mr. Weed returned he bore with him the written statement of Lincoln;

CHAP. XVI. what he believed, and was determined to assert and maintain on pending and probable issues.

Mr. Seward's letter of December 26, to Lincoln, gives us the sequel of this visit.

I had only the opportunity for conferring with Mr. Weed which was afforded by our journeying together on the railroad from Syracuse to Albany.

He gave me verbally the substance of the suggestion you prepared for the consideration of the Republican Members, but not the written proposition. This morning I received the latter from him, and also information for the first time of your expectation that I would write to you concerning the temper of parties and the public here.

I met on Monday my Republican associates on the Committee of Thirteen, and afterwards the whole Committee. With the unanimous consent of our section I offered three propositions which seemed to me to cover the ground of the suggestion made by you through Mr. Weed as I understood it.

First. That the Constitution should never be altered so as to authorize Congress to abolish or interfere with slavery in the States. This was accepted.

Second. That the fugitive-slave law should be amended by granting a jury trial to the fugitive. This in opposition to our votes was amended so as to give the jury in the State from which the fugitive fled, and so amended was voted down by our own votes. The Committee had already agreed to Mr. Crittenden's amendment concerning the fees of the commissioner, making them the same when the fugitive is returned to slavery as when he is discharged.

Our *Third* resolution was that Congress recommend to all the States to revise their legislation concerning persons recently resident in other States, and to repeal all such laws which contravene the Constitution of the United States, or any law of Congress passed in pursuance thereof. This was rejected by the pro-slavery vote of the Committee.

To-day we have had another meeting. I offered, with the concurrence of my political associates, a fourth propo-

sition, viz.: That Congress should pass a law to punish invasions of our States and conspiracies to effect such invasions, but the latter only in the State and district where the acts of such complicity were committed. This by the votes of our opponents was amended so as practically to carry out Mr. Douglas's suggestion of last winter for the revival of the old Sedition law of John Adams's time, and then was rejected by our own votes.

This evening the Republican members of the Committee with Judge Trumbull and Mr. Fessenden met at my house to consider your written suggestion and determine whether it shall be offered. While we think the ground has been already covered, we find that in the form you give it, it would divide our friends not only in the Committee but in Congress; a portion being unwilling to give up their old opinion that the duty of executing the constitutional provisions concerning fugitives from service belongs to the States, and not at all to Congress. But we shall confer and act as wisely as we can.

Thus far I have reported only our action on the subject of your suggestion. I proceed now to tell you what I think of the temper of the parties and of the public here.

South Carolina has already taken her attitude of defiance. Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana are pushed on towards the same attitude. I think that they could not be arrested even if we should offer all you suggest and with it the restoration of the Missouri Compromise line. But persons acting for those States intimate that they might be so arrested because they think that the Republicans are not going to concede the restoration of that line.

The action of the border States is uncertain. Sympathy there is strong with the Cotton States, while prudence and patriotism dictate adhesion to the Union. Nothing could *certainly* restrain them but the adoption of Mr. Crittenden's compromise, and I do not see the slightest indication of its adoption on the Republican side of Congress. The Members stand nearly or quite as firm against it as the country is. Under these circumstances, time and accident, it seems to me, must determine the course of the border States.

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Probably all the debate and conferences we have hitherto had will sink out of the public mind within a week or two, when the Republican members shall have refused to surrender at discretion to the State of South Carolina. New and exciting subjects will enter into the agitation and control results.

Thus I have said all that I am able to say of the temper of parties and of the public. I add, very respectfully, my own opinion on the probable future.

The United States of America, their Constitution, their capital, their organization in all its departments, and with all its military and naval forces, will stand and pass without resistance into your hands. There will be several, perhaps all, of the slave States standing in a contumacious attitude on the 4th of March. Sedition will be growing weaker and loyalty stronger every day from the acts of secession as they occur.

Seward to Lincoln, Dec. 26, 1860. MS.

But now the crisis in the affairs of the Government was approaching. It is already foreshadowed in Mr. Seward's letter of December 28. "There is a feverish excitement here," wrote he, "which awakens all kinds of apprehensions of popular disturbance and disorders connected with your assumption of the Government." And he suggested that Mr. Lincoln should prepare to come to Washington a week sooner than usual on such occasions; prefacing the advice with the statement, "I do not entertain these apprehensions myself." But by the day following he became convinced of the danger, and again wrote:

At length I have gotten a position in which I can see what is going on in the councils of the President. It pains me to learn that things there are even worse than is understood. The President is debating day and night on the question whether he shall not recall Major Anderson and surrender Fort Sumter and go on arming the South. A plot is forming to seize the capital on or

before the 4th of March, and this, too, has its accomplices in the public councils. I could tell you more particularly than I dare write, but you must not imagine that I am giving you suspicions and rumors. Believe me that I know what I write. In point of fact, the responsibilities of your administration must begin before the time arrives.

Seward to Lincoln, Dec. 29, 1860. MS.

Mr. Seward then advises that the President should arrive earlier, that he appoint his Secretaries of War, Navy, and Treasury, and that they come to Washington as soon as possible.

The events of a day or two, however, dissipated the apparent magnitude of the crisis. Buchanan's council broke up, Floyd retired in disgrace, the Cabinet was reorganized; Holt was made Secretary of War, and the plots of the conspirators were exposed and for a season baffled.

CHAPTER XVII

STEPHENS'S SPEECH

CH. XVII. FOLLOWING the lead of South Carolina, the Governor of Georgia began the secession movement in that State almost immediately after the Presidential election, by such public declarations and acts as fell within the scope of his personal influence and official authority. But Georgia had given a heavy vote for Douglas, and her people were imbued with a strong feeling of conditional unionism. An opposition to hasty secession at once developed itself of so formidable a character that all the influence and cunning of the secessionists were needed to push their movement to success. The ablest men in the State hurried to Milledgeville and met in a sort of battle royal of speech-making and wire-pulling; the Legislature was the target, and its action or non-action upon military appropriations and a convention bill was the result to be affected. Senator Toombs and others made speeches to promote secession; and in reply to these Alexander H. Stephens addressed the Legislature by special invitation on the 14th of November. His speech takes rank as the ablest made by a Southerner in opposition to disunion. The occasion appears to have been one of great

excitement. Toombs sat on the platform beside the speaker, and interlarded the address with his cynical interrogatories and comments, which Stephens met in every instance with successful repartee. CH. XVII.

The speaker declared that to secede in consequence of Lincoln's election was to break the Constitution and show bad faith. "We went into the election with this people," said he. "The result was different from what we wished; but the election has been constitutionally held." Mr. Lincoln could do the South no harm against an adverse House and Senate. This Government, with all its defects, came nearer the object of all good governments than any other on the face of the earth. One by one he refuted the charges and complaints which had been advanced by Toombs, and warned his hearers against the perils of sudden disunion. Liberty once lost might never be restored. Georgia had grown great, rich, and intelligent in the Union.

> I look upon this country, with our institutions, as the Eden of the world, the Paradise of the Universe. It may be that out of it we may become greater and more prosperous; but I am candid and sincere in telling you that I fear if we yield to passion, and without sufficient cause shall take that step, instead of becoming greater, or more peaceful, prosperous, and happy — instead of becoming gods we will become demons, and at no distant day commence cutting one another's throats.

The speech created an immense sensation throughout the South, and but for an artful trick of the secessionists would have arrested and changed the immediate tide of secession in Georgia. Seeing that the underlying Union feel-

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ing was about to endanger their scheme of revolt, through defection or hesitation on the part of the Empire State of the South, they devised an adroit plea to appropriate its whole force to further their own plans. They persistently urged that "we can make better terms out of the Union than in it." Mr. Stephens himself has explained the misrepresentation and its result. "Two-thirds at least of those who voted for the ordinance of secession did so, I have but little doubt, with a view to a more certain re-formation of the Union."

Alex. H. Stephens, "A Constitutional View of the Late War between the States," Vol. II., p. 321.

To understand this statement more thoroughly, it must be added that Mr. Stephens's great Union speech was also enthusiastically hailed by the North as a sign of firm allegiance. But that part of the country totally misapprehended its spirit and object. With all his eloquently asserted devotion to the Union, he was a pro-slavery man of the most ultra type. He defended the institution upon the "higher law" doctrine. "If slavery," said he, "as it exists with us is not best for the African, constituted and made as he is, if it does not best promote his welfare and happiness, socially, morally, and politically, as well as that of his master, it ought to be abolished." He believed slavery should be protected in the Territories by Federal law. He did not go quite to the extent of advocating a revival of the African slave trade; but went so far as to suggest that without such a re-opening the South could not maintain her coveted balance of power. "If the policy of this country," said he, "settled in its early history, of prohibiting further importations or immigrations of this class of population, is to be adhered to, the race of competition

Stephens, Farewell Speech, Augusta, Ga., July 2, 1859. Cleveland, "Life of Stephens," p. 650.

Stephens, Farewell Speech, Augusta, Ga., July 2, 1859. Cleveland, "Life of Stephens," p. 647.

between us and our brethren of the North in the colonization of new States, which heretofore has been so well maintained by us, will soon have to be abandoned."

So again, while he asserted that the South had lost nothing, but gained much through the slavery agitation, and while he maintained that she was menaced by no danger, he had been for nearly ten years a conditional disunionist. During the agitation of 1850, a convention of Georgia passed certain resolutions, known as the "Georgia platform." The resolutions declared the acceptance of the compromise of 1850 as a "permanent adjustment"; and then went on to threaten disunion in case that adjustment were violated.[1] This "Georgia platform" was Mr. Stephens's rallying-ground and stronghold; latterly he had extended it by including personal liberty bills as a cause of disunion. He loved the Union, but he held the Union secondary to the Georgia platform; and he opposed secession because he thought it a departure from this platform. "Not only a departure from the Georgia platform," said he, "and from the long-established

[1] "*Fourth.* That the State of Georgia, in the judgment of this convention, will, and ought to resist, even (as a last resort) to a disruption of every tie which binds her to the Union, any future act of Congress abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, without the consent and petition of the slaveholders thereof, or any act abolishing slavery in places within the slave-holding States, purchased by the United States for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dock-yards, navy yards, and other like purposes; or in any act suppressing the slave trade between slave-holding States; or in any refusal to admit as a State any Territory applying, because of the existence of slavery therein; or in any act prohibiting the introduction of slaves into the Territories of Utah and New Mexico; or in any act repealing or materially modifying the laws now in force for the recovery of fugitive slaves." —Stephens, "War Between the States," Vol. II., p. 676.

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principles of the national Democratic party, but an entire change of position of the entire South, of all parties, not of all individuals, in relation to the power and jurisdiction of the Federal Government over the subject of African slavery."

Stephens, Augusta Speech, Sept. 1, 1860, Cleveland, p. 692.

When the disruption of the Charleston Convention paralyzed the Democratic party, Mr. Stephens lost heart. He thought the times out of joint. He saw no further prospect of doing good. The popular fever must run its course. If disunion came he avowed he would yield to the misfortune. His destiny, he said, lay with Georgia and the South. It will appear from this that Mr. Stephens was a most unsafe political mentor. Yet, out of this lethargy of conviction and will came the splendid outburst of patriotic eloquence and Union argument of his Milledgeville speech; only to be marred, however, at its close by renewed adhesion to the Georgia platform, and a new subserviency to the "will of Georgia."

Stephens to Landrum, July 1, 1860. Cleveland, p. 672.

The newspapers brought the report of Mr. Stephens's speech to Springfield, the home of Mr. Lincoln, as well as to all other Northern cities, and the President-elect read its stirring periods with something of the general hope that a gleam of light was shining upon dark places. Like other men in the North, he had no means of knowing the eccentricities of Mr. Stephens's principles and policy, and therefore probably shared the general error of overvaluing his expressions of attachment to the Union. He had personally known him as a fellow-Congressman and a fellow-Whig in 1847–49; they had become co-laborers in their advocacy of the nomination and election of General Taylor to

the Presidency, and through these associations contracted a warm social and political friendship.

It was, therefore, most natural that, upon reading his reported speech, Mr. Lincoln addressed a note of a few lines to Mr. Stephens, asking him for a revised copy; and this note led to a short but most interesting correspondence.

Mr. Stephens replied courteously, saying that his speech had not been revised by him; that while the newspaper report contained several verbal inaccuracies, its main points were sufficiently clear for all practical purposes. The note closed with the following sentence: "The country is certainly in great peril, and no man ever had heavier or greater responsibilities resting upon him than you have in the present momentous crisis." The phrase seemed to open the way to a confidential interchange of thought; and a few days afterwards Mr. Lincoln wrote the following frank letter:

For your own eye only.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Dec. 22, 1860.

HON. A. H. STEPHENS.

MY DEAR SIR: Your obliging answer to my short note is just received, and for which please accept my thanks. I fully appreciate the present peril the country is in, and the weight of responsibility on me. Do the people of the South really entertain fears that a Republican administration would, directly or indirectly, interfere with the slaves, or with them about the slaves? If they do, I wish to assure you, as once a friend, and still, I hope, not an enemy, that there is no cause for such fears. The South would be in no more danger in this respect than it was in the days of Washington. I suppose, however, this does not meet the case. You think slavery is right and ought to be extended, while we think it is wrong

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and ought to be restricted. That, I suppose, is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us.

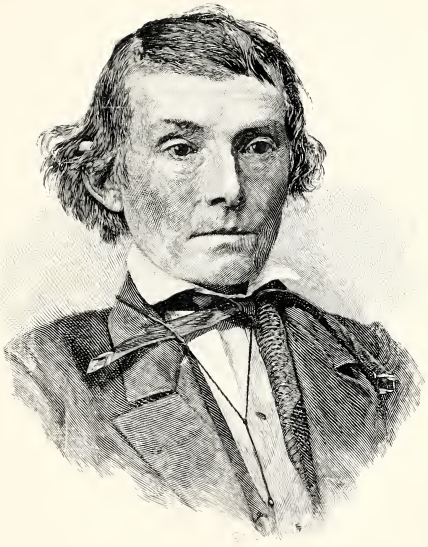
Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

Stephens, "War Between the States," Vol. II., p. 266.

With equal frankness Mr. Stephens, under date of December 30, wrote a long reply, which is conspicuous for its candid admissions. Premising that though differing from him politically he was not Mr. Lincoln's enemy, Mr. Stephens proceeded as follows:

I will also add that in my judgment the people of the South do not entertain any fears that a Republican administration, or at least the one about to be inaugurated, would attempt to interfere directly and immediately with slavery in the States. Their apprehension and disquietude do not spring from that source. They do not arise from the fact of the known antislavery opinions of the President-elect. Washington, Jefferson, and other Presidents are generally admitted to have been antislavery in sentiment. But in those days antislavery did not enter as an element into party organizations. . . But now this subject, which is confessedly on all sides outside of the constitutional action of the Government so far as the States are concerned, is made the central idea in the platform of principles announced by the triumphant party. The leading object seems to be simply, and wantonly, if you please, to put the institutions of nearly half the States under the ban of public opinion and national condemnation. This, upon general principles, is quite enough of itself to arouse a spirit not only of general indignation, but of revolt on the part of the proscribed. . . We at the South do think African slavery, as it exists with us, both morally and politically right. This opinion is founded upon the inferiority of the black race; you, however, and perhaps a majority of the North, think it wrong. Admit the difference of opinion. The same difference of opinion existed to a more general extent amongst those who formed the Constitution when it was made and adopted. The changes have been mainly to



ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS.

our side. As parties were not formed on this difference of opinion then, why should they be now? The same difference would, of course, exist in the supposed case of religion. When parties, or combinations of men, therefore, so form themselves, must it not be assumed to arise not from reason or any sense of justice, but from fanaticism? The motive can spring from no other source, and when men come under the influence of fanaticism, there is no telling where their impulses or passions may drive them. This is what creates our discontent and apprehension. . . Conciliation and harmony, in my judgment, can never be established by force. Nor can the Union, under the Constitution, be maintained by force. The Union was formed by the consent of Independent Sovereign States. Ultimate sovereignty still resides with them separately, which can be resumed, and will be, if their safety, tranquillity, and security in their judgment require it. Under our system, as I view it, there is no rightful power in the general Government to coerce a State in case any one of them should throw herself upon her reserved rights, and resume the full exercise of her sovereign powers. Force may perpetuate a Union — that depends upon the contingencies of war. But such a Union would not be the Union of the Constitution: it would be nothing short of a consolidated despotism.

Stephens, "War Between the States," Vol. II., pp. 267–70.

Mr. Lincoln could not, of course, enter upon a further discussion of the topics raised, and made no reply to Mr. Stephens's letter. The correspondence is noteworthy as showing how both writers agreed upon the actual and underlying cause of the political crisis — namely, that the South believed slavery to be right and ought to be extended, while the North believed it was wrong and ought to be restricted. It was a conflict of opinion. Such conflicts have come in all times, in all nations, and under all forms of government. But, admitting the existence of such a conflict of opinion, the legitimate inquiry arises, Was it a proper cause of war?

CH. XVII. History must answer this question unhesitatingly and emphatically in the negative. In ages happily past, the anger of a king, the caprice of a mistress, or the ambition of a minister has often deluged a nation in blood. But in our day the conscience of civilization demands that the sword shall only defend the life of governments, and the life, liberty, and property of their subjects. It has ordained that written constitutions shall decide claims of rulers and rights of citizens. Casuistry the most adroit could not prove the right of the free States to expel the slave States for believing the institution of slavery to be a substantial blessing; equally absurd was the doctrine that the slave States had a right to destroy the Union by secession because the free States thought slavery a moral, social, and political evil. Upon this question, as upon all others, public opinion was the arbiter appointed by the Constitution and laws. Upon this question the lawful and constitutional verdict had been pronounced by the election of Lincoln; and the proper duty of the South under the circumstances had been admirably stated by Mr. Stephens himself in his Milledgeville speech: "In my judgment the election of no man, constitutionally chosen to that high office, is sufficient cause for any State to separate from the Union. It ought to stand by and aid still in maintaining the Constitution of the country."

Cleveland, p. 696.

Mr. Stephens's letter ignored the existence of the pro-slavery sentiment in the South, which had for six years been united and unceasing in party affiliation and action, and that this party action had wrought

the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in violation of plighted political faith and generous comity between sections. Moreover that antislavery opinions had not only been under ban of public sentiment there, but had notoriously for years been visited with mob violence, and been made the subject of prohibitory penal statutes. The experiment of a sentimental union dreamed of by Stephens and others had been fully tried in the compromise of 1850, and first and flagrantly violated by the South herself, against every appeal and protest. CH. XVII.

CHAPTER XVIII

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CH. XVIII. ONE of the vexatious duties of Lincoln was to answer the importunings of a class of sincere, but timid men, alarmed by the signs of disunion, who besought him to make some public statement to quiet the South. Requests of this character were not confined to one party, but came from all; the more considerable number being from Republicans and from Southern unionists or followers of Bell and Everett. The great bulk of these letters was, of course, never answered; but occasionally one was received from a man of such standing and influence that to ignore it would not only seem ungracious, but might subject the President-elect to more serious misrepresentation than it had already been his lot to endure. To show both a prominent phase of current politics and his manner of dealing with it, we print several replies of this class.

Thus, for instance, he wrote, confidentially, to Mr. William S. Speer, a citizen of Tennessee, under
1860. date of October 23:

I appreciate your motive when you suggest the propriety of my writing for the public something disclaiming all intention to interfere with slaves or slavery in the States; but in my judgment it would do no good. I

have already done this many, many times; and it is in print, and open to all who will read. Those who will not read or heed what I have already publicly said would not read or heed a repetition of it. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." CH. XVIII. Lincoln to Speer, Oct. 23, 1860. MS.

Among the newspapers of the West, none had taken a higher rank or wielded a greater influence than the "Louisville Journal." It had in a manner been Mr. Lincoln's primer in politics in those early days when he labored through Blackstone, or even farther back when he was yet struggling with Kirkham's grammar on the shady knolls of New Salem. Compared with these rocks and pitfalls of letters, the anecdotes, the wit, the epigrammatic arguments of the "Louisville Journal" were a very garden of delight, not only to Lincoln, but to the crude yet knowledge-hungry intellects of the whole Mississippi Valley. In time the "Journal" became a great luminary, and the name of its witty editor a household word. For many years it was a beacon and watch-tower of the Whig party; then the Pandora's box of the Nebraska bill was opened; and when finally in the extraordinary campaign of 1860 Lincoln read this once favorite sheet, it was to find himself the victim of its satire and depreciation. Victory, however, is a sovereign balm for detraction; and it must have been easy for him to forgive his old friend George D. Prentice when the latter wrote him (October 26): "There is evidently a very strong probability of your being elected to the Presidency by the popular vote." Expressing the "strongest" confidence in both his "personal and political integrity," he

CH. XVIII. suggested that in the event of his election he should publish a letter setting forth his conservative views and intentions, "to assure all good citizens of the South and to take from the disunionists every excuse or pretext for treason."

Prentice to Lincoln, Oct. 26, 1860. MS.

To this appeal Mr. Lincoln prepared a reply, October 29, though it was not then sent:

Your suggestion that I in a certain event shall write a letter setting forth my conservative views and intentions is certainly a very worthy one. But would it do any good? If I were to labor a month, I could not express my conservative views and intentions more clearly and strongly than they are expressed in our platform and in my many speeches already in print and before the public. And yet even you, who do occasionally speak of me in terms of personal kindness, give no prominence to these oft-repeated expressions of conservative views and intentions, but busy yourself with appeals to all conservative men to vote for Douglas,— to vote any way which can possibly defeat me,— thus impressing your readers that you think I am the very worst man living. If what I have already said has failed to convince you, no repetition of it would convince you. The writing of your letter, now before me, gives assurance that you would publish such a letter from me as you suggest; but, till now, what reason had I to suppose the "Louisville Journal," even, would publish a repetition of that which is already at its command, and which it does not press upon the public attention?

And now, my friend,— for such I esteem you personally,— do not misunderstand me. I have not decided that I will not do substantially what you suggest. I will not forbear from doing so merely on punctilio and pluck. If I do finally abstain, it will be because of apprehension that it would do harm. For the good men of the South — and I regard the majority of them as such — I have no objection to repeat seventy and seven times. But I have bad men also to deal with, both North and South; men who are eager for something new upon

which to base new misrepresentations; men who would like to frighten me, or at least to fix upon me the character of timidity and cowardice. They would seize upon almost any letter I could write as being an "awful coming down." I intend keeping my eye upon these gentlemen, and to not unnecessarily put any weapons in their hands.

Lincoln to Prentice, Oct. 29, 1860. MS.

This letter was withheld till after election. On the 16th of November he wrote a letter of very similar purport to Mr. N. Paschal, editor of the "Missouri Republican."

I could say nothing which I have not already said, and which is in print, and accessible to the public. Pardon me for suggesting that if the papers like yours, which heretofore have persistently garbled and misrepresented what I have said, will now fully and fairly place it before their readers, there can be no further misunderstanding. I beg you to believe me sincere, when I declare I do not say this in a spirit of complaint or resentment; but that I urge it as the true cure for any real uneasiness in the country, that my course may be other than conservative. The Republican newspapers now and for some time past are and have been republishing copious extracts from my many published speeches, which would at once reach the whole public if your class of papers would also publish them. I am not at liberty to shift my ground — that is out of the question. If I thought a repetition would do any good I would make it. But in my judgment it would do positive harm. The secessionists *per se*, believing they had alarmed me, would clamor all the louder.

Lincoln to Paschal, Nov. 16, 1860 MS.

With the solicitations of this nature coming from his political friends, Mr. Lincoln was not only as firm and decided, but more emphatic in criticism. On November 5, the day before the Presidential election, there arrived at Springfield, and called upon him, a gentleman from New England, of prominence in political and official life, who brought and presented letters of this same tenor from a consid-

1860.

CH. XVIII. erable number of citizens representing commercial and manufacturing industries in that region. He was one of those keen, incisive talkers who go direct to the heart of a mission.

"I have called to see," he said, "if the alarms of many persons in New England engaged in commerce and manufactures cannot by some means be relieved. I am myself largely interested in manufactures. Our trade has fallen off, our workmen are idle, we get no orders from the South, and with the increasing chances of civil war, bankruptcy and ruin stare us in the face."

Something in the persistence and manner of his interlocutor, something in the tone of the letters presented, and still more in the character of the signers, irritated Lincoln to a warmth of retort he seldom reached. He divined at once the mercenary nature of the appeal, and it roused him to repel the pressure. His visitor closed by asking some conservative promise "to reassure the men honestly alarmed."

"There are no such men," bluntly replied Lincoln. "This is the same old trick by which the South breaks down every Northern victory. Even if I were personally willing to barter away the moral principle involved in this contest, for the commercial gain of a new submission to the South, I would go to Washington without the countenance of the men who supported me and were my friends before the election; I would be as powerless as a block of buckeye wood."

The man still insisted, and Lincoln continued:

"The honest men (you are talking of honest men) will look at our platform and what I have

said. There they will find everything I could now say, or which they would ask me to say. All I could add would be but repetition. Having told them all these things ten times already, would they believe the eleventh declaration? Let us be practical. There are many general terms afloat, such as 'conservatism,' 'enforcement of the irrepressible conflict at the point of the bayonet,' 'hostility to the South,' etc., all of which mean nothing without definition. What then could I say to allay their fears, if they will not define what particular act or acts they fear from me or my friends?" CH. XVIII.

At this stage of the conversation his visitor, who with true military foresight had provided a reserve, handed him an additional letter numerously signed, asking if he did not there recognize names that were a power.

"Yes," retorted Lincoln sharply, glancing at the document, "I recognize them as a set of liars and knaves who signed that statement about Seward last year."

The visitor was taken aback at this familiarity with the local politics of his State, but rallied and insisted that there were also other names on the list. Lincoln now looked through the paper more carefully, his warmth meanwhile cooling down a little.

"Well," answered he, laughing, "after reading it, it is about as I expected to find it. It annoyed me to hear that gang of men called respectable. Their conduct a year ago was a disgrace to any civilized citizen."

Here his visitor suggested that the South was making armed preparations.

CH. XVIII. "The North," answered Lincoln, "does not fear invasion from the slave States, and we of the North certainly have no desire, and never had, to invade the South. They have talked about what they intend to do, in the event of a Black Republican victory, until they have convinced themselves there is really no courage left in the North."

"Have we backed this time?" interrupted the visitor.

"That is just what I am pressed to do now," replied Lincoln. "If I shall begin to yield to these threats, if I begin dallying with them, the men who have elected me (if I shall be elected) would give me up before my election, and the South, seeing it, would deliberately kick me out. If my friends should desire me to repeat anything I have before said, I should have no objection to do so. If they required me to say something I had not yet said, I would either do so or get out of the way. If I should be elected, the first duty to the country would be to stand by the men who elected me."

J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

Still, from time to time, the point was pressed upon him from other influential quarters. Henry J. Raymond, editor of the "New-York Times," joined in urging it. Lincoln, on November 28, answered him confidentially as follows:

> Yours of the 14th was received in due course. I have delayed so long to answer it, because my reasons for not coming before the public in any form just now had substantially appeared in your paper (the "Times"), and hence I feared they were not deemed sufficient by you, else you would not have written me as you did. I now think we have a demonstration in favor of my view. On the 20th instant Senator Trumbull made a short speech, which I suppose you have both seen and approved. Has

a single newspaper, heretofore against us, urged that speech upon its readers with a purpose to quiet public anxiety? Not one, so far as I know. On the contrary, the "Boston Courier" and its class hold me responsible for that speech, and endeavor to inflame the North with the belief that it foreshadows an abandonment of Republican ground by the incoming Administration; while the "Washington Constitution" and its class hold the same speech up to the South as an open declaration of war against them. This is just as I expected, and just what would happen with any declaration I could make. These political fiends are not half sick enough yet. Party malice, and not public good, possesses them entirely. "They seek a sign, and no sign shall be given them." At least such is my present feeling and purpose. CH. XVIII.

Lincoln to Raymond, Nov. 28, 1860. MS.

And in this purpose he remained steadfast to the end, though put to yet more trying tests. It has been mentioned, that with the opening of Congress, and the formation of the Senate Committee of Thirteen and the House Committee of Thirty-three, certain conservative men from the border slave States endeavored to gain control of the political situation by forming a neutral or mediating party between the disunionists and the Republicans. Their policy was a mistake; for, while reprobating present dismemberment, their attitude on the slavery question indicated clearly enough that, if clung to, it would inevitably drive them to the extreme plans of the Cotton States. Some of these would-be "neutral" States eventually went that direful road; and those which did not were saved only by the restraint of the Union army. But for the time their leaders were sincerely patriotic. From one of the most prominent of these, John A. Gilmer, of North Carolina, to whom Lincoln afterwards made a tender of a Cabinet appoint-

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ment, he received an inquiry, dated December 10, concerning his opinions on several points of the slavery controversy, saying: "I am not without hope that a clear and definite exposition of your views on the questions mentioned may go far to quiet, if not satisfy, all reasonable minds; that on most of them it will become plain that there is much more misunderstanding than difference, and that the balance are so much more abstract than practical."

Gilmer to Lincoln, Dec. 10, 1860. MS.

However difficult to resist this appeal, so influential, so respectful, so promising, the President-elect felt himself bound to adhere to his policy of refusing any public utterance, for reasons which he set forth at some length in a confidential answer, written on the 15th of December:

> I am greatly disinclined to write a letter on the subject embraced in yours; and I would not do so, even privately as I do, were it not that I fear you might misconstrue my silence. Is it desired that I shall shift the ground upon which I have been elected? I cannot do it. You need only to acquaint yourself with that ground, and press it on the attention of the South. It is all in print and easy of access. May I be pardoned if I ask whether even you have ever attempted to procure the reading of the Republican platform, or my speeches, by the Southern people? If not, what reason have I to expect that any additional production of mine would meet a better fate? It would make me appear as if I repented for the crime of having been elected and was anxious to apologize and beg forgiveness. To so represent me would be the principal use made of any letter I might now thrust upon the public. My old record cannot be so used; and that is precisely the reason that some new declaration is so much sought.
>
> Now, my dear sir, be assured I am not questioning your candor; I am only pointing out that while a new

letter would hurt the cause which I think a just one, you can quite as well effect every patriotic object with the old record. Carefully read pages 18, 19, 74, 75, 88, 89, and 267 of the volume of Joint Debates between Senator Douglas and myself, with the Republican Platform adopted at Chicago, and all your questions will be substantially answered. I have no thought of recommending the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, nor the slave trade among the slave States, even on the conditions indicated; and if I were to make such recommendation, it is quite clear Congress would not follow it. CH. XVIII.

As to employing slaves in arsenals and dock-yards, it is a thing I never thought of in my life, to my recollection, till I saw your letter; and I may say of it precisely as I have said of the two points above.

As to the use of patronage in the slave States, where there are few or no Republicans, I do not expect to inquire for the politics of the appointee, or whether he does or not own slaves. I intend in that matter to accommodate the people in the several localities, if they themselves will allow me to accommodate them. In one word, I never have been, am not now, and probably never shall be in a mood of harassing the people either North or South.

On the Territorial question I am inflexible, as you see my position in the book. On that there is a difference between you and us; and it is the only substantial difference. You think slavery is right and ought to be extended; we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted. For this neither has any just occasion to be angry with the other.

As to the State laws, mentioned in your sixth question, I really know very little of them. I never have read one. If any of them are in conflict with the fugitive-slave clause, or any other part of the Constitution, I certainly shall be glad of their repeal; but I could hardly be justified, as a citizen of Illinois, or as President of the United States, to recommend the repeal of a statute of Vermont or South Carolina.

Lincoln to Gilmer, Dec. 15, 1860. MS.

We have given samples of these solicitations coming from Republicans, from Douglas Demo-

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crats, and from the adherents of Bell; the following, coming from the fourth political school, will be found of equal interest. Its origin is given in the words of the principal actor, General Duff Green, who, in a letter nearly three years afterwards, thus described it: "In December, 1860, at the request of the President of the United States, I went to Springfield to see Mr. Lincoln and urge him to go to Washington and exert his influence in aid of the adjustment of the questions then pending between the North and the South. I was authorized by Mr. Buchanan to say to him that if he came he would be received and treated with the courtesy due to the President-elect. I saw Mr. Lincoln at his own house, and did urge the necessity of his going to Washington and uniting his efforts in behalf of peace, telling him that in my opinion he alone could prevent a civil war, and that if he did not go, upon his conscience must rest the blood that would be shed."

Duff Green to Jefferson Davis, May 26, 1863. MS.

Whether this proposition came by authority or not, Lincoln could not question either the truth of the envoy or the motive of the mission. In either case the appeal was adroitly laid. Of course it was impossible to accept or even to entertain it; on the other hand, a simple refusal might be made the basis of very serious misrepresentation. He therefore wrote the following reply:

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Dec. 28, 1860.

GEN. DUFF GREEN.

MY DEAR SIR: I do not desire any amendment of the Constitution. Recognizing, however, that questions of such amendment rightfully belong to the American people, I should not feel justified nor inclined to withhold from them if I could a fair opportunity of expressing

their will thereon through either of the modes prescribed in the instrument. CH. XVIII.

In addition I declare that the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of powers on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend; and I denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as the gravest of crimes.

I am greatly averse to writing anything for the public at this time; and I consent to the publication of this only upon the condition that six of the twelve United States Senators for the States of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, and Texas shall sign their names to what is written on this sheet below my name, and allow the whole to be published together.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

We recommend to the people of the States we represent respectively, to suspend all action for dismemberment of the Union, at least until some act deemed to be violative of our rights shall be done by the incoming Administration.

Lincoln to Duff Green, Dec. 28, 1860. MS.

This letter Lincoln transmitted to Senator Trumbull at Washington, with the following direction:

General Duff Green is out here endeavoring to draw a letter out of me. I have written one which herewith I inclose to you, and which I believe could not be used to our disadvantage. Still, if on consultation with our discreet friends you conclude that it may do us harm, do not deliver it. You need not mention that the second clause of the letter is copied from the Chicago Platform. If, on consultation, our friends, including yourself, think it can do no harm, keep a copy and deliver the letter to General Green.

Lincoln to Trumbull, Dec. 28, 1860. MS.

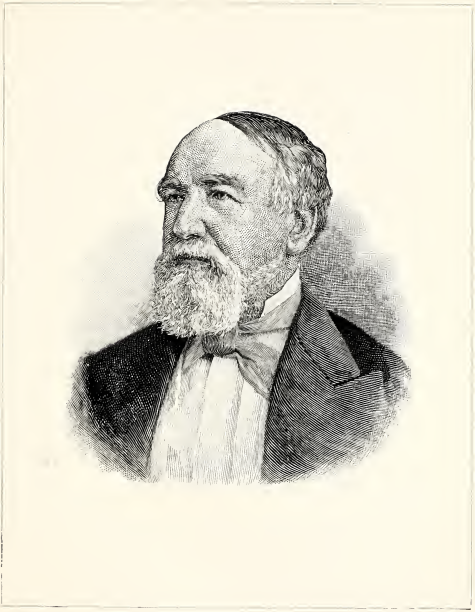
It is not definitely known whether this letter was delivered. Nothing further came of Duff Green's mission except a letter from himself in the "New

CH. XVIII. York Herald" mentioning his visit and his failure, in the vaguest generalities. His aim had apparently been to induce Lincoln tacitly to assume responsibility for the Southern revolt; and when the latter by his skillful answer pointed out the real conspirators, they were no longer anxious to have a publication made.

The whole attitude and issue of the controversy was so tersely summed up by Lincoln in a confidential letter to a Republican friend, under date of January 11, 1861, that we cannot forbear citing it in conclusion:

Yours of the 6th is received. I answer it only because I fear you would misconstrue my silence. What is our present condition? We have just carried an election on principles fairly stated to the people. Now we are told in advance the Government shall be broken up unless we surrender to those we have beaten, before we take the offices. In this they are either attempting to play upon us or they are in dead earnest. Either way, if we surrender, it is the end of us, and of the Government. They will repeat the experiment upon us *ad libitum*. A year will not pass till we shall have to take Cuba as a condition upon which they will stay in the Union. They now have the Constitution under which we have lived over seventy years, and acts of Congress of their own framing, with no prospect of their being changed; and they can never have a more shallow pretext for breaking up the Government, or extorting a compromise, than now. There is in my judgment but one compromise which would really settle the slavery question, and that would be a prohibition against acquiring any more territory.

Lincoln to Hon. J. T. Hale, Jan. 11, 1861. MS.



N. B. JUDD.

CHAPTER XIX

SPRINGFIELD TO WASHINGTON

AS the date of inauguration approached, formal invitations, without party distinction, came from the Legislatures of Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, tendering Mr. Lincoln the hospitalities of those States and their people, and inviting him to visit their capitals on his journey to Washington. Similar invitations also came to him from the municipal authorities of many cities and towns on the route, and railroads tendered him special trains for the use of himself and family. Mr. Lincoln had no fondness for public display, but in his long political career he had learned the importance of personal confidence and live sympathy between representatives and constituents, leaders and people. About to assume unusual duties in extraordinary times, he doubtless felt that it would not only be a gracious act to accept, so far as he could, these invitations, in which all parties had freely joined, but that both people and Executive would be strengthened in their faith and patriotism by a closer acquaintance, even of so brief and ceremonial a character. Accordingly, he answered the Governors and committees that he would visit the

CHAP. XIX. cities of Indianapolis, Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Albany, New York, Trenton, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg; while to the Governor of Massachusetts he replied that the want of time alone constrained him to omit that State from his route of travel.

1861. Monday, the 11th day of February, was fixed as the time of departure, and a programme and schedule of special trains from point to point were arranged, extending to Saturday, the 23d, the time appointed for his arrival in Washington. Early Monday morning (the 11th) found Mr. Lincoln, his family, and suite at the rather dingy little railroad station in Springfield, with a throng of at least a thousand of his neighbors who had come to bid him good-bye. It was a stormy morning, which served to add gloom and depression to their spirits. The leave-taking presented a scene of subdued anxiety, almost of solemnity. Mr. Lincoln took a position in the waiting-room, where his friends filed past him, often merely pressing his hand in silent emotion.

The half-finished ceremony was broken in upon by the ringing bells and rushing train. The crowd closed about the railroad car into which the President-elect and his party[1] made their way. Then came the central incident of the morning. The

[1] The Presidential party which made the whole journey consisted of the following persons: Mr. Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln, their three sons, Robert T., William, and Thomas, Lockwood Todd, Doctor W. S. Wallace, John G. Nicolay, John Hay, Hon N. B. Judd, Hon. David Davis, Colonel E. V. Sumner, Major David Hunter, Captain George W. Hazard, Captain John Pope, Colonel Ward H. Lamon, Colonel E. E. Ellsworth, J. M. Burgess, George C. Latham, W. S. Wood, and B. Forbes. Besides these a considerable number of other personal friends and dignitaries accompanied the President from Springfield to Indianapolis, and places beyond.

bell gave notice of starting; but as the conductor paused with his hand lifted to the bell-rope, Mr. Lincoln appeared on the platform of the car, and raised his hand to command attention. The bystanders bared their heads to the falling snowflakes, and standing thus, his neighbors heard his voice for the last time, in the city of his home, in a farewell address[1] so chaste and pathetic, that it reads as if he already felt the tragic shadow of forecasting fate:

My friends: no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

A proper description of the Presidential tour which followed would fill a volume. It embraced two weeks of official receptions by committees, mayors, governors, and legislatures; of crowded evening receptions and interminable hand-shakings; of impromptu or formal addresses at every ceremony; of cheers, salutes, bonfires, military

[1] This address was correctly printed for the first time in the "Century Magazine" for December, 1887, from the original manuscript, having been written down immediately after the train started, partly by Mr. Lincoln's own hand and partly by that of his private secretary from his dictation.

CHAP. XIX. parades, and imposing processions amid miles of spectators.

Political dissension was for the moment hushed in the general curiosity to see and hear the man who by the free and lawful choice of the nation had been called to exercise the duties of the Presidential office. The universal eagerness was perhaps heightened by the fact that during the same two weeks the delegates from the States in insurrection were in session at Montgomery, Alabama, occupied with the temporary organization of a government openly pledged to rebellion, and whose doings were daily reported by the telegraph and printed in every newspaper. Personal curiosity was thus supplemented by growing political anxiety, and every word of the President-elect was scanned for some light by which to read the troubled and uncertain future. Mr. Lincoln was therefore obliged to measure his public utterances with unusual caution; and while he managed to avoid any announcement of policy, the country was nevertheless able to read between the lines that it had made no mistake in the man to whom it had confided the preservation of the Government.

It would, of course, be impossible in a single chapter to cite his many speeches on this journey, in which there occurred, of necessity, a great deal of repetition. It will, perhaps, give a better idea of their general tenor to reproduce passages from a few of the most noteworthy. In reading these it must be borne in mind that they were reported and printed under such circumstances of haste and confusion that verbal accuracy could not be expected, and that they are but abstracts, in which the full

structure of his sentences is often abridged or transposed to permit the whole to be brought within the limits of an ordinary press dispatch.

The train which left Springfield in the morning arrived in Indianapolis before nightfall, where, in response to an address from Governor Oliver P. Morton, Mr. Lincoln said:

Most heartily do I thank you for this magnificent reception, and while I cannot take to myself any share of the compliment thus paid, more than that which pertains to a mere instrument, an accidental instrument perhaps I should say, of a great cause, I yet must look upon it as a most magnificent reception, and as such most heartily do I thank you for it. You have been pleased to address yourself to me chiefly in behalf of this glorious Union in which we live, in all of which you have my hearty sympathy, and, as far as may be within my power, will have, one and inseparably, my hearty coöperation. While I do not expect, upon this occasion, or until I get to Washington, to attempt any lengthy speech, I will only say that to the salvation of the Union there needs but one single thing, the hearts of a people like yours. The people, when they rise in mass in behalf of the Union and the liberties of this country, truly may it be said, "The gates of hell cannot prevail against them." In all trying positions in which I shall be placed, and doubtless I shall be placed in many such, my reliance will be upon you and the people of the United States; and I wish you to remember, now and forever, that it is your business, and not mine; that if the union of these States and the liberties of this people shall be lost, it is but little to any one man of fifty-two years of age, but a great deal to the thirty millions of people who inhabit these United States, and to their posterity in all coming time. It is your business to rise up and preserve the Union and liberty for yourselves, and not for me. . . I appeal to you again to constantly bear in mind that not with politicians, not with Presidents, not with office-seekers, but with you, is the question, Shall the Union

CHAP. XIX. and shall the liberties of this country be preserved to the latest generations.

The ceremonies during his stay here called out another address from him, in which he asked the following pertinent questions:

I am here to thank you much for this magnificent welcome, and still more for the generous support given by your State to that political cause which I think is the true and just cause of the whole country and the whole world. Solomon says there is "a time to keep silence," and when men wrangle by the month with no certainty that they *mean* the same *thing*, while using the same *word*, it perhaps were as well if they would keep silence. The words "coercion" and "invasion" are much used in these days, and often with some temper and hot blood. Let us make sure, if we can, that we do not misunderstand the meaning of those who use them. Let us get exact definitions of these words, not from dictionaries, but from the men themselves, who certainly appreciate the *things* they would represent by the use of words. What, then, is "Coercion"? What is "Invasion"? Would the marching of an army into South Carolina, without the consent of her people, and with hostile intent towards them, be "invasion"? I certainly think it would; and it would be "coercion" also if the South Carolinians were forced to submit. But if the United States should merely hold and retake its own forts and other property, and collect the duties on foreign importations, or even withhold the mails from places where they were habitually violated, would any or all of these things be "invasion" or "coercion"? Do our professed lovers of the Union, but who spitefully resolve that they will resist coercion and invasion, understand that such things as these on the part of the United States would be coercion or invasion of a State? If so, their idea of means to preserve the object of their affection would seem exceedingly thin and airy. If sick, the little pills of the homeopathist would be much too large for them to swallow. In their view, the Union, as a family relation, would seem to be no regular marriage, but a sort of "free-love" arrangement, to be maintained only on

"passional attraction." By the way, in what consists the special sacredness of a State? I speak not of the position assigned to a State in the Union, by the Constitution; for that, by the bond, we all recognize. That position, however, a State cannot carry out of the Union with it. I speak of that assumed primary right of a State to rule all which is *less* than itself, and ruin all which is larger than itself. If a State and a county, in a given case, should be equal in extent of territory, and equal in number of inhabitants, in what, as a matter of principle, is the State better than the county? Would an exchange of names be an exchange of *rights* upon principle? On what rightful principle may a State, being not more than one-fiftieth part of the nation, in soil and population, break up the nation and then coerce a proportionally larger subdivision of itself, in the most arbitrary way? What mysterious right to play tyrant is conferred on a district of country, with its people, by merely calling it a State? Fellow-citizens, I am not asserting anything; I am merely asking questions for you to consider.

At Columbus, Ohio, he said to the Legislature of that State, convened in joint session in the hall of the Assembly:

It is true, as has been said by the President of the Senate, that very great responsibility rests upon me in the position to which the votes of the American people have called me. I am deeply sensible of that weighty responsibility. I cannot but know what you all know, that without a name, perhaps without a reason why I should have a name, there has fallen upon me a task such as did not rest even upon the Father of his Country; and so feeling, I cannot but turn and look for that support without which it will be impossible for me to perform that great task. I turn, then, and look to the American people, and to that God who has never forsaken them. Allusion has been made to the interest felt in relation to the policy of the new Administration. In this I have received from some a degree of credit for having kept silence, and from others some deprecation. I still think that I was right. . . I have not maintained silence from

CHAP. XIX. any want of real anxiety. It is a good thing that there is no more than anxiety, for there is nothing going wrong. It is a consoling circumstance that when we look out, there is nothing that really hurts anybody. We entertain different views upon political questions, but nobody is suffering anything. This is a most consoling circumstance, and from it we may conclude that all we want is time, patience, and a reliance on that God who has never forsaken this people.

During a brief halt of the train at Steubenville, where a large crowd was assembled, he made the following short statement of the fundamental question at issue:

I fear that the great confidence placed in my ability is unfounded. Indeed, I am sure it is. Encompassed by vast difficulties as I am, nothing shall be wanting on my part, if sustained by the American people and God. I believe the devotion to the Constitution is equally great on both sides of the river. It is only the different understanding of that instrument that causes difficulty. The only dispute on both sides is, "What are their rights?" If the majority should not rule, who would be the judge? Where is such a judge to be found? We should all be bound by the majority of the American people—if not, then the minority must control. Would that be right? Would it be just or generous? Assuredly not. I reiterate, that the majority should rule. If I adopt a wrong policy, the opportunity for condemnation will occur in four years' time. Then I can be turned out, and a better man with better views put in my place.

Necessarily omitting any description of the magnificent demonstrations, and the multiplied speeches in the State and city of New York, his addresses in the capital of New Jersey must be quoted, because they show a culminating earnestness of thought and purpose. To the Senate he said:

I am very grateful to you for the honorable reception of which I have been the object. I cannot but remember the place that New Jersey holds in our early history. In the revolutionary struggle few of the States among the Old Thirteen had more of the battlefields of the country within their limits than New Jersey. May I be pardoned if, upon this occasion, I mention that away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, such a one as few of the younger members have ever seen, "Weems' Life of Washington." I remember all the accounts there given of the battlefields and struggles for the liberties of the country, and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton, New Jersey. The crossing of the river; the contest with the Hessians; the great hardships endured at that time, all fixed themselves on my memory more than any single revolutionary event; and you all know, for you have all been boys, how these early impressions last longer than any others. I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that these men struggled for. I am exceedingly anxious that that thing—that something even more than National Independence; that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world to all time to come—I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made, and I shall be most happy indeed if I shall be an humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle. You give me this reception, as I understand, without distinction of party. I learn that this body is composed of a majority of gentlemen who, in the exercise of their best judgment in the choice of a chief magistrate, did not think I was the man. I understand, nevertheless, that they came forward here to greet me as the constitutionally elected President of the United States—as citizens of the United States—to meet the man who, for the time being, is the representative of the majesty of the nation—united by the single purpose to

CHAP. XIX. perpetuate the Constitution, the Union, and the liberties of the people. As such, I accept this reception more gratefully than I could do did I believe it were tendered to me as an individual.

Passing then to the Assembly Chamber, he addressed the members of the lower house in conclusion:

. . . You, Mr. Speaker, have well said that this is a time when the bravest and wisest look back with doubt and awe upon the aspect presented by our national affairs. Under these circumstances, you will readily see why I should not speak in detail of the course I shall deem it best to pursue. It is proper that I should avail myself of all the information and all the time at my command, in order that when the time arrives in which I must speak officially, I shall be able to take the ground which I deem the best and safest, and from which I may have no occasion to swerve. I shall endeavor to take the ground I deem most just to the North, the East, the West, the South, and the whole country. I take it, I hope, in good temper, certainly with no malice towards any section. I shall do all that may be in my power to promote a peaceful settlement of all our difficulties. The man does not live who is more devoted to peace than I am, none who would do more to preserve it, but it may be necessary to put the foot down firmly. [Here the audience broke out into cheers so loud and long, that for some moments it was impossible to hear Mr. Lincoln's voice.] And if I do my duty and do right, you will sustain me, will you not? [Loud cheers, and cries of "Yes, yes, we will."] Received as I am by the members of a Legislature, the majority of whom do not agree with me in political sentiments, I trust that I may have their assistance in piloting the ship of State through this voyage, surrounded by perils as it is; for if it should suffer wreck now, there will be no pilot ever needed for another voyage.

Perhaps in no one of the many addresses delivered during his tour was he so visibly moved

and affected by his surroundings as when he spoke in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, which he visited on the 22d of February, the anniversary of Washington's birthday. He said: CHAP. XIX. 1861.

I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle from which sprang the institutions under which we live. You have kindly suggested to me that in my hands is the task of restoring peace to our distracted country. I can say in return, sirs, that all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated in and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here and framed and adopted that Declaration. I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence. I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weight would be lifted from the shoulders of all men and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Now, my friends, can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it. Now, in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there is no need of bloodshed and war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course;

CHAP. XIX. and I may say in advance that there will be no bloodshed unless it be forced upon the Government. The Government will not use force, unless force is used against it.

My friends, this is wholly an unprepared speech. I did not expect to be called on to say a word when I came here. I supposed it was merely to do something towards raising a flag — I may, therefore, have said something indiscreet. [Cries of "No, No."] But I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, die by.

In his last speech of the series, delivered in Harrisburg, before the assembled Legislature of Pennsylvania, he happily described an interesting ceremony which had taken place that same morning before leaving Philadelphia:

I appear before you only for a very few brief remarks, in response to what has been said to me. I thank you most sincerely for this reception, and the generous words in which support has been promised me upon this occasion. I thank your great commonwealth for the overwhelming support it recently gave, not me personally, but the cause which I think a just one, in the late election. Allusion has been made to the fact — the interesting fact, perhaps we should say — that I for the first time appear at the capital of the great commonwealth of Pennsylvania upon the birthday of the Father of his Country. In connection with that beloved anniversary, connected with the history of this country, I have already gone through one exceedingly interesting scene this morning in the ceremonies at Philadelphia. Under the conduct of gentlemen there, I was for the first time allowed the privilege of standing in the old Independence Hall, to have a few words addressed to me there, and opening up to me an opportunity of expressing, with much regret, that I had not more time to express something of my own feelings, excited by the occasion, somewhat to harmonize and give shape to the feelings that had really been the feelings of my whole life. Besides this, our friends there had provided a magnificent flag of the country. They had arranged it so

that I was given the honor of raising it. And when it went up, I was pleased that it went to its place by the strength of my own feeble arm. When, according to the arrangement, the cord was pulled, and it floated gloriously to the wind, without an accident, in the bright, glowing sunshine of the morning, I could not help hoping that there was, in the entire success of that beautiful ceremony, at least something of an omen of what is to come. Nor could I help feeling then, as I often have felt, in the whole of that proceeding I was a very humble instrument. I had not provided the flag; I had not made the arrangements for elevating it to its place; I had applied but a very small portion of my feeble strength in raising it. In the whole transaction I was in the hands of the people who had arranged it, and if I can have the same generous coöperation of the people of the nation, I think the flag of our country may yet be kept flaunting gloriously. I recur for a moment but to repeat some words uttered at the hotel, in regard to what has been said about the military support which the general Government may expect from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania in a proper emergency. To guard against any possible mistake do I recur to this. It is not with any pleasure that I contemplate the possibility that a necessity may arise in this country for the use of the military arm. While I am exceedingly gratified to see the manifestation upon your streets of your military force here, and exceedingly gratified at your promise to use that force upon a proper emergency — while I make these acknowledgments I desire to repeat, in order to preclude any possible misconstruction, that I do most sincerely hope that we shall have no use for them; that it will never become their duty to shed blood, and most especially never to shed fraternal blood. I promise that so far as I may have wisdom to direct, if so painful a result shall in anywise be brought about, it shall be through no fault of mine.

CHAPTER XX

LINCOLN'S SECRET NIGHT JOURNEY

CHAP. XX. 1861.

ON the morning of February 23 the whole country was surprised at the telegraphic announcement, coupled with diverse and generally very foggy explanations, that the President-elect, after his long and almost triumphal journey in the utmost publicity, and with well-nigh universal greetings of good-will, had suddenly abandoned his announced programme and made a quick and secret night journey through Baltimore to the Federal capital. Public opinion at the time, and for years afterwards, was puzzled by the event, and the utmost contrariety of comment, ranging from the highest praise to the severest detraction which caricature, ridicule, and denunciation could express, was long current. In the course of time, the narratives of the principal actors in the affair have been published,[1] and a sufficient statement of the facts and motives involved may at

[1] See narrative of S. M. Felton, in Schouler, "Massachusetts in the Civil War," Vol. I., pp. 59–65; Judd to Pinkerton, Nov. 3, 1867, Edwards, "Life of N. B. Judd," pamphlet, pp. 11–17; Pinkerton, "The Spy of the Rebellion," pp. 45–103; Kennedy to Lossing, embracing narrative of Colonel Stone, Lossing, "Civil War," Vol. II., pp. 147–49; Lincoln's statement to Lossing, Ib., Vol. I., pp. 279, 280; Lincoln's statement to Arnold, Arnold, "Lincoln and Slavery," p. 171; and Lamon, "Life of Lincoln," pp. 511–26. Also, MS. letters printed in this chapter.

length be made. The newspapers stated (without any prompting or suggestion from Mr. Lincoln) that an extensive plot to assassinate him on his expected trip through Baltimore about midday of Saturday had been discovered, which plot the earlier and unknown passage on Friday night disconcerted and prevented. CHAP. XX.

This theory has neither been proved nor disproved by the lapse of time; Mr. Lincoln did not entertain it in this form[1] nor base his course upon it. But subsequent events did clearly demonstrate the possibility and probability of attempted personal violence from the fanatical impulse of individuals, or the sudden anger of a mob, and confirmed the propriety of his decision.

The threats of secession, revolution, plots to seize Washington, to burn the public buildings, to prevent the count of electoral votes and the inauguration of the new President, which had for six weeks filled the newspapers of the country, caused much uneasiness about the personal safety of Mr. Lincoln, particularly among the railroad officials over whose lines he was making his journey; and to no one of them so much as to Mr. S. M. Felton, the President of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railway, whose line formed the connecting link from the North to the South, from a free to a slave State, from the region of absolute loyalty to the territory of quasi-

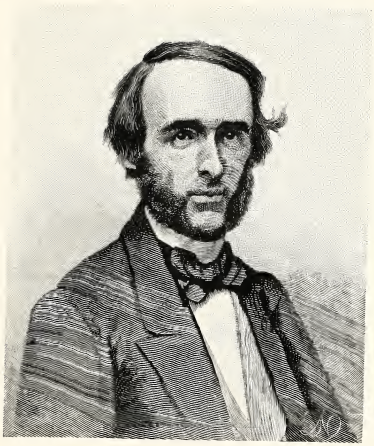
[1] Mr. Lincoln, long afterwards, declared: "I did not then, nor do I now, believe I should have been assassinated, had I gone through Baltimore as first contemplated; but I thought it wise to run no risk, where no risk was necessary." Hon. I. N. Arnold, in his work, "Lincoln and Slavery," says in a note, p. 171, that the above was "stated to the author by Mr. Lincoln."

CHAP. XX. rebellion. Independently of politics, the city of Baltimore at that time bore an unenviable reputation as containing a dangerous and disorderly element; her "roughs" had a degree of newspaper notoriety by no means agreeable to quiet and non-combative strangers.

But Baltimore and other portions of Maryland were also profoundly moved by the incipient rebellion. Governor Hicks had been plied with persuasion, protest, and even threats of personal violence, to induce him to convene the Legislature of that State, so that secession might begin under a legal pretext. The investigation of the Select Committee of Five, though it found no organized plot to seize the capital of the nation, gave abundant traces of secession conspiracy of various degrees—especially of half-formed military companies, organizing to prevent Northern troops from passing through Baltimore to Washington or other points in the South. As part and parcel of this scheme, the railroads were to be destroyed and the bridges burned. The events of April, as they actually occurred, had already been planned, informally at least, in January.

Aside from patriotism, the duty of protecting the tracks and bridges of the railroad of which he was president induced Mr. Felton to call to his aid Mr. Allan Pinkerton, chief of a Chicago detective agency, whom he had before employed on an important matter.

> He was a man of great skill and resources [writes Mr. Felton]. I furnished him with a few hints and at once set him on the track with eight assistants. There were then drilling upon the line of the railroad some three



FREDERICK W. SEWARD.

military organizations, professedly for home defense, pretending to be Union men, and in one or two instances tendering their services to the railroad in case of trouble. Their propositions were duly considered; but the defense of the road was never intrusted to their tender mercies. The first thing done was to enlist a volunteer in each of these military companies. They pretended to come from New Orleans and Mobile, and did not appear to be wanting in sympathy for the South. They were furnished with uniforms at the expense of the road, and drilled as often as their associates in arms; became initiated into all the secrets of the organization, and reported every day or two to their chief, who immediately reported to me the designs and plans of these military companies. One of these organizations was loyal; but the other two were disloyal, and fully in the plot to destroy the bridges, and march to Washington, to wrest it from the hands of the legally constituted authorities. Every nook and corner of the road and its vicinity was explored by the chief and his detectives, and the secret working of secession and treason laid bare and brought to light. Societies were joined in Baltimore, and various modes known to and practiced only by detectives were resorted to, to win the confidence of the conspirators and get into their secrets. The plan worked well; and the midnight plottings and daily consultations of the conspirators were treasured up as a guide to our future plans for thwarting them. . . It was made as certain as strong circumstantial and positive evidence could make it, that there was a plot to burn the bridges and destroy the road, and murder Mr. Lincoln on his way to Washington, if it turned out that he went there before troops were called. If troops were first called, then the bridges were to be destroyed, and Washington cut off and taken possession of by the South. I at once organized and armed a force of about two hundred men, whom I distributed along the line between the Susquehanna and Baltimore, principally at the bridges. These men were drilled secretly and regularly by drill-masters, and were apparently employed in whitewashing the bridges, putting on some six or seven coats of whitewash, saturated with salt and alum, to make the outside

CHAP. XX. of the bridges as nearly fire-proof as possible. This white-washing, so extensive in its application, became the nine-days' wonder of the neighborhood. Thus the bridges were strongly guarded, and a train was arranged so as to concentrate all the forces at one point in case of trouble. The programme of Mr. Lincoln was changed; and it was decided by him that he would go to Harrisburg from Philadelphia, and thence over the Northern Central road by day to Baltimore, and thence to Washington. We were then informed by our detective that the attention of the conspirators was turned from our road to the Northern Central, and that they would there await the coming of Mr. Lincoln.

Schouler, "Massachusetts in the Civil War," Vol. I., pp. 61, 62.

It appeared from the reports of Pinkerton's detectives that among the more suspicious indications were the very free and threatening expressions of a man named Ferrandini, an Italian, sometime a barber at Barnum's Hotel in Baltimore, but who had become captain of one of the military companies organized in that city to promote secession. Ferrandini's talk may not have been conclusive proof of a conspiracy, but it showed his own intent to commit assassination, and conveyed the inference of a plot. Coupled with the fact that the Baltimore air was full of similar threats, it established the probability of a mob and a riot. Add to this Ferrandini's testimony (February 5, 1861), that he was then drilling a company (fifteen members) of "Constitutional Guards" in Baltimore, formed for the express purpose "to prevent Northern volunteer companies from passing through the State of Maryland . . . to come here [Washington] to help the United States troops, or anybody else, to invade the South in any shape whatever"; also that another corps, called the National Volunteers, had formed, "to protect

Lamon, "Life of Abraham Lincoln," p. 516.

their State," and began drilling the previous Saturday; also that he had "heard that the minute-men have fifteen companies" in Baltimore — and we have the direct evidence of extensive organization, and strong presumption of the uses to which it could be turned. Then, if we remember that riot, murder, and bridge-burning actually took place in Baltimore two months later, in exact accordance with the plans and ideas formulated, both in the loose talk and the solemn testimony by Ferrandini and others, we are unavoidably driven to the conclusion that Mr. Felton, General Scott, Governor Hicks, and others had abundant cause for the very serious apprehensions under which they acted.

Testimony before the Select Committee of Five, pp. 133-7.

N. B. Judd, a resident of Chicago, of peculiar prominence in Illinois politics and a personal friend of Lincoln, was perhaps the most active and influential member of the suite of the President-elect. Pinkerton the detective knew Judd personally, and, as the Presidential party approached, notified him by letter at Buffalo, and by special messenger at New York, of the investigations he was making in Baltimore. Judd as yet said nothing of the matter to any one. When the party arrived in Philadelphia, however, he was instantly called to a conference with Mr. Felton and the detective. Pinkerton laid his reports before the two, and, after an hour's examination, both were convinced that the proofs of a plot to assassinate the President-elect were as serious and important as in the nature of things such evidence can ever be.

He immediately took Pinkerton with him to Mr. Lincoln's room at the Continental Hotel, to whom the whole story was repeated, and where Judd

CHAP. XX. advised that, in the opinion both of Mr. Felton and himself, Mr. Lincoln's safety required him to proceed that same evening on the 11 o'clock train. "If you follow the course suggested," continued Judd, "you will necessarily be subjected to the scoffs and sneers of your enemies, and the disapproval of your friends, who cannot be made to believe in the existence of so desperate a plot." Mr. Lincoln replied that he appreciated these suggestions, but that he could stand anything that was necessary. Then rising from his seat he said: "I cannot go to-night; I have promised to raise the flag over Independence Hall to-morrow morning, and to visit the Legislature at Harrisburg. Beyond that I have no engagements."

Judd to Pinkerton, Nov. 3, 1867.

Hitherto, all Lincoln's movements had been made under the invitation, arrangement, direction, and responsibility of committees of legislatures, governors of States, and municipal authorities of towns and cities. No such call or greeting, however, had come from Maryland; no resolutions of welcome from her Legislature, no invitation from her Governor, no municipal committee from Baltimore. The sole proffers of friendship and hospitality from the commonwealth came from two citizens in their private capacity—Mr. Gittings, President of the Northern Central Railroad, who tendered a dinner to Mr. Lincoln and his family; and Mr. Coleman, of the Eutaw House, who extended a similar invitation to the President-elect and his suite. Appreciating fully these acts of personal courtesy, Mr. Lincoln yet felt that there was no evidence before him that the official authority of the city would be exercised to restrain

the unruly elements which would on such an occasion densely pack the streets of Baltimore.

During their ten days' experience on the journey thus far, both he and his suite had had abundant evidence as to how completely exposed and perfectly helpless every individual of the party, and especially Mr. Lincoln, was at times, even amid the friendliest feeling and the kindest attention. He had been almost crushed in the corridor of the State-house at Columbus; arriving after dark in the Pittsburgh depot, a stampede of the horses of a small cavalry escort had seriously endangered his carriage and its occupants; at Buffalo, Major Hunter, of his suite, had his arm broken by a sudden rush of the crowd. If with all the good-will and precautions of police and military such perils were unavoidable in friendly cities, what might happen where authorities were indifferent, where municipal control and public order were lax, and where prejudice, hostility, and smoldering insurrection animated the masses of people surging about the carriages of an unprotected street procession?

Yet with all these considerations Mr. Lincoln could not entirely convince himself that a deliberate plot to murder him was in existence. "I made arrangements, however, with Mr. Judd for my return to Philadelphia the next night, if I should be convinced that there was danger in going through Baltimore. I told him that if I should meet at Harrisburg, as I had at other places, a delegation to go with me to Baltimore, I should feel safe, and go on."

Lincoln's statement to Lossing, Lossing, "Civil War," Vol. I., p. 280.

Mr. Judd devoted the remainder of the afternoon and nearly the whole of the night of February 21

1861.

CHAP. XX. to the discussion and perfection of arrangements for a night journey through Baltimore, as suggested by himself and Mr. Felton, and as conditionally accepted by the President-elect. Only four persons joined in this discussion — Mr. Judd, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. Franciscus, General Manager of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Mr. Henry Sanford, representing Colonel E. S. Sanford, President of the American Telegraph Company. At 4 o'clock A. M. the party separated, having agreed on the following plan: that after the reception at Harrisburg, a special train consisting of a baggage car and one passenger car, starting at 6 P. M., should convey Mr. Lincoln and one companion back to Philadelphia, the track between the two cities to be kept clear of everything; that Mr. Felton at Philadelphia should detain the 11 o'clock P. M. Baltimore train until the arrival of the special train from Harrisburg; that Pinkerton should have a carriage ready in which to proceed through Philadelphia from one depot to the other; that an employee of his should engage berths in the sleeping-car of the Baltimore train; that Mr. Sanford should so disconnect the wires as to make any telegraphing between the several points within certain hours impossible; and that Mr. Lincoln should have for his single escort and companion Ward H. Lamon, of his suite, a devoted personal friend from Illinois — young, active, and of almost herculean frame and strength.

Judd to Pinkerton, Nov. 3, 1867.

1861. At 6 o'clock on the morning of February 22, the appointed flag-raising by the President-elect, over Independence Hall in Philadelphia, was duly celebrated, and on the trip to Harrisburg, which fol-

lowed as soon as possible, Mr. Judd communicated the details of his plan to Mr. Lincoln. Before leaving Philadelphia Lincoln had received at the Continental Hotel the visit of Frederick W. Seward, who came as a special messenger from his father in Washington, to place the following correspondence in his hands: CHAP. XX.

[Seward to Lincoln.]

WASHINGTON, February 21, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR: My son goes express to you. He will show you a report made by our detective to General Scott, and by him communicated to me this morning. I deem it so important as to dispatch my son to meet you wherever he may find you.

I concur with General Scott in thinking it best for you to reconsider your arrangement. No one here but General Scott, myself, and the bearer is aware of this communication.

I should have gone with it myself, but for the peculiar sensitiveness about my attendance at the Senate at this crisis.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD. MS.

[General Scott to Seward.]

February 21, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR: Please receive my friend, Colonel Stone, chief of General Weightman's staff, and a distinguished young officer with me in Mexico. He has an important communication to make.

Yours truly,

WINFIELD SCOTT. MS.

[Colonel Stone's Report.]

February 21, 1861.

A New York detective officer who has been on duty in Baltimore for three weeks past reports this morning that there is serious danger of violence to, and the assassina-

CHAP. XX. tion of, Mr. Lincoln in his passage through that city, should the time of that passage be known. He states that there are banded rowdies holding secret meetings, and that he has heard threats of mobbing and violence, and has himself heard men declare that if Mr. Lincoln was to be assassinated they would like to be the men. He states further that it is only within the past few days that he has considered there was any danger, but now he deems it imminent. He deems the danger one which the authorities and people in Baltimore cannot guard against. All risk might be easily avoided by a change in the traveling arrangements which would bring Mr. Lincoln and a portion of his party through Baltimore by a night train
MS. without previous notice.

Here was a new and most serious additional warning. The investigation on which it was based was altogether independent of that made by Pinkerton, and entirely unknown to him. Colonel Stone, it will be remembered, was the officer to whom General Scott intrusted the organization and command of the District Militia for the defense of Washington and the general supervision and control of the city. The detectives, three in number, were from New York, and at the request of Colonel Stone had been selected and placed on duty by Mr. Kennedy, Superintendent of Police of New York City.[1] In both cases similar observations had been made, and similar conclusions arrived at.

Warned thus of danger by concurrent evidence too grave to be disregarded, and advised to avoid it, not only by Judd and Felton in Philadelphia, but now also by Mr. Seward, the chief of his new Cabinet, and by General Scott, the chief of the army, Mr. Lincoln could no longer hesitate to

[1] See in Lossing, "Civil War," Vol. II., pp. 147–49, a letter from Kennedy, and the narrative of Colonel Stone.

adopt their suggestion. Whether the evidence would prove ultimately true, or whether violence upon him would be attempted, was not the question. The existence of the danger was pointed out and certified by an authority he had no right to disregard; the trust he bore was not merely the personal safety of an individual, but the fortune and perhaps the fate of the Government of the nation. It was his imperative duty to shun all possible and unnecessary peril. CHAP. XX.

A man of less courage would have shrunk from what must inevitably appear to the public like a sign of timidity; but Lincoln on this and other occasions concerned himself only with the larger issues at stake, leaving minor and especially personal consequences to take care of themselves. Frederick W. Seward was, therefore, informed by Judd "that he could say to his father that all had been arranged, and that, so far as human foresight could predict, Mr. Lincoln would be in Washington at 6 o'clock the next morning." With this message Mr. Seward returned to Washington, while Mr. Lincoln and his suite proceeded to Harrisburg, where on that same Friday, the 22d of February, he was officially received by the Governor and the Legislature of Pennsylvania.

Judd to Pinkerton, Nov. 3, 1867.

1861.

No other member of Mr. Lincoln's suite had as yet been notified of anything connected with the matter; but Mr. Judd had suggested to him that he felt exceedingly the responsibility of the advice he had given and the steps he had taken, and that he thought it due to the age and standing of the leading gentlemen of the President-elect's party that at least they should be informed and consulted. "To

CHAP. XX. the above suggestions," writes Judd, "Mr. Lincoln assented, adding: 'I reckon they will laugh at us, Judd, but you had better get them together.' It was arranged that after the reception at the State-house, and before dinner, the matter should be fully laid before the following gentlemen of the party: Judge David Davis, Colonel E. V. Sumner, Major David Hunter, Captain John Pope, and Ward H. Lamon."

Mr. Judd's narrative then further recites what occurred:

The meeting thus arranged took place in the parlor of the hotel, Mr. Lincoln being present. The facts were laid before them by me, together with the details of the proposed plan of action. There was a diversity of opinion, and some warm discussion, and I was subjected to a very rigid cross-examination. Judge Davis, who had expressed no opinion, but contented himself with asking rather pointed questions, turned to Mr. Lincoln, who had been listening to the whole discussion, and said: "Well, Mr. Lincoln, what is your own judgment upon this matter?" Mr. Lincoln replied: "I have thought over this matter considerably, since I went over the ground with Pinkerton last night. The appearance of Mr. Frederick Seward, with warning from another source, confirms Mr. Pinkerton's belief. Unless there are some other reasons besides fear of ridicule, I am disposed to carry out Judd's plan." Judge Davis then said: "That settles the matter, gentlemen." Colonel Sumner said: "So be it, gentlemen; it is against my judgment, but I have undertaken to go to Washington with Mr. Lincoln, and I shall do it." I tried to convince him that any additional person added to the risk; but the spirit of the gallant old soldier was up, and debate was useless.

The party separated about 4 P. M., the others to go to the dinner table, and myself to go to the railroad station and the telegraph office. At a quarter to six I was back at the hotel, and Mr. Lincoln was still at the table. In a few moments the carriage drove up to the side door of the hotel. Either Mr. Nicolay or Mr. Lamon called Mr.

Lincoln from the table. He went to his room, changed his dinner dress for a traveling suit, and came down with a soft hat sticking in his pocket, and his shawl on his arm.[1] As the party passed through the hall I said, in a low tone, "Lamon, go ahead. As soon as Mr. Lincoln is in the carriage, drive off; the crowd must not be allowed to identify him." Mr. Lamon went first to the carriage; Colonel Sumner was following close after Mr. Lincoln; I put my hand gently on his shoulder; he turned to see what was wanted, and before I could explain, the carriage was off. The situation was a little awkward, to use no stronger terms, for a few moments, until I said to the Colonel: "When we get to Washington, Mr. Lincoln shall determine what apology is due to you." CHAP. XX.

It is needless to describe the various stages of Mr. Lincoln's journey. The plan arranged by the railroad and telegraph officials was carried out to the smallest detail without delay or special incident, and without coming to the knowledge of any person on the train or elsewhere, except those to whom the secret was confided. The President-elect and his single companion were safely and comfortably carried from Harrisburg to Philadelphia, and at midnight took their berths in the sleeping-car of the regular train from New York, passing through Baltimore unrecognized and undisturbed, and arriving in Washington at 6 o'clock on the morning of February 23. Here they were met by Mr. Seward and E. B. Washburne, and conducted to Willard's Hotel. The family and 1861.

[1] Many caricatures and comments of that day were based upon the following sentence in a dispatch to the "New-York Times": "He wore a Scotch plaid cap and a very long military cloak, so that he was entirely unrecognizable." This description was the pure invention of a newspaper correspondent understood to be Joseph Howard, Jr., who later in the war was imprisoned in Fort Lafayette for publishing a forged proclamation, about the draft, in the New York newspapers.

CHAP. XX. suite made the journey direct from Harrisburg to Baltimore, according to the programme, arriving in Washington late that evening. They encountered in Baltimore no incivility, nor any unusual disorder, though, as elsewhere, dense crowds, very inadequately controlled by the police, surrounded the railroad depots and filled the streets through which their carriages passed. All motive, however, to commit an assault was now past, since it was everywhere known that Mr. Lincoln was not with the party, but already at his destination.

CHAPTER XXI

LINCOLN'S INAUGURATION

ARRIVED in Washington and installed in the spacious parlors of Willard's Hotel, fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue, Mr. Lincoln had a little more than a week to prepare for the inauguration. Of this a part was taken up with the customary introductory visits — to the outgoing President and Cabinet, where Mr. Buchanan and his councilors received him with cordial politeness; to the two Houses of Congress, where he was enthusiastically welcomed by friends and somewhat sullenly greeted by opponents; and to the Supreme Court of the United States, whose venerable chief and associate justices extended to him an affable recognition as the lawful successor in constitutional rulership.

In his own parlors, also, the President-elect received numerous demonstrations of respect. President Buchanan and his Cabinet officially returned his visit. The Peace Conference, embracing distinguished delegates from all the free States and the border slave States, and headed by their chairman, ex-President Tyler, waited upon him in a body, in pursuance of a formal and unanimous resolution. His Presidential rivals, Douglas and Breckinridge, each made him a call of courtesy.

"Proceedings of the Peace Conference," pp. 336, 337.

CHAP. XXI. The mayor and the municipal council came in an official visit of welcome. Several delegations and many high functionaries repeated these ceremonial calls, which again were supplemented by numerous cordial invitations to private hospitality.

While all these tokens of respect were sincere and loyal, there was a deep anxiety in public feeling to learn how the new President would deal with an organized rebellion, which had been allowed by his predecessor to establish itself without the least hinderance, and which, while committing repeated acts of war, had as yet perpetrated no violence or bloodshed — only, however, because it had met neither official nor military resistance.

Mr. Lincoln's chief labor during this interim was consultation with the more influential leaders of the Republican party, who, either as members of Congress, delegates in the Peace Conference, or as casual or special visitors to the capital, had a final word to offer about the composition of his Cabinet or the policy of his Administration. Thus,
1861. from the 23d of February to the 4th of March, every moment of the day and many hours of the night were occupied. As his doors were at all times freely opened, and as his life-long habit was to listen patiently to counsel from all quarters, it is safe to say that no President ever approached his task better informed of the temper of his followers, and decided more deliberately upon his general course of conduct. Yet, here as afterwards, he followed the practice of holding his convictions open to the latest moment, and of not irrevocably committing himself to specific acts till the instant of their execution.

But neither in the formation of his Cabinet nor in his proposed administrative policy did this final consultation with his party friends work any essential alteration of his own well-formed opinions. His executive councilors were chosen upon plans long since matured in his own mind; and his inaugural address, composed and privately printed at Springfield, received on the last days several slight changes in the text, and a number of verbal changes, mainly suggested by the very few individuals to whom he submitted it. Judge David Davis read it while in Springfield. O. H. Browning read it in Indianapolis after the Presidential journey was begun, and suggested perhaps the most important modification which was made. Francis P. Blair, Sr., read it in Washington, and highly commended it, suggesting no changes.

As would be natural in any great political leader scanning his successful rival's first act of practical statesmanship, the most careful scrutiny of the document was made by Mr. Seward. The President-elect handed him a copy some time during the day of his arrival; and the next day being Sunday, Mr. Seward spent part of it in examining the inaugural and in writing out the list of alterations and amendments which he thought advisable. On Sunday evening he wrote the following letter, which, with his list of suggestions, he sent to Mr. Lincoln:

SUNDAY EVENING, February 24, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR: I have suggested many changes of little importance severally, but in their general effect tending to soothe the public mind. Of course the concessions are as they ought to be, if they are to be of avail, at the cost of the winning, the triumphant party. I do not fear their

CHAP. XXI. displeasure. They will be loyal, whatever is said. Not so the defeated, irritated, angered, frenzied party. I, my dear sir, have devoted myself singly to the study of the case here — with advantages of access and free communication with all parties of all sections. I have a common responsibility and interest with you, and I shall adhere to you faithfully in every case. You must, therefore, allow me to speak frankly and candidly. In this spirit, I declare to you my conviction, that the second and third paragraphs, even if modified as I propose in my amendments, will give such advantages to the Disunionists that Virginia and Maryland will secede, and we shall within ninety, perhaps within sixty, days be obliged to fight the South for this capital, with a divided North for our reliance, and we shall not have one loyal magistrate or ministerial officer south of the Potomac.

In that case the dismemberment of the republic would date from the inauguration of a Republican Administration. I therefore most respectfully counsel the omission of those paragraphs. I know the tenacity of party friends, and I honor and respect it. But I know also that they know nothing of the real peril of the crisis. It has not been their duty to study it, as it has been mine. Only the soothing words which I have spoken have saved us and carried us along thus far. Every loyal man, and indeed every disloyal man, in the South, will tell you this.

Your case is quite like that of Jefferson. He brought the first Republican party into power against and over a party ready to resist and dismember the Government. Partisan as he was, he sank the partisan in the patriot in his inaugural address, and propitiated his adversaries by declaring: "We are all Federalists, all Republicans." I could wish that you would think it wise to follow this example in this crisis. Be sure that while all your administrative conduct will be in harmony with Republican principles and policy, you cannot lose the Republican party by practicing in your advent to office the magnanimity of a victor.

Very faithfully your friend,

[WM. H. SEWARD.]

THE HONORABLE ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



HANNIBAL HAMLIN.

General Remarks:

The argument is strong and conclusive, and ought not to be in any way abridged or modified.

But something besides or in addition to argument is needful — to meet and remove prejudice and passion in the South, and despondency and fear in the East.

Some words of affection — some of calm and cheerful confidence.[1]

Mr. Seward only suggested two important changes: (1) To omit the reference to the Chicago platform mentioned in his letter, with the announcement that the President would follow the principles therein declared. (2) Instead of a declaration of intention to reclaim, hold, occupy, and possess the places and property belonging to the Government, to speak ambiguously about the exercise of power, and to hint rather at forbearance. The other modifications in his list were simple changes of phraseology — affecting only the style, and changing no argument or proposition of policy.

Whether these were on the whole an improvement depends perhaps upon the taste of the critic, whether he prefers a full and formal or a direct and sententious diction. The literary styles of Mr. Seward and Mr. Lincoln differed essentially. Mr. Seward was strongly addicted to long, sonorous sentences, and unusually felicitous in them, amplifying his thought to general application and to philosophic breadth. Mr. Lincoln liked to condense his idea into a short sentence, with legal conciseness and specific point. In the present crisis

[1] MS. For the copy of this letter and other valuable manuscripts, we are indebted to the Hon. Frederick W. Seward.

CHAP. XXI. Mr. Seward's policy, as announced in his 12th of January speech, was "to meet prejudice with conciliation, exaction with concession which surrenders no principle, and violence with the right hand of peace." Mr. Lincoln's policy was without prejudice or passion to state frankly and maintain firmly the position and doctrines assumed by the American people in the late Presidential election. Mr. Seward believed himself to be the past and the coming peacemaker; and thus his whole effort was to soften, to postpone, to use diplomacy. His corrections of the inaugural were in this vein: a more careful qualification of statement, a greater ambiguity of phrase, a gain in smoothness, but a loss in brevity and force.

Seward, Senate Speech, Jan. 12, 1861. "Globe," p. 343.

Mr. Lincoln adopted either in whole or in part nearly all the amendments proposed by Mr. Seward. But those which he himself modified, and such further alterations as he added of his own accord, show that whatever the inaugural gained in form and style in these final touches came as much through his own power of literary criticism as from the more practiced pen of Mr. Seward. The most vital change in the document was in adopting a suggestion of his friend Browning, not to announce a purpose to recapture Moultrie and other forts and places already seized by the rebels, but for the present to declare only that he would hold those yet in possession of the Government. One other important change Mr. Lincoln himself made. In the original draft any idea of an amendment of the Constitution was rather repelled than invited. In the revision Mr. Lincoln said he should "favor rather than oppose

a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it," and further expressed his willingness to accept the amendment recently proposed by Congress. All these various alterations, proposed or adopted, are added as notes to the text of the inaugural in this chapter, where the critical student may compare them. CHAP. XXI.

It was in the closing paragraph of the inaugural that Mr. Lincoln's mastery in literary art clearly revealed itself. Mr. Seward, as we have seen in the postscript of his letter, thought that "some words of affection—some of calm and cheerful confidence," "to meet and remove prejudice and passion in the South, and despondency and fear in the East," ought to be added. In the original draft the concluding sentence, addressing itself to "my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen," was: "With you and not with me is the solemn question, Shall it be peace or a sword?" This ending Mr. Seward proposed to strike out, and submitted two drafts of a closing paragraph to take its place. One of them was long and commonplace; under the other lurked a fine poetic thought cumbrously expressed. This Mr. Lincoln took, and with his more artistic sense transformed it into an illustration of perfect and tender beauty.

The acts of the last ten days of Mr. Buchanan's Administration were entirely colorless and negative. The deliberations and recommendations of the much-vaunted Peace Conference proved as worthless as Dead Sea fruit. The concluding labors of Congress were of considerable importance, but of no immediate effect. There was, therefore, as little in public affairs as in public advice to cause

CHAP. XXI. the President-elect to reconsider or remodel his thoughts and purposes.

Mar. 4, 1861. Inauguration Day fell on Monday, and the ceremonies took place with unusual attention to display, and uncommon precautions to insure public order and the safety of all the participants. General Stone, who had charge of the military arrangements, has related them with some minuteness.

On the afternoon of the 3d of March, General Scott held a conference at his headquarters, there being present his staff, General Sumner, and myself; and then was arranged the programme of the procession. President Buchanan was to drive to Willard's Hotel and call upon the President-elect. The two were to ride in the same carriage, between double files of a squadron of the District of Columbia cavalry. The company of sappers and miners were to march in front of the Presidential carriage, and the infantry and riflemen of the District of Columbia were to follow it. Riflemen in squads were to be placed on the roofs of certain commanding houses which I had selected along Pennsylvania Avenue, with orders to watch the windows on the opposite side, and to fire upon them in case any attempt should be made to fire from those windows on the Presidential carriage. The small force of regular cavalry which had arrived was to guard the side-street crossings of Pennsylvania Avenue, and to move from one to another during the passage of the procession. A battalion of District of Columbia troops were to be placed near the steps of the Capitol, and riflemen in the windows of the wings of the Capitol. On the arrival of the Presidential party at the Capitol the troops were to be stationed so as to return in the same order after the ceremony.[1]

General Stone does not mention another item of preparation — that on the brow of the hill, not far from the north entrance to the Capitol, command-

[1] General C. P. Stone, "Washington on the Eve of the War." "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," Vol. I., p. 24.

ing both the approach and the broad plateau of the east front, was stationed a battery of flying artillery, in the immediate vicinity of which General Scott remained a careful observer of the scene during the entire ceremonies, ready to take personal command and direction should any untoward occurrence render it necessary. CHAP. XXI.

The closing duties of the session, which expired at noon, kept President Buchanan at the Capitol till the last moment. Accompanied by the Committee of the Senate, he reached Willard's Hotel and conducted the President-elect to his carriage, in which, side by side, they rode in the procession, undisturbed by the slightest disorder. When they reached the Senate Chamber, already densely packed with officials and civilians, the ceremony of swearing-in the Vice-President was soon performed. Then in a new procession of dignitaries Mr. Lincoln was escorted through the corridor of the great edifice to the east portico, where below the platform stood an immense throng in waiting. The principal actors — the Senate Committee of Arrangements, the out-going President, the President-elect and his family, the Chief-Justice in his robe, the Clerk of the Court with the Bible — took their places in a central group on the front of the platform, in full view of the waiting multitude. Around this central group other Justices in their robes, Senators, Representatives, officials, and prominent guests crowded to their seats. Mar. 4, 1861.

To the imaginative spectator there might have been something emblematic in the architectural features of the scene. The construction of the great dome of the Capitol was in mid-progress,

CHAP. XXI. and huge derricks held by a network of steel ropes towered over the incomplete structure. In the grounds in front stood the bronze statue of Liberty, not then lifted to the pedestal from which she now greets the rising sun. At that moment, indeed, it required little poetic illusion to fancy her looking with a mute appeal for help to the man who was the center of all eyes and hearts; and could she have done so, her gaze would already have been rewarded with a vision of fateful prophecy. For in the central group of this inauguration ceremony there confronted each other four historic personages in the final act of a political drama which in its scope, completeness, and consequence will bear comparison with those most famous in human record,—Senator Douglas, the author of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, representing the legislative power of the American Government; Chief-Justice Taney, author of the Dred Scott decision, representing the influence of the judiciary; and President Buchanan, who by his Lecompton measures and messages had used the whole executive power and patronage to intensify and perpetuate the mischiefs born of the repeal and the dictum. Fourth in the group stood Abraham Lincoln, President-elect, illustrating the vital political truth announced in that sentence of his Cincinnati speech in which he declared: "The people of these United States are the rightful masters of both Congresses and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution."[1]

[1] The dramatic element of the scene in another view has been noticed by Dr. Holland, in his "Life of Lincoln," p. 278, where

When the cheers which greeted his appearance had somewhat abated, Senator Edward D. Baker, of Oregon, rose and introduced Mr. Lincoln to the audience; and stepping forward, the President-elect, in a firm, clear voice, thoroughly practiced in addressing the huge open-air assemblages of the West, read his inaugural address, to which every ear listened with eagerness. CHAP. XXI.

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES: In compliance with a custom as old as the Government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly, and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President "before he enters on the execution of his office."[1] Mar. 4, 1861.

he says: "Mr. Lincoln himself must have wondered at the strange conjunction of personages and events. The 'Stephen' of his first speech in the old Senatorial campaign was a defeated candidate for the Presidency, who then stood patriotically at his side, holding the hat of the Republican President, which he had politely taken at the beginning of the inaugural address; 'James' had just walked out of office to make room for him; 'Franklin' had passed into comparative obscurity or something worse; and 'Roger' had just administered to him the oath of office."

[1] Mr. Lincoln's original draft contained at this point the following paragraphs:

"The more modern custom of electing a Chief Magistrate upon a previously declared platform of principles supersedes in a great measure the necessity of re-stating those principles in an address of this sort. Upon the plainest grounds of good faith, one so elected is not at liberty to shift his position. It is necessarily implied, if not expressed, that in his judgment the platform which he thus accepts binds him to nothing either unconstitutional or inexpedient.

"Having been so elected upon the Chicago platform, and while I would repeat nothing in it, of aspersion or epithet, or question of motive, against any man or party, I hold myself bound by duty, as well as impelled by inclination, to follow, within the Executive sphere, the principles therein declared. By no other course could I meet the reasonable expectations of the country."

Mr. Seward proposed either to omit the whole, or to amend them as follows:

CHAP. XXI. I do not consider it necessary at present for me to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement.

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. And, more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

"*Resolved*, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend, and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes."

I now reiterate these sentiments; and, in doing so, I

"The more modern custom of nominating a Chief Magistrate upon a previously declared summary of principles supersedes in a great measure the necessity of restating those principles in an address of this sort. It is necessarily implied, if not expressed, that the summary binds the officer elected to nothing either unconstitutional or inexpedient. With this explanation I deem it my duty, as I am disposed in feeling, to follow, so far as they apply to the Executive sphere, the principles on which I was brought before the American People."

Mr. Lincoln adopted Mr. Seward's preference of the alternative suggestions made, and omitted the whole.

only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in anywise endangered by the now incoming Administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given, will be cheerfully given[2] to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause — as cheerfully to one section, as to another.

There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions:

"No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the lawgiver is the law. All Members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution — to this provision as much as to any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves, whose cases come within the terms of this clause, "shall be delivered up" their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not, with nearly equal unanimity, frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by State authority; but surely that difference is not a very material one. If

[2] In the original draft this sentence stood: "The protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given will be cheerfully given to all the States," etc.

Mr. Seward proposed to amend it thus: "will be cheerfully given in every case and under all circumstances to all the States," etc.

Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the suggestion, but himself modified it so as to read: "will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause — as cheerfully to one section, as to another."

CHAP. XXI. the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him, or to others, by which authority it is done. And should any one, in any case, be content that his oath shall go unkept, on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to *how* it shall be kept?

Again, in any law upon this subject, ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced so that a free man be not, in any case, surrendered as a slave?[3] And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that "the citizen of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States?"

I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservations and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules. And while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed, than to violate any of them trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional.

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our National Constitution. During that period fifteen different and greatly distinguished citizens have, in succession, administered the Executive branch of the Government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success.[4] Yet, with all this scope of precedent, I now enter upon the same task for the brief constitutional term of four years, under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted.[5]

[3] The remainder of this paragraph was not in the original draft. Mr. Lincoln added it of his own accord.

[4] This sentence stood in the original: "They have conducted it through many perils; and on the whole, with great success." Mr. Lincoln adopted Mr. Seward's suggestion to make it read: "and generally with great success."

[5] In the original this sentence read: "A disruption of the Federal Union is menaced, and, so far as can be on paper, is already

I hold that, in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever — it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

Again, if the United States be not a Government proper, but an association of States in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it — break it, so to speak, but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that, in legal contemplation, the Union is perpetual, confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the articles of association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured,[6] and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And, finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was, "*to form a more perfect Union.*"

But if destruction of the Union by one, or by a part only, of the States be lawfully possible, the Union is

effected. The particulars of what has been done are so familiar and so fresh that I need not waste any time in recounting them."

Mr. Seward proposed to change it as follows: "A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted."

Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

[6] This sentence originally stood: "It was further matured and expressly declared and pledged to be perpetual," etc.

Mr. Lincoln of his own accord amended it as follows: "It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual," etc.

CHAP. XXI. *less* perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity.[7]

It follows from these views that no State, upon its own mere motion, can lawfully get out of the Union; that *resolves* and *ordinances* to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence, within any State or States, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.[8]

I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken; and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States.[9] Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part; and I shall perform it, so far as practicable, unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means, or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary.[10] I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as

[7] In the original this paragraph concluded as follows: "The Union is less perfect than before, which contradicts the Constitution, and therefore is absurd."

Mr. Seward proposed to strike out the words "and therefore is absurd." Mr. Lincoln adopted this suggestion, and in addition remodeled the whole sentence, so as to read: "The Union is *less* perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity."

[8] The first half of this sentence originally closed: "ordinances to that effect are legally nothing," and the second half, "are insurrectionary or treasonable, according to circumstances." Mr. Seward's suggestions to strike out the word "nothing" and substitute the word "void," and to strike out the word "treasonable" and substitute the word "revolutionary" were adopted.

[9] In the original this sentence stood: "I therefore consider that the Union is unbroken; and, to the extent of my ability, I shall take care that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States."

Mr. Seward proposed to amend it as follows: "I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken; and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States."

Mr. Lincoln adopted the change.

[10] This phrase originally stood: "or in some tangible way direct the contrary."

Mr. Seward's suggestion to strike out the words "tangible way" and substitute therefor the words "authoritative manner" was adopted.

the declared purpose of the Union that it *will* constitutionally defend and maintain itself.[11]

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority.[12] The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and

[11] This sentence originally closed: "will have its own and defend itself." Mr. Seward's suggestion to strike out these words and insert "will constitutionally defend and maintain itself," was adopted.

[12] In the original draft this paragraph, after the first sentence, stood as follows:

"All the power at my disposal will be used to reclaim the public property and places which have fallen; to hold, occupy, and possess these and all other property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion of any State. Where hostility to the United States, in any interior locality, shall be so great and so universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the Government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal, that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices."

Mr. Seward proposed to strike out all the above, and to insert the following:

"The power confided to me shall be used indeed with efficacy, but also with discretion in every case and exigency, according to the circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles, and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections. There are in this Government, as in every other, emergencies when the exercise of power lawful in itself is less certain to secure the just ends of administration than a temporary forbearance from it, with reliance on the voluntary though delayed acquiescence of the people in the laws which have been made by themselves and for their own benefit. I shall not lose sight of this obvious maxim."

Mr. Lincoln, however, did not adopt this proposal, but made a slight change which had been suggested by another friend. At Indianapolis he gave a copy of his original draft to Hon. O. H. Browning, who, after carefully reading it, on his return wrote to Mr. Lincoln (February 17, 1861) referring to this paragraph: "Would it not be judicious so to modify this as to make it read: 'All the power at my disposal will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts, etc.,' omitting the declaration of the purpose of reclamation, which will be construed into a threat or menace, and will be irritating even in the border States? On principle the pass-

CHAP. XXI. places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. Where hostility to the United States, in any interior locality, shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the Government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal, that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union.[13] So far as possible, the people everywhere shall have that sense of perfect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper, and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised according to circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles, and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.[14]

That there are persons in one section or another who

age is right as it now stands. The fallen places ought to be reclaimed. But cannot that be accomplished as well or even better without announcing the purpose in your inaugural?"

Mr. Lincoln adopted Mr. Browning's advice, and modified his own phraseology as proposed.

He also made in this paragraph another slight change of phraseology. For, "there will be no invasion of any State," he substituted, "there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere."

[13] This phrase originally was, "The mails, unless refused, will continue to be furnished," etc. Mr. Lincoln himself changed this to read: "The mails, unless repelled."

[14] This paragraph originally closed with the following sentence: "This course will be pursued until current experience shall show a modification or change to be proper." Mr. Lincoln himself changed this so as to read: "The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper." He also added a part of the language proposed by Mr. Seward for the previous paragraph, as will be seen by comparison.

seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them.[15] To those, however, who really love the Union, may I not speak? CHAP. XXI.

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it?[16] Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from — will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

All profess to be content in the Union, if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right, plainly written in the Constitution, has been denied?[17] I think not. Happily the human mind is so constituted,[18] that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might, in a moral point of view,

[15] This sentence originally stood: "That there are persons who seek to destroy the Union," etc. Mr. Seward proposed to amend so as to make it read: "That there are persons in one section as well as in the other, who seek to destroy the Union," etc. Mr. Lincoln changed the amendment to, "That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext," etc.

Mr. Seward also proposed to add to the last clause of the sentence, after the word "them," the following: "because I am sure they must be few in number and of little influence when their pernicious principles are fully understood."

Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the suggestion.

[16] Mr. Lincoln himself struck out the word "Union," as it originally appeared in this sentence, and inserted in lieu the words "fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes."

[17] Mr. Seward proposed to insert the word "distinct" after the words, "Is it true, then, that any," in the second sentence of this paragraph.

Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the suggestion.

[18] In this sentence Mr. Lincoln himself changed the word "constructed" to "constituted."

CHAP. XXI. justify revolution — certainly would, if such right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions,[19] in the Constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration.[20] No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by national or by State authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. *May* Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. *Must* Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease. There is no other alternative; for continuing the Government is acquiescence on one side or the other.[21]

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority.[22] For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present

[19] The phrase, "by affirmations and negations," Mr. Seward proposed to make, "by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions."

Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

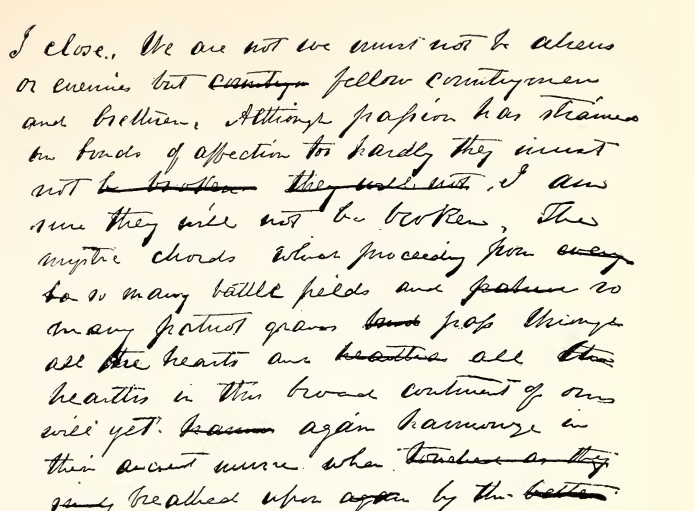
[20] The phrase, "applicable to every question," Mr. Seward proposed to change to, "applicable to every possible question."

Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the change.

[21] In this paragraph Mr. Seward proposed to substitute the words "acquiesce" and "acquiescence" for "submit" and "submission."

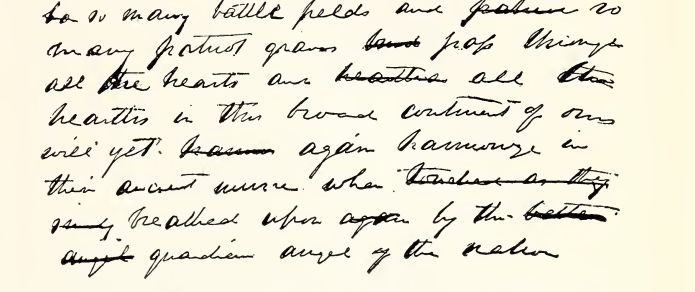
Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

[22] The original phrase, "a minority of their own number will secede from them," Mr. Lincoln himself changed to, "a minority of their own will secede from them."



I close. We are not we must not be aliens or enemies but ~~countrymen~~ fellow countrymen and brethren. Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly they must not ~~be broken~~ they ~~will not break~~. I am sure they will not be broken. The mystic chords which proceeding from every ~~battle~~ so many battle fields and patriot graves ~~and~~ pass through all the hearts and ~~hearths~~ all the hearths in this broad continent of ours will yet ~~again~~ again harmonize in their ancient music when ~~touched as they~~ touched upon again by the ~~better~~ ~~angels~~ guardian angel of the nation

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF MR. SEWARD'S SUGGESTION FOR THE CLOSE OF THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS. (FROM THE ORIGINAL MS.)



You can have no conflict, without being yourselves the aggressors. *You* have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while *I* shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect and defend" it. ~~I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies.~~

I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE CLOSING PARAGRAPH OF THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS AS REWRITTEN BY MR. LINCOLN. (FROM THE ORIGINAL FROM WHICH THE ADDRESS WAS DELIVERED.)

Union now claim to secede from it?[23] All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this. CHAP. XXI.

Is there such perfect identity of interests among the States to compose a new Union as to produce harmony only, and prevent renewed secession?[24]

Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people.[25] Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I do not forget the position, assumed by some, that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court; nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding, in any case, upon the parties to a suit, as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all

[23] In the original these sentences ran as follows: "For instance, why may not South Carolina, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede from a new Southern Confederacy, just as she now claims to secede from the present Union? Her people, and, indeed, all secession people, are now being educated to the precise temper of doing this."

Mr. Seward proposed to substitute the names "Alabama or Florida" for "South Carolina"; and the word "communities" for "people."

Instead of adopting this, Mr. Lincoln re-wrote the whole, as follows: "For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this."

[24] For the original phrase, "a Southern Union," Mr. Lincoln himself substituted, "a new Union."

[25] The original sentence, "A constitutional majority is the only true sovereign of a free people," Mr. Seward proposed to change to, "A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign," etc.

Mr. Lincoln adopted the change.

CHAP. XXI.

other departments of the Government.[26] And while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled, and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice.[27] At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government, upon vital questions, affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal.[28] Nor is there in this view any assault upon the court or the judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink to decide cases properly brought before them, and it is no fault of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes.[29]

[26] In this sentence the final clause, "while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the Government," was suggested by Mr. Seward and adopted by Mr. Lincoln.

[27] In the original this phrase ran: "the greater evils of a different rule." Mr. Seward proposed to substitute "practice" for "rule," and Mr. Lincoln struck out the word "greater," making it read, "the evils of a different practice."

[28] In the original this sentence stood: "but if the policy of the Government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, it is plain that the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having turned their government over to the despotism of the few life officers composing the court."

Mr. Seward proposed to amend it as follows: "At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, made in the ordinary course of litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal."

Mr. Lincoln adopted the amendment, first changing the phrase, "made in the ordinary course of litigation," to, "the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation," and also the phrase, "having practically resigned," to, "having to that extent practically resigned."

[29] The original draft here contained the following paragraph:

"The Republican party, as I

One section of our country believes slavery is *right*, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is *wrong*, and ought not to be extended.[30] This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution, and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave trade, are each as well enforced,[31] perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself.[32] The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured; and it would be worse in both cases *after* the separation of the sections, than before. The foreign slave trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived without restriction in one section;[33] while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory

understand, have avowed the purpose to prevent, if they can, the extension of slavery under the national auspices; and upon this arises the only dispute between the sections."

Mr. Seward proposed to strike out the whole paragraph, and Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

[30] In the original this phrase stood: "One section believes slavery is right," etc. Mr. Seward proposed to make it read: "One section of our country believes slavery is right," etc.

Mr. Lincoln adopted the amendment.

[31] The phrase, "as well enforced as any law," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "as well enforced, perhaps, as any law," etc.

The suggestion was adopted.

[32] The phrase, "where the moral sense of the people is against the law itself," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself."

The suggestion was adopted.

[33] The phrase, "would be revived," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "would be ultimately revived."

The suggestion was adopted.

CHAP. XXI. *after* separation than *before?* Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens, than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government they can exercise their *constitutional* right of amending it, or their *revolutionary* right to dismember or overthrow it.[34] I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the National Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully recognize the rightful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself; and I should, under existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others, not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not

[34] Following the words, "dismember and overthrow it," the original continued:

"As I am not much impressed with the belief that the present Constitution can be improved, I make no recommendations of amendments. I am rather for the old ship, and the chart of the old pilots. If, however, the people desire a new or an altered vessel, the matter is exclusively their own, and they can move in the premises, as well without as with an Executive recommendation. I shall place no obstacle in the way of what may appear to be their wishes."

Mr. Seward proposed to change the first sentence of the above to the following: "While so great a diversity of opinion exists on the question what amendments, if indeed any, would be effective in restoring peace and safety, it would only tend to aggravate the dispute if I were to attempt to give direction to the public mind in that respect."

Mr. Lincoln did not adopt Mr. Seward's suggestion; but struck out all the above, and remodeled the whole paragraph to the form in which it now stands in the text, adding also the reference to the new constitutional amendment.

be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution — which amendment, however, I have not seen — has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose, not to speak of particular amendments, so far as to say that, holding such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The Chief Magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have conferred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves can do this also if they choose;[35] but the Executive, as such, has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present Government, as it came to his hands, and to transmit it, unimpaired by him, to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences is either party without faith of being in the right?[36] If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with his eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South,[37] that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of the Government under which we live, this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief; and have, with equal wisdom, provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain

[35] The original phrase, "can do this if they choose," Mr. Lincoln himself changed to read, "can do this also if they choose."

[36] The original phrase, "is either party without faith in the right?" Mr. Lincoln himself changed to, "is either party without faith of being in the right?"

[37] The original phrase, "be on our side or on yours," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "be on the side of the North, or of the South, of the East, or of the West."

Mr. Lincoln changed it to read: "be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and," etc.

CHAP. XXI. their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.[38]

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and *well* upon this whole subject.[39] Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.[40] If there be an object to *hurry* any of you, in hot haste, to a step which you would never take *deliberately*, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied, still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new Administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulty.

In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail *you*.[41] You can have no conflict, without being yourselves the aggressors. *You* have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the Government, while *I* shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."[42]

[38] The original phrase, "While the people remain patient and true to themselves, no man, even in the Presidential chair, can," etc., Mr. Seward proposed to change to, "While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no legislature and no administration can," etc.

Mr. Lincoln changed it to read as follows: "While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can," etc.

[39] The original phrase, "take time and think well," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "think calmly and think well."

Mr. Lincoln changed it to, "think calmly and *well*."

[40] The original sentences: "Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. Nothing worth preserving is either breaking or burning," Mr. Seward proposed to strike out.

Mr. Lincoln retained the first, and struck out the second.

[41] In the original sentence, "The Government will not assail you, unless you first assail it," Mr. Seward suggested striking out the last clause.

Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

[42] The original draft, after the

I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have

words, "preserve, protect, and defend it," concluded as follows, addressing itself to "my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen": "You can forbear the assault upon it, I cannot shrink from the defense of it. With you, and not with me, is the solemn question of 'Shall it be peace or a sword?'"

Mr. Seward did not like this termination; his letter, previously quoted, suggested that "something besides or in addition to argument is needful — to meet and remove prejudice and passion in the South, and despondency and fear in the East. Some words of affection — some of calm and cheerful confidence." Accordingly he submitted two separate drafts for a closing paragraph, from which Mr. Lincoln might choose one to substitute for the two sentences which he proposed to strike out.

Suggestions for a closing paragraph:

NO. I.

"However unusual it may be at such a time to speak of sections or to sections, yet in view of the misconceptions and agitations which have strained the ties of brotherhood so far, I hope it will not be deemed a departure from propriety, whatever it may be from custom, to say that if in the criminations and misconstructions which too often imbue our political contests, any man south of this capital has been led to believe that I regard with a less friendly eye his rights, his interests, or his domestic safety and happiness, or those of his State, than I do those of any other portion of my country, or that I would invade or disturb any legal right or domestic institution in the South, he mistakes both my principles and feelings, and does not know me. I aspire to come in the spirit, however far below the ability and wisdom, of Washington, of Madison, of Jackson, and of Clay. In that spirit I here declare that in my administration I shall know no rule but the Constitution, no guide but the laws, and no sentiment but that of equal devotion to my whole country, east, west, north, and south."

NO. II.

"I close. We are not, we must not be, aliens or enemies, but fellow-countrymen and brethren. Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly, they must not, I am sure they will not, be broken. The mystic chords which, proceeding from so many battlefields and so many patriot graves, pass through all the hearts and all hearths in this broad continent of ours, will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation."

The first of these drafts, containing 139 words in its opening sentence, and made up of phrases which had become extremely commonplace by iteration in the six years' slavery discussion, was clearly inadmissible. The second draft, containing the germ of a fine poetic thought, Mr. Lincoln took, and, in a new development and perfect form, gave it the life and spirit and beauty which have made it celebrated in the text.

CHAP. XXI. strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

A cheer greeted the conclusion. Chief-Justice Taney arose, the clerk opened his Bible, and Mr. Lincoln, laying his hand upon it, with deliberation pronounced the oath:

"I, Abraham Lincoln, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Then, while the battery on the brow of the hill thundered its salute, citizen Buchanan and President Lincoln returned to their carriage, and the military procession escorted them from the Capitol to the Executive Mansion, on the threshold of which Mr. Buchanan warmly shook the hand of his successor, with cordial good wishes for his personal happiness and the national peace and prosperity.

CHAPTER XXII

LINCOLN'S CABINET

Hon. Gideon Welles, Conversation. J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

THE work of framing the new Cabinet was mainly performed on the evening of the Presidential election. After the polls were closed on the 6th of November (so Mr. Lincoln related a year or two later), the superintendent of the telegraph at Springfield invited him to his office to remain and read the dispatches as they should come in. He accepted the offer; and reporting himself in due time at the telegraph office, from which all other visitors were excluded at 9 o'clock, awaited the result of the eventful day. Soon the telegrams came thick and fast — first from the neighboring precincts and counties; then from the great Western cities, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati; and finally from the capitals of the doubtful States, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and the Empire State of New York. Here in this little room, in the company of two or three silent operators moving about their mysteriously clicking instruments, and recording with imperturbable gravity the swift-throbbing messages from near and far, Mr. Lincoln read the reports as they came, first in fragmentary dribblets, and later in the rising and swelling stream of cheering news.

CH. XXII. There was never a closer calculator of political probabilities than himself. He was completely at home among election figures. All his political life he had scanned tables of returns with as much care and accuracy as he analyzed and scrutinized maxims of government and platforms of parties. Now, as formerly, he was familiar with all the turning-points in contested counties and "close" districts, and knew by heart the value of each and every local loss or gain and its relation to the grand result. In past years, at the close of many a hot campaign, he had searched out the comfort of victory from a discouraging and adverse-looking column of figures, or correctly read the fatal omen of defeat in some single announcement from a precinct or county.

Silently, as they were transcribed, the operators handed him the messages, which he laid on his knee while he adjusted his spectacles, and then read and re-read several times with deliberation. He had not long to wait for indications. From a scattering beginning, made up of encouraging local fragments, the hopeful news rose to almost uninterrupted tidings of victory. Soon a shower of congratulatory telegrams fell from the wires, and while his partisans and friends in all parts of the country were thus shaking hands with him "by lightning" over the result, he could hear the shouts and speeches of his Springfield followers, gathered in the great hall of the State-house across the street.

Of course his first emotions were those of a kindling pleasure and pride at the completeness of his success. But this was only a momentary glow. He was indeed President-elect; but with that con-

sciousness there fell upon him the appalling shadow of his mighty task and responsibility. It seemed as if he suddenly bore the whole world upon his shoulders, and could not shake it off; and sitting there in the yet early watches of the night, he read the still coming telegrams in a sort of absent-minded mechanical routine, while his inner man took up the crushing burden of his country's troubles, and traced out the laborious path of future duties. "When I finally bade my friends good-night and left that room," said Lincoln, "I had substantially completed the framework of my Cabinet as it now exists." CH. XXII.

Though the grouping and combining of the new President's intended councilors occurred at this time, it is no less true that some of them were selected at a much earlier date. For a month after the election he gave no intimation whatever of his purpose. Cabinet-making is at all times difficult, as Mr. Lincoln felt and acknowledged, even though he had progressed thus far in his task. Up to the early days of December he followed the current of newspaper criticism, daily read his budget of private letters, gave numerous interviews to visiting politicians of prominence and influence, and, on the occasion of a short visit to Chicago, met and conferred with Mr. Hamlin, the Vice-President-elect — all constituting, most probably, little else than a continued study of the Cabinet question. Never arbitrary or dictatorial in the decision of any matter, he took unusual care on this point to receive patiently and consider seriously all the advice, recommendations, and objections which his friends from different States had to offer.

CH. XXII. His personal experience during his service as a Member of Congress had given him an insight into the sharp and bitter contentions which grow out of office-seeking and the distribution of patronage. It was therefore doubtless with the view to fortify himself in his selections that he now determined to make definite offers of some, at least, of the Cabinet appointments. The question of taking part of his constitutional advisers from among his political opponents, and from the hostile or complaining Southern States, had been thoroughly debated in his own mind. The conclusion arrived at is plainly evinced by the following, written by him, and inserted as a short leading editorial in the Springfield "Journal" on the morning of December 12 (or 13), 1860:

> We hear such frequent allusions to a supposed purpose on the part of Mr. Lincoln to call into his Cabinet two or three Southern gentlemen from the parties opposed to him politically, that we are prompted to ask a few questions.
>
> *First.* Is it known that any such gentleman of character would accept a place in the Cabinet?
>
> *Second.* If yea, on what terms does he surrender to Mr. Lincoln, or Mr. Lincoln to him, on the political differences between them, or do they enter upon the administration in open opposition to each other?

The high authorship of these paragraphs was not announced, but the *reductio ad absurdum* was so complete that the newspapers were not amiss in guessing whence they emanated.

The selection of enemies being out of the question, Mr. Lincoln chose his ablest friends. On the morning of December 8, 1860, he penned the following letters:

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., December 8, 1860. CH. XXII.

MY DEAR SIR: With your permission I shall at the proper time nominate you to the Senate for confirmation as Secretary of State for the United States. Please let me hear from you at your own earliest convenience.

Your friend and obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN. MS.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Washington, D. C.

(Private and confidential.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., December 8, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: In addition to the accompanying and more formal note inviting you to take charge of the State Department, I deem it proper to address you this. Rumors have got into the newspapers to the effect that the department named above would be tendered you as a compliment, and with the expectation that you would decline it. I beg you to be assured that I have said nothing to justify these rumors. On the contrary, it has been my purpose, from the day of the nomination at Chicago, to assign you, by your leave, this place in the Administration. I have delayed so long to communicate that purpose, in deference to what appeared to me a proper caution in the case. Nothing has been developed to change my view in the premises; and I now offer you the place in the hope that you will accept it, and with the belief that your position in the public eye, your integrity, ability, learning, and great experience all combine to render it an appointment preëminently fit to be made.

One word more. In regard to the patronage sought with so much eagerness and jealousy, I have prescribed for myself the maxim, "Justice to all"; and I earnestly beseech your coöperation in keeping the maxim good.

Your friend and obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN. MS.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Washington, D. C.

This letter, so full of frankness and delicate courtesy, together with the brief note preceding

CH. XXII. it, was sent to two intimate friends of the President-elect at Washington, with the request, if their judgment concurred in the step, to hand them to Mr. Seward. They were at once delivered, and the recipient wrote the following equally courteous and characteristic answer:

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: I have had the honor of receiving as well your note which tenders to me a nomination to the Senate for the office of Secretary of State, as also your private and confidential letter on the same subject.

It would be a violation of my own feelings, as well as a great injustice to you, if I were to leave occasion for any doubt on your part that I appreciate as highly as I ought the distinction which, as the Chief Magistrate of the Republic, you propose to confer upon me, and that I am fully, perfectly, and entirely satisfied with the sincerity and kindness of your sentiments and wishes in regard to my acceptance of it.

You will readily believe that, coming to the consideration of so grave a subject all at once, I need a little time to consider whether I possess the qualifications and temper of a minister, and whether it is in such a capacity that my friends would wish that I should act if I am to continue at all in the public service. These questions are, moreover, to be considered in view of a very anomalous condition of public affairs. I wish, indeed, that a conference with you upon them were possible. But I do not see how it could prudently be held under existing circumstances. Without publishing the fact of your invitation, I will, with your leave, reflect upon it a few days, and then give you my definite answer, which, if I know myself, will be made under the influence exclusively of the most earnest desire for the success of your Administration, and through it for the safety, honor, and welfare of the Union.

Whatever may be my conclusion, you may rest assured of my hearty concurrence in your views in regard to the distribution of the public offices as you have communicated them.

Believe me, my dear sir, most respectfully and most faithfully your friend and humble servant, CH. XXII.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD. MS.

The Hon. ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
President-elect of the United States.

Before the end of the month, Mr. Lincoln received a short and simple note from Mr. Seward signifying his acceptance. Meanwhile he had sent (December 13) a verbal message to Edward Bates, of St. Louis, Missouri, that he would go there the next day to see and consult him about some points connected with the formation of his Cabinet. "I thought I saw an unfitness in his coming to me, and that I ought to go to him," Bates, Diary. MS. writes Mr. Bates with his old-school politeness. Accordingly, the following Saturday (December 15) found him at Mr. Lincoln's office in Springfield.

They had had a personal acquaintance of some eight years; and after cordial greetings the President-elect proceeded without further prelude to tell him that since the day of the Chicago nomination it had been his purpose to tender him one of the places in his Cabinet. Some of his friends had asked the State Department for him. He could not now offer him this, which was usually considered the first place in the Cabinet, for the reason that he should offer that place to Mr. Seward, in view of his ability, his integrity, his commanding influence, and his fitness for the place. He did this as a matter of duty to the party and to Mr. Seward's many and strong friends, while at the same time it accorded perfectly with his own personal inclinations, notwithstanding some opposition on the part of sincere and warm friends. He would, therefore, offer Mr.

CH. XXII. Bates what he supposed would be more congenial, and for which he was certainly in every way qualified—the Attorney-Generalship.

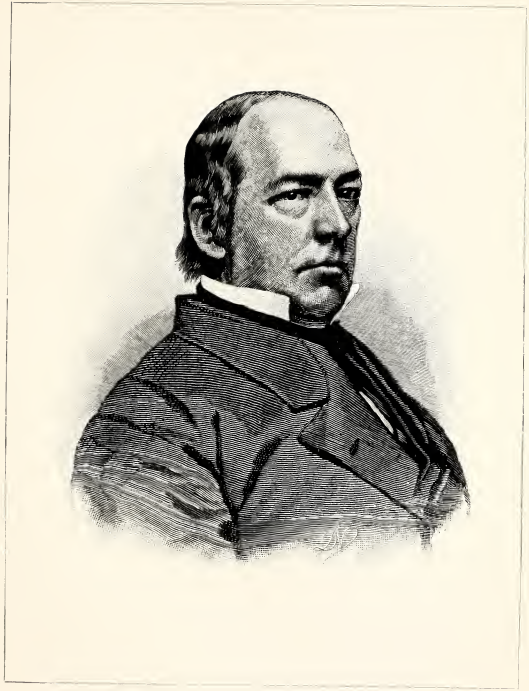
J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

Within a few days it was announced by authority that Mr. Bates had been tendered and had accepted a place in the new Cabinet. His adhesion was looked upon as a sure indication of a moderate and constitutional policy by the incoming Administration.

The choice of Mr. Seward as the head of the Cabinet, as well as his probable acceptance, was also soon whispered about among leading Republicans in Congress, rumored in the public press, and in time confirmed by a semi-official statement in the "Albany Evening Journal," the organ of Mr. Seward's friend Thurlow Weed. This action of Mr. Lincoln gave the party at large general gratification, since up to the Chicago Convention Mr. Seward had been its chief favorite. Whatever of antagonism existed between pronounced and conservative Republicans was thus happily neutralized, and the respective partisans of Mr. Seward and Mr. Bates each felt themselves bound to the new Administration through the presence of a trusted leader in Mr. Lincoln's councils.

To these two selections a third had in the mean time been virtually added. As the individual held a less prominent position in the nation, and as the choice was merely provisional, it provoked no con-

1860. test. On December 11, three days after writing his letter to Mr. Seward, two gentlemen called upon the President-elect to present the claims of Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana, one of the "pivotal States" in the November election, to a seat in the



CALEB B. SMITH.

Cabinet. After a short talk, showing that the question had already gone through the crucible of his judgment, Mr. Lincoln replied that, being determined to act with caution and not embarrass himself with promises, he could only say that he saw no insuperable objections to Indiana's having a place, or to Smith being the man. To this decision Mr. Lincoln held firm, though very considerable pressure came upon him in behalf of another citizen of Indiana, already then distinguished and destined to attain still greater eminence. A letter which Mr. Lincoln wrote, explaining why he adhered to his original choice, will be of interest in this connection as illustrating one of his rules of conduct which contributed so much to his popular strength; namely, neither to forget a friendship nor remember a grudge.

CH. XXII.

J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 8, 1861.

HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX.

MY DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 6th has just been handed me by Mr. Baker, of Minnesota. When I said to you the other day that I wished to write you a letter, I had reference, of course, to my not having offered you a Cabinet appointment. I meant to say, and now do say, you were most honorably and amply recommended; and a tender of the appointment was not withheld, in any part, because of anything happening in 1858.[1] Indeed, I should have decided as I did easier than I did, had that matter never existed. I had partly made up my mind in favor of Mr. Smith — not conclusively, of course — before your name was mentioned in that connection. When you were brought forward I said, "Colfax is a young man, is already in position, is running a brilliant career, and is

[1] The allusion here is to the fact that in the Senatorial campaign of 1858 in Illinois, between Lincoln and Douglas, Mr. Colfax was understood to favor the reëlection of Douglas.

CH. XXII. sure of a bright future in any event — with Smith it is now or never." I considered either abundantly competent, and decided on the ground I have stated. I now have to beg that you will not do me the injustice to suppose for a moment that I remember anything against you in malice.

MS. Also partly printed in Hollister, "Life of Colfax."

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

The next step in Cabinet-making was much more complex as a political and personal adjustment, and proved for the moment too difficult of execution. Mr. Lincoln had frequently and without reserve expressed his decided preference for ex-Governor Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio, as his Secretary of the Treasury, not only on account of his acknowledged executive talent, but above all because his spotless integrity of character would at once impart confidence in the national credit, now greatly impaired by recent maladministration and liable to be lost in the convulsions of civil war. There seemed, too, an eminent fitness in this selection. He was looked upon as the most prominent and able representative of the second great constituent element of the Republican party — the former Democrats of the Northern States whose anti-slavery convictions had joined them to the new party of freedom.

But against this preference there rose up the local claim of the State of Pennsylvania and of Senator Simon Cameron as her most prominent citizen. The manufacturing industry of that State created a local sentiment in behalf of a protective tariff stronger than all other party issues. Protection had not, indeed, been a prominent question in the late election, yet the Republican platform

proclaimed that the "industrial interests" should be encouraged; the bulk of the new party were former tariff men; Mr. Lincoln himself had been an avowed protectionist in other political campaigns, and was known not to have changed his convictions on this point. Stronger than all was the implied understanding in favor of protection — unwritten indeed, but none the less relied upon by politicians and parties. Now that the election was won, Pennsylvania claimed control of the Treasury Department as that branch of the Government which could wield the greatest influence, both upon legislation and administration, for the promotion of her industrial prosperity. Governor Chase had a wider national reputation than Senator Cameron, but each was a leader in his own State, each had received the almost unanimous complimentary vote of his own State in the Chicago Convention. CH. XXII.

In view of these conflicting motives and interests, the President-elect invited Mr. Cameron to visit him at Springfield, and interviews took place between them on the 30th and 31st of December. 1860. Their conversations were undoubtedly intended to be frank and explicit, and yet it would appear that a temporary misunderstanding grew out of them, the precise nature of which has never become public history. When Mr. Cameron returned to his home he bore with him the following note:

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., December 31, 1860.

HON. SIMON CAMERON.

MY DEAR SIR: I think fit to notify you now, that by your permission I shall at the proper time nominate you to the U. S. Senate for confirmation as Secretary of the

CH. XXII. MS. Treasury, or as Secretary of War — which of the two I have not yet definitely decided. Please answer at your earliest convenience.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

The purpose of the President-elect, evidently formed with deliberation, was suddenly changed, but, as the sequel proved, for a time only. If he ever explained his reason for so doing, it was to witnesses who are long since dead. One of the secondary causes he has himself left on record. It happened that just at this juncture he received, both by letter and through personal visits from Pennsylvania politicians, the indications of a bitter hostility to Cameron from an influential and very active minority in that State, headed by the newly elected Governor and the chairman of the State central committee, who protested in severe terms against Cameron's appointment. The situation required prompt action, and, keeping his own counsel, Mr. Lincoln wrote:

(Private.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Jan. 3, 1861.

HON. SIMON CAMERON.

MY DEAR SIR: Since seeing you things have developed which make it impossible for me to take you into the Cabinet. You will say this comes of an interview with McClure; and this is partly, but not wholly, true. The more potent matter is wholly outside of Pennsylvania; and yet I am not at liberty to specify it. Enough that it appears to me to be sufficient. And now I suggest that you write me declining the appointment, in which case I do not object to its being known that it was tendered you. Better do this at once, before things so change that you cannot honorably decline, and I be compelled to

openly recall the tender. No person living knows or has an intimation that I write this letter. CH. XXII.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

P. S. Telegraph me instantly on receipt of this, saying, "All right."— A. L. MS.

It will be seen from this that Mr. Lincoln did not offer any explanation of his course; also that he had so well kept his secret, both of the tender and the recall, that, since his judgment so dictated, he could reverse his own action and the world be none the wiser. Still further does it appear from this letter that he had either enjoined or expected an equal discretion on the part of Mr. Cameron. But the latter, in haste to control the party politics of Pennsylvania, and dictate who from that State should succeed him in the Senate, had shown Mr. Lincoln's first note. Mr. Cameron was, therefore, not only unable to telegraph "All right," but was in a measure compelled also to show the recall to a few special friends; and thus the incident, though the correspondence and the actual details were carefully kept out of the newspapers, was more or less understood in confidential circles of politics.

As might have been expected, Mr. Cameron's nearest personal friend came at once to Springfield; and the conferences on the subject may be sufficiently inferred from a letter and its inclosure which he carried back.

(Private and confidential.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Jan. 13, 1861.

HON. SIMON CAMERON.

MY DEAR SIR: At the suggestion of Mr. Sanderson, and with hearty good-will besides, I herewith send you a

CH. XXII. letter dated Jan. 3 — the same in date as the last you received from me. I thought best to give it that date, as it is in some sort to take the place of that letter. I learn, both by a letter of Mr. Swett and from Mr. Sanderson, that your feelings were wounded by the terms of my letter really of the 3d. I wrote that letter under great anxiety, and perhaps I was not so guarded in its terms as I should have been; but I beg you to be assured I intended no offense. My great object was to have you act quickly, if possible before the matter should be complicated with the Penn. Senatorial election. Destroy the offensive letter or return it to me.

I say to you now I have not doubted that you would perform the duties of a Department ably and faithfully. Nor have I for a moment intended to ostracize your friends. If I should make a Cabinet appointment for Penn. before I reach Washington, I will not do so without consulting you, and giving all the weight to your views and wishes which I consistently can. This I have always intended.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

[Inclosure.]

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Jan. 3, 1861.

HON. SIMON CAMERON.

MY DEAR SIR: When you were here, about the last of December, I handed you a letter saying I should at the proper time nominate you to the Senate for a place in the Cabinet. It is due to you and to truth for me to say you were here by my invitation, and not upon any suggestion of your own. You have not as yet signified to me whether you would accept the appointment, and with much pain I now say to you that you will relieve me from great embarrassment by allowing me to recall the offer. This springs from an unexpected complication, and not from any change of my view as to the ability or faithfulness with which you would discharge the duties of the place.

I now think I will not definitely fix upon any appointMS. ment for Pennsylvania until I reach Washington.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

Before further describing this Cameron dilemma, we must look at another complication which was added to it. On the day he had given Mr. Cameron his written tender of a place (December 31), he had also telegraphed to Governor Chase, "In these troublous times I would like a conference with you. Please visit me here at once." By a curious coincidence, Mr. Chase arrived in Springfield on the day (January 3) on which Mr. Lincoln wrote the recall of the tender to Mr. Cameron. As in other instances, the President-elect waived all ceremony and called on Mr. Chase at his hotel. "I have done with you," said he, "what I would not perhaps have ventured to do with any other man in the country — sent for you to ask you whether you will accept the appointment of Secretary of the Treasury, without, however, being exactly prepared to offer it to you." He also informed him of the selection of Mr. Seward and Mr. Bates, which he heartily approved. Nothing was, of course, said of the tender to Cameron or its recall; but the opposition to Cameron in Pennsylvania and the urging of Mr. Dayton, of New Jersey, instead, the apparent acquiescence of all in the choice of Mr. Chase, and the threatening affairs of the nation as well as the strife among Republican factions, were fully talked over during his visit, which lasted two days. Mr. Chase stated that he "was not prepared to say that he would accept that place if offered." Neither did he positively decline. He valued the trust and its opportunities, but he was reluctant to leave the Senate. It was resolved to ask the advice of friends, and abide the course of events. "A good deal of conversation," writes Mr. Chase, "followed in reference to other possible

Warden, "Life of Salmon P. Chase," pp. 364, 365.

Schuckers, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 201.

Warden, "Life of Salmon P. Chase," p. 365.

CH. XXII. members of the Cabinet, but everything was left open when we parted."

All these important visits to Springfield were heralded in the newspapers, and the rumors connected therewith proportionately magnified. Particularly did the statement of Mr. Cameron's selection, and its quick contradiction, put both his friends and opponents on the alert. Pennsylvania politics were for the moment at a white heat, and letters showered into Springfield. Politicians are but human, and Mr. Cameron was sorely wounded in pride and weakened in prestige. He felt hurt at the form as well as the substance of the recall, which, being intended to remain secret, was more explicit than conventional. While he did not conceal his chagrin, on the whole he kept his temper, taking the ground that he neither originally solicited the place, nor would he now decline it. His enemies, seeing him at bay, redoubled their efforts to defeat him. They charged him with unfitness, with habitual intrigue, with the odium of corrupt practices. Mr. Lincoln, however, soon noticed that these allegations were vaguely based upon newspaper report and public rumor, and that, when requested to do so, no one was willing to make specific charges and furnish tangible proof.

While the opponents of Mr. Cameron hastened to transmit to Springfield protests against his appointment, his friends were yet more active in forwarding recommendations in his behalf. All
1861. through the month of January this epistolary contest seemed the principal occupation of the Pennsylvania Republicans, and to some extent it communicated itself to other localities. Sharp as

were the assaults, the defense was yet more earnest, and testimonials came from all ranks and classes, — citizens, clergymen, editors, politicians, and officials of all grades, and in numbers fully as three to one,— indorsing his private and personal worth, his public services, his official uprightness. Astute Washington politicians were nonplused, and frankly confessed that his vindication from aspersion was complete and overwhelming and that they could not account for it — attributing it, as usual, to his personal intrigue.

Reasons aside, it was evident that Pennsylvania demanded Cameron, and in the same connection protested against Chase, in the Treasury Department, insisting that the latter, through his Democratic teachings and party affiliations, was necessarily wedded to the doctrines of free trade, and hence inimical to the manufacturing prosperity of that State, which was anxiously looking forward to protective legislation. Mr. Cameron was highly gratified at this manifestation from his own State, as he had a right to be, and was thereby able to declare himself entirely satisfied with the situation as thus left, and to express his continued good-will towards the President-elect.

Morehead to Lincoln, Jan. 27, 1861. MS.

Pending this incident, still another phase of the Cabinet question had more fully developed itself at Washington. The proposition to appoint at least one distinctly Southern man continued from time to time to be urged upon Mr. Lincoln, notably by some of the most prominent and, it may be added, most radical Republican Senators and Representatives in Congress. To the policy of such a step the President-elect cordially assented; but the real

CH. XXII.

question was, as he had already so sharply defined it: Would any Southern man of character and influence accept such a place? Since Mr. Seward's selection, he too joined in the current suggestion. "I feel it my duty," he wrote, December 25, "to submit for your consideration the names of Colonel Frémont for Secretary of War, Randall Hunt, of Louisiana, and John A. Gilmer or Kenneth Raynor, of North Carolina, for other places. Should you think that any of these gentlemen would be likely to be desirable in the Administration, I should find no difficulty, I think, in ascertaining whether they would accept, without making the matter public." In another note, of December 28, he added the name of Robert E. Scott, of Virginia, to his list of Southern candidates. Thereupon Mr. Lincoln sent him authority to make the inquiry, while he himself wrote directly to John A. Gilmer asking him to come to Springfield. Mr. Seward's letters had also urged, in this connection, that in view of the threatened revolution Mr. Lincoln should come to Washington somewhat earlier than usual, and should at once select his Secretaries of War and Navy, that they might begin to devise measures of safety. To all these suggestions Mr. Lincoln sent the following reply:

Seward to Lincoln, Dec. 25, 1860. MS.

(Private.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Jan. 3, 1861.

HON. W. H. SEWARD.

MY DEAR SIR: Yours without signature was received last night. I have been considering your suggestions as to my reaching Washington somewhat earlier than is usual. It seems to me the inauguration is not the most dangerous point for us. Our adversaries have us now clearly at

disadvantage. On the second Wednesday of February, when the votes should be officially counted, if the two Houses refuse to meet at all, or meet without a quorum of each, where shall we be? I do not think that this counting is constitutionally essential to the election; but how are we to proceed in absence of it? CH. XXII.

In view of this, I think it best for me not to attempt appearing in Washington till the result of that ceremony is known. It certainly would be of some advantage if you could know who are to be at the heads of the War and Navy Departments; but, until I can ascertain definitely whether I can get any suitable men from the South, and who, and how many, I cannot well decide. As yet, I have no word from Mr. Gilmer, in answer to my request for an interview with him. I look for something on the subject, through you, before long. MS

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

The result of Mr. Seward's inquiries soon came, and revealed precisely the hesitation and difficulty which the President-elect had foretold. "Mr. G., of N. C., says he will consider of the proposition, and that he trusts that before giving an answer he will be able to name a person better calculated than himself for the purpose indicated. I do not think he will find such a person. He will not reply further, until required to do so by you, directly or indirectly. I will communicate with him if you wish. I think he would not decline. I have tried to get an interview on my own responsibility with Mr. Scott, but he has not yet come, though he has promised to do so. . . I still think Randall Hunt, of Louisiana, would be well chosen." And again: "Mr. Gilmer has written home confidentially, and will give me an answer in a few days. He is inquiring about Randall Hunt. What do you know

Seward to Lincoln, Jan. 4, 1861. MS.

CH. XXII.

of Meredith P. Gentry, of Tennessee?" To this Mr. Lincoln answered:

Seward to Lincoln, Jan. 8, 1861. MS.

(Private.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Jan. 12, 1861.

HON. W. H. SEWARD.

MY DEAR SIR: Yours of the 8th received. I still hope Mr. Gilmer will, on a fair understanding with us, consent to take a place in the Cabinet. The preference for him over Mr. Hunt or Mr. Gentry is that, up to date, he has a living position in the South, while they have not. He is only better than Winter Davis in that he is farther South. I fear if we could get, we could not safely take, more than one such man — that is, not more than one who opposed us in the election, the danger being to lose the confidence of our own friends.

Your selection for the State Department having become public, I am happy to find scarcely any objection to it. I shall have trouble with every other Northern Cabinet appointment, so much so that I shall have to defer them as long as possible, to avoid being teased to insanity to make changes.

MS.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

Under date of January 15 Mr. Seward sent an additional report on the subject. "I think," wrote he, "Mr. Scott has been terrified into dropping the subject about which I wrote to you. He has not come to see me; so we will let him pass, if you please. I still think well and have hopes of Gilmer." But Mr. Lincoln was by that time thoroughly satisfied that this last hope would also prove idle; for he himself had a second letter from Mr. Gilmer (dated January 29) in which that gentleman declined his invitation to come to Springfield, and in which, having missed receiving Mr. Lincoln's former reply, he still pathetically insisted

Seward to Lincoln, Jan. 15, 1861. MS.

that the President-elect should save the country by writing a letter to satisfy the South.

Mr. Seward was so much of an optimist that he clung to the idea of securing a Southern unionist. In another letter which he wrote to the President-elect, under date of January 27, it is curious to note how he continues his search after the impossible, against the accumulation of evidence which convinced his reason but could not subdue his hope:

Mr. Cameron showed me the letter you had sent to him, and seems entirely satisfied with it.

I saw Mr. Robert E. Scott, of Virginia, to-day pursuant to appointment. He is a splendid man, and he would be a fit and creditable representative of the Southern Union party. Whether he is not too exacting for his section to make a practical minister for you is quite doubtful in my mind. I will think more.

Recent events in Virginia have opened access for me to Union men in Virginia and other Southern States. Among others, Mr. James Barbour, of the State of Virginia, has visited me. He is a Democrat, but the master spirit of the Union party, and he left upon my mind a most favorable impression as a man of talent, spirit, loyalty, and practicability. We will talk of him when you come here.

The appeals from the Union men in the border States for something of concession or compromise are very painful, since they say that without it their States must all go with the tide, and your Administration must begin with the free States meeting all Southern States in a hostile Confederacy. Chance might render the separation perpetual. Disunion has been contemplated and discussed so long there that they have become frightfully familiar with it, and even such men as Mr. Scott and William C. Rives are so far disunionists as to think that they would have the right and be wise in going if we will not execute new guaranties which would be abhorrent in the North. It is almost in vain that I tell them to wait, let us have a truce on slavery, put our issue on disunion,

CH. XXII. and seek remedies for ultimate griefs in a constitutional question.

This is the dark side of the picture. Now for the brighter one. Beyond a peradventure disunion is falling and union rising in the popular mind. Our friends say we are safe in Maryland, and Mr. Scott and others tell us that union is gaining rapidly as an element in Virginia.

In any case you are to meet a hostile armed confederacy when you commence — you must reduce it by force or conciliation. The resort to force would very soon be denounced by the North, although so many are anxious for a fray. The North will not consent to a long civil war. A large portion, much the largest portion of the Republican party, are reckless now of the crisis before us; and compromise or concession, though as a means of averting dissolution, is intolerable to them. They believe that either it will not come at all, or be less disastrous than I think it will be. For my own part I think that we must collect the revenues, regain the forts in the Gulf, and if need be maintain ourselves here; but that every thought that we think ought to be conciliatory, forbearing, and paternal, and so open the way for the rising of a Union party in the seceding States which will bring them back into the Union.

It will be very important that your inaugural address be wise and winning. I am glad that you have suspended making Cabinet appointments. The temper of your Administration, whether generous and hopeful of union or harsh and reckless, will probably determine the fate of our country. May God give you wisdom for the great trust and responsibility.

Seward to Lincoln, Jan. 27, 1861. MS.

In this attitude matters remained until towards the end of February, when Mr. Lincoln arrived in Washington; namely, Mr. Seward, of New York, and Mr. Bates, of Missouri, had positively accepted definite places in the Cabinet; Mr. Chase, of Ohio, and Mr. Smith, of Indiana, had been virtually chosen, but were yet held under advisement; a

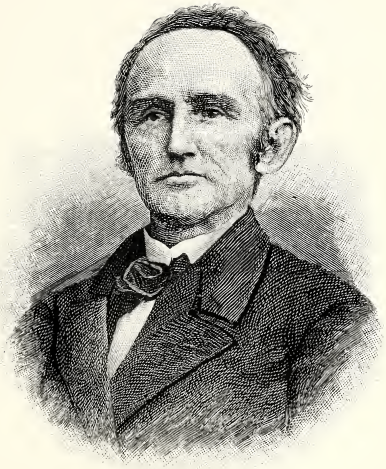
tender had been made to Mr. Cameron, of Pennsylvania, and recalled but not declined; and Southern men, like Gilmer, of North Carolina, and Scott, of Virginia, had not the courage to accept. CH. XXII.

In addition to these, Mr. Lincoln had by this time practically settled in his own judgment upon Gideon Welles, of Connecticut, as the New England member, though no interview had been held nor tender made. But as early as the meeting (November 22) between the President and Vice-President elect at Chicago, this name had been the subject of special consultation; and a friend had obtained from Mr. Welles the latter's written views upon current political questions, especially the fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution. A great number of letters and formal recommendations since received had but confirmed Mr. Lincoln's first impressions as to his fitness, availability, and representative character. 1860.

Washington was thronged with politicians, called there by the proceedings of Congress; by the Peace Convention, just closing; by the secession excitement; and especially by the advent of a new and yet untried party in administration. Willard's, then the principal hotel, was never in its history more busy nor more brilliant. Here Mr. Lincoln and his suite had spacious and accessible rooms, and here, during the six or eight working-days which intervened between his arrival and the inauguration, was the great political exchange where politicians, editors, committee-men, delegations, Congressmen, Governors, and Senators congregated, and besieged the doors of the coming power from morning till midnight. 1861.

CH. XXII. Mr. Lincoln had a sincere respect for great names in politics and statesmanship, the more so because his own life had in the main been provincial. Nevertheless, he quickly noted that here at the center, as well as in lesser and more distant circles, there was present harmony in the chief party tenets, but that great diversity and cross-purpose, even serious antagonism, as to men and measures in detail were likely to arise in the future; that the powerful cross-lights of the capital only intensified the factional contests, local jealousies, and the national difficulties and dangers he had already viewed more remotely but quite as accurately from Springfield; that the wisdom of trained actors in the political drama was as much beclouded by interest or prejudice as was his own by inexperience and diffidence.

After a week's patient listening he found his well-formed judgment about the composition of his Cabinet unshaken. He had by this time finally determined to place Cameron in the War Department, and Chase was understood to have accepted the Treasury. Hence the East and the West, the great "pivotal States," the Whig and Democratic elements of the Republican party each by three members, were all believed to be fairly and acceptably represented. The slave States too, through Mr. Bates, of Missouri, had a voice in the new council; but the charge of sectionalism had been so persistently iterated by the South, that it was thought best to give the single remaining place to Maryland, even then balancing between loyalty and open secession; and the final controversy was whether that choice should fall upon Montgomery



MONTGOMERY BLAIR.

Blair, a Democrat, and member of a historic and influential family, or upon Henry Winter Davis, a young Whig of rising fame. CH. XXII.

Something of the obstinacy and bitterness of the entire contest was infused into this last struggle over a really minor place. This was partly because so little remained to quarrel about, but mainly because it was supposed to be the casting vote of the new Cabinet, which should decide the dominancy of the Whig Republicans or Democratic Republicans in Mr. Lincoln's Administration. In the momentary heat and excitement this phase of the matter expanded beyond any original design, until Mr. Lincoln realized that it was no longer a merely local strife between Blair and Davis in Maryland, but the closing trial of strength and supremacy between Whigs and Democrats of the new party throughout the Union, headed respectively, though perhaps unconsciously, by Seward and Chase. This contingency, too, had been foreseen by the President-elect, and he had long ago determined not to allow himself to be made the football between rival factions. Carrying out, therefore, his motto of "Justice to all," as formulated in his tender to Seward, he determined to appoint Mr. Blair. When reminded that by such selection he placed four Democrats and only three Whigs in his Cabinet, he promptly replied that "he was himself an old-line Whig, and he should be there to make the parties even"; a declaration which he repeated, sometimes jocularly, sometimes earnestly, often afterwards.

Heated partisans from both factions doubtless found it difficult to persuade themselves that this

CH. XXII. inexperienced man would persist in attempting to hold an even and just balance between the two. But he had already made up his mind that if the quarrel became irrepressible it should be carried on outside of his Administration. During the two or three days which elapsed after his selections were finally determined upon, and before their actual transmission to the Senate for confirmation, there were interminable rumors of changes, and, of course, a corresponding rush to influence new combinations. Late one night a friend gained access to him, and in great excitement asked, "Is it true, Mr. Lincoln, as I have just heard, that we are to have a new deal after all, and that you intend to nominate Winter Davis instead of Blair?" "Judd," replied he, "when that slate breaks again, it will break at the top."

Hon. N. B. Judd, Conversation. J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

These plottings at last bore mischievous fruit. Superserviceable friends doubtless persuaded Seward that the alleged ascendency of the Chase faction in the Cabinet was real and ominous. Hence, possibly, the subjoined note:

WASHINGTON, March 2, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR: Circumstances which have occurred since I expressed to you in December last my willingness to accept the office of Secretary of State seem to me to render it my duty to ask leave to withdraw that consent.

Tendering to you my best wishes for the success of your Administration, with my sincere and grateful acknowledgments of all your acts of kindness and confidence towards me, I remain, very respectfully and sincerely,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

MS. THE HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President-elect.

This, from the man who for several months had held intimate counsel with him, had taken active part in the formation of the Cabinet, and had read and partly revised the inaugural, was unexpected. Did it mean that he would withdraw and complain that he was forced out because a preponderating influence was given to his rival? The note was received on Saturday, and Mr. Lincoln pondered the situation till Monday morning. While the inauguration procession was forming in the streets, he wrote the following and handed it to his private secretary to copy, with the remark, "I can't afford to let Seward take the first trick." It was dated, for form's sake, at the Executive Mansion, though it was written and copied at Willard's. CH. XXII.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 4, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR: Your note of the 2d instant, asking to withdraw your acceptance of my invitation to take charge of the State Department, was duly received. It is the subject of the most painful solicitude with me; and I feel constrained to beg that you will countermand the withdrawal. The public interest, I think, demands that you should; and my personal feelings are deeply enlisted in the same direction. Please consider and answer by 9 o'clock A. M. to-morrow.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD. MS.

When the inauguration pageant was ended, and the usual public reception and hand-shaking were concluded, Mr. Seward called upon the President at the Executive Mansion, and the two men had a long and confidential talk, in which Seward's answer, sent the following morning, was perhaps already foreshadowed:

Ch. XXII.

March 5, 1861.

My Dear Sir: Deferring to your opinions and wishes as expressed in your letter of yesterday, and in our conversation of last evening, I withdraw my letter to you of the 2d instant, and remain, with great respect and esteem,

Your most obedient servant,

William H. Seward.

MS. The President of the United States.

Mar. 5, 1861. Whereupon, at 12 o'clock, the Senate being convened in extra session, the President sent to that body the names of his proposed Cabinet, as follows:

For Secretary of State, William H. Seward, of New York.
For Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio.
For Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania.
For Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, of Connecticut.
For Secretary of the Interior, Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana.
For Attorney-General, Edward Bates, of Missouri.
For Postmaster-General, Montgomery Blair, of Maryland.

The Senate confirmed all these nominations without delay; and on the day after, March 6, most of the appointees were formally inducted into office. That evening occurred the first Cabinet meeting, for introduction and acquaintance; and the new President greeted his Cabinet at the Executive Mansion substantially as he had planned it, on the night of the November election, in the little telegraph office at Springfield.

Carping critics might indeed at the moment have specified defects, incongruities, jealousies, and seeds of possible discord and disaster in the new Cabinet, but we can now understand that they neither comprehended the man who was to dominate and govern it, nor the storms of state which, as captain and crew, he and they were to encounter and outride. He needed advisers,

helpers, executive eyes and hands, not alone in department routine, but in the higher qualities of leadership and influence; above all, his principal motive seems to have been representative character, varied talent—in a word, combination. Statesmanship implies success; success demands coöperation, popular sympathy, and support. He wished to combine the experience of Seward, the integrity of Chase, the popularity of Cameron; to hold the West with Bates, attract New England with Welles; please the Whigs through Smith, and convince the Democrats through Blair. CH. XXII.

Mr. Lincoln possessed a quick intuition of human nature and of the strength or weakness of individual character. His whole life had been a practical study of the details and rivalries of local partisanship. He was, moreover, endowed in yet unsuspected measure with a comprehensive grasp of great causes and results in national politics. He had noted and heralded the alarming portent of the slavery struggle. With more precision than any contemporary, he had defined the depth and breadth of the moral issues and rights it involved; he had led the preliminary victory at the November polls. Now that secession was proclaimed in every Cotton State, his simple logic rose above minor considerations to the peril and the protection of the nation, to the assault on and the defense of the Constitution. He saw but the ominous cloud of civil war in front, and the patriotic faith and enthusiasm of the people behind him. The slogan of a Seward committee, a Chase delegation, or a Cameron clan was but the symbol and promise of a Wide-Awake club to vote for freedom, or of an

CH. XXII. armed regiment on the battlefield to maintain it. Neither did any one yet suspect his delicate tact in management, strength of will, and firmness of purpose. In weaker hands such a Cabinet would have been a hot-bed of strife; under him it became a tower of strength. He made these selections because he wanted a council of distinctive and diverse, yet able, influential, and representative, men, who should be a harmonious group of constitutional advisers and executive lieutenants — not a board of regents holding the great seal in commission and intriguing for the succession.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE QUESTION OF SUMTER

IN his letter of January 4, General Scott had promised Mr. Lincoln that from time to time he would keep him informed of the situation of military affairs. This promise the general failed to redeem; probably not through any intentional neglect, but more likely because in the first place Buchanan's policy of delay, indecision, and informal negotiation with the conspirators left everything in uncertainty; and, secondly, because the attention of the Administration (and measurably of the whole country) was turned to hopes of compromise, especially through the labors of the Peace Convention. The rebels, on their part, were absorbed in the formation of the provisional government at Montgomery; Lincoln was making his memorable journey from Springfield to Washington by way of the chief cities of the North; the Fort Pickens truce was practically a secret; and thus the military status was for the time being lost sight of beyond the immediate neighborhood of Charleston. Since the reorganization of Buchanan's Cabinet on December 31, and the expulsion or defection of traitors from the departments and from Congress, the whole North had breathed somewhat easier. The firing on the *Star of the*

1861.

1860.

CH. XXIII. *West* had created a storm of indignation; but this, too, quickly subsided, and by a sort of common consent all parties and sections looked to the in-
1861. coming Administration as the only power which could solve the national crisis.

The key-note of such a solution was given in the inaugural of the new President. This announced a decided, though not a violent, change of policy. Buchanan's course had been one professedly of conciliation, but practically of ruinous concession. Lincoln, receiving from his hands the precious trust of the Government,—not in its original integrity, but humbled, impaired, diminished, and threatened,— announced his purpose of conciliation, conservation, and restoration. "The policy chosen," said he, "looked to the exhaustion of all peaceful measures before a resort to any stronger ones. It sought only to hold the public places and property not already wrested from the Government, and to collect the revenue, relying for the rest on time, discussion, and the ballot-box. It promised a continuance of the mails at Government expense to the very people who were resisting the Government, and it gave repeated pledges against any disturbance to any of the people or any of their rights. Of all that which a President might constitutionally and justifiably do in such a case, everything was forborne without which it was believed possible to keep the Government on foot."

Lincoln, Message to Congress, July 4, 1861.

This pacific purpose was now, however, destined to receive a rude shock. When on the morning of
1861. the 5th of March Lincoln went to his office in the Executive Mansion, he found a letter from Mr. Holt, still acting as Secretary of War, giving

him news of vital importance received on the morning of the inauguration — namely, that Fort Sumter must, in the lapse of a few weeks at most, be strongly reënforced or summarily abandoned. Major Anderson had in the previous week made an examination of his provisions. There was bread for twenty-eight days; pork for a somewhat longer time; beans, rice, coffee, and sugar for different periods from eight to forty days.

He had at the same time consulted his officers on the prospects and possibilities of relief and reënforcement. They unanimously reported that before Sumter could be permanently or effectively succored a combined land and naval force must attack and carry the besieging forts and batteries, and hold the secession militia at bay, and that such an undertaking would at once concentrate at Charleston all the volunteers, not alone of South Carolina, but of the adjacent States as well. "I confess," wrote Anderson, transmitting the reports and estimates of his nine officers, "that I would not be willing to risk my reputation on an attempt to throw reënforcements into this harbor within the time for our relief rendered necessary by the limited supply of our provisions, and with a view of holding possession of the same, with a force of less than twenty thousand good and well-disciplined men." Mr. Holt, quoting from previous instructions to and reports from the major, added that this declaration "takes the Department by surprise, as his previous correspondence contained no such intimation."

Anderson to Cooper, Feb. 28, 1861. MS. Partly printed in W. R. Vol. I., p. 197.

Retrospective criticism as to why or how such a state of things had been permitted to grow up was,

CH. XXIII. of course, useless. Here was a most portentous complication, not of Lincoln's own creating, but which he must nevertheless meet and overcome. He had counted on the soothing aid of time; time, on the contrary, was in this emergency working in the interest of rebellion. General Scott was at once called into council, but his sagacity and experience could afford neither suggestion nor encouragement. That same night he returned the papers to the President with a somewhat lengthy indorsement reciting the several events which led to, and his own personal efforts to avert, this contingency, but ending with the gloomy conclusion: "Evacuation seems almost inevitable, and in this view our distinguished Chief Engineer (Brigadier Totten) concurs—if indeed the worn-out garrison be not assaulted and carried in the present week."

This was a disheartening, almost a disastrous, beginning for the Administration. The Cabinet had only that day been appointed and confirmed. The Presidential advisers had not yet taken their posts—all had not even signified their acceptance. There was an impatient multitude clamoring for audience, and behind these swarmed an army of office-seekers. Everything was urgency and confusion, everywhere was ignorance of method and routine. Rancor and hatred filled the breasts of political opponents departing from power; suspicion and rivalry possessed partisan adherents seeking advantage and promotion. As yet, Lincoln virtually stood alone, face to face with the appalling problems of the present and the threatening responsibilities of the future. Doubtless in this juncture he remembered and acted upon a biblical precedent

which in after days of trouble and despondency he was wont to quote for justification or consolation. When the children of Israel murmured on the shore of the Red Sea, Moses told them to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Here, at the very threshold of his Presidential career, Lincoln had need to practice the virtue of patience — one of the cardinal elements of his character, acquired in many a personal and political tribulation. CH. XXIII.

He referred the papers back to General Scott to make a more thorough investigation of all the questions involved. At the same time he gave him a verbal order touching his future policy, which a few days later was reduced to writing, and on the installation of the new Secretary of War transmitted by that functionary to the General-in-Chief through the regular official channels, as follows: "I am directed by the President to say he desires you to exercise all possible vigilance for the maintenance of all the places within the military department of the United States, and to promptly call upon all the departments of the Government for the means necessary to that end." Cameron to Scott (written by Lincoln). MS.

On the 9th of March, in written questions, Lincoln in substance asked General Scott to inform him: 1st. To what point of time can Anderson maintain his position in Sumter? 2d. Can you, with present means, relieve him within that time? 3d. What additional means would enable you to do so? This was on Saturday following the inauguration. The chiefs of the several departments, with the exception of Cameron, Secretary of War, had been during the week inducted into office. 1861. MS.

CH. XXII. That night the President held his first Cabinet council on the state of the country; and the crisis at Sumter, with the question of relieving the fort, were for the first time communicated to his assembled advisers. The general effect was one of dismay if not consternation. For such a discussion all were unprepared. Naturally all decision must be postponed, and the assistance of professional advice be sought. What followed has been written down by an eye-witness and participant:

> March 9, 1861, Saturday night.— A Cabinet council upon the state of the country. I was astonished to be informed that Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, must be evacuated, and that General Scott, General Totten, and Major Anderson concur in opinion, that as the place has but twenty-eight days' provision, it must be relieved, if at all, in that time; and that it will take a force of twenty thousand men at least, and a bloody battle, to relieve it!
>
> For several days after this, consultations were held as to the feasibility of relieving Fort Sumter, at which were present, explaining and aiding, General Scott, General Totten, Commodore Stringham, and Mr. Fox, who seems to be *au fait* in both nautical and military matters. The army officers and navy officers differ widely about the degree of danger to rapid-moving vessels passing under the fire of land batteries. The army officers think destruction almost inevitable, where the navy officers think the danger but slight. The one believe that Sumter cannot be relieved — not even provisioned — without an army of twenty thousand men and a bloody battle. The other (the naval) believe that with light, rapid vessels they can cross the bar at high tide of a dark night, run the enemy's forts (Moultrie and Cummings Point), and reach Sumter with little risk. They say that the greatest danger will be in landing at Sumter, upon which point there may be a concentrated fire. They do not doubt that the place can be and ought to be relieved.

Mr. Fox is anxious to risk his life in leading the relief, and Commodore Stringham seems equally confident of success. CH. XXIII.

The naval men have convinced me fully that the thing can be done, and yet as the doing of it would be almost certain to begin the war, and as Charleston is of little importance as compared with the chief points in the Gulf, I am willing to yield to the military counsel and evacuate Fort Sumter, at the same time strengthening the forts in the Gulf so as to look down opposition, and guarding the coast with all our naval power, if need be, so as to close any port at pleasure.

And to this effect I gave the President my written opinion on the 16th of March. Bates, Diary. MS.

This extract from the diary of Edward Bates, the Attorney-General in the new Administration, shows us the drift and scope of the official discussions on the Sumter question. To understand its full bearings, however, we must examine it a little more specifically. The idea of the evacuation and abandonment of the fort was so repugnant that Mr. Lincoln could scarcely bring himself to entertain it; we have his own forcible statement of how the apparently crushing necessity presented itself to his mind. General Scott, on March 11 and 12, made written replies to the questions the President had propounded, and submitted the draft of an order for evacuation. 1861.

He believed Anderson could, in respect to provisions, hold out some forty days without much suffering, but that the assailants, having overpowering numbers, could easily wear out the garrison by a succession of pretended night attacks, and, when ready, take it easily by a single real assault. To supply or reënforce the fort successfully, he should need a fleet of war vessels and transports

Ch. XXIII. which it would take four months to collect; and, besides, 5000 regulars and 20,000 volunteers, which it would require new acts of Congress to authorize and from six to eight months to raise, organize, and discipline. "It is, therefore, my opinion and advice," wrote Scott, "that Major Anderson be instructed to evacuate the fort so long gallantly held by him and his companions, immediately on procuring suitable water transportation, and that he
MS. embark with his command for New York." "In a purely military point of view," says Lincoln, "this reduced the duty of the Administration in the case to the mere matter of getting the garrison safely out of the fort. It was believed, however, that to so abandon that position, under the circumstances, would be utterly ruinous; that the necessity under which it was to be done would not be fully understood; that by many it would be construed as a part of a voluntary policy; that at home it would discourage the friends of the Union, embolden its adversaries, and go far to insure to the latter a recognition abroad; that in fact it would be our
Lincoln, Message to Congress, July 4, 1861. national destruction consummated. This could not be allowed."

The dire alternative presented caused a thorough reëxamination and discussion of the various plans of relief which had been suggested; and since the army and the navy showed some considerable disagreement in opinions, these discussions were held before the President and Cabinet in the executive council chamber itself. General Scott's first impulse had been to revive and reorganize the Ward
1861. expedition, prepared about the middle of February, which was to have consisted of several small Coast

Survey steamers. To this end he called Captain Ward to Washington and again discussed the plan. But considering the increase of batteries and channel obstructions, it was now by both of them pronounced impracticable. One other offer seemed worthy of consideration. This was the plan proposed by Gustavus V. Fox, a gentleman thirty-nine years of age, who had been nineteen years in the United States Navy, had been engaged in the survey of the Southern coast, had commanded United States mail steamers, and had resigned from the navy in 1856 to engage in civil pursuits. He was a brother-in-law of the new Postmaster-General Blair, who seconded his project with persistence. He had made his proposal to General Scott early in February, and, backed by prominent New York merchants and shippers, urged it as he best might through the whole of that month. CH. XXIII.

In his various communications Captain Fox thus described his plan:

> I propose to put the troops on board of a large, comfortable sea-steamer, and hire two (or three) powerful light-draught New York tug-boats, having the necessary stores on board; these to be convoyed by the United States steamer *Pawnee*, now at Philadelphia, and the revenue cutter *Harriet Lane*. . . Arriving off the bar [at Charleston], I propose to examine by day the naval preparations and obstructions. If their vessels determine to oppose our entrance (and a feint or flag of truce would ascertain this), the armed ships must approach the bar and destroy or drive them on shore. Major Anderson would do the same upon any vessels within the range of his guns, and would also prevent any naval succor being sent down from the city. Having dispersed this force, the only obstacles are the forts on Cummings Point and

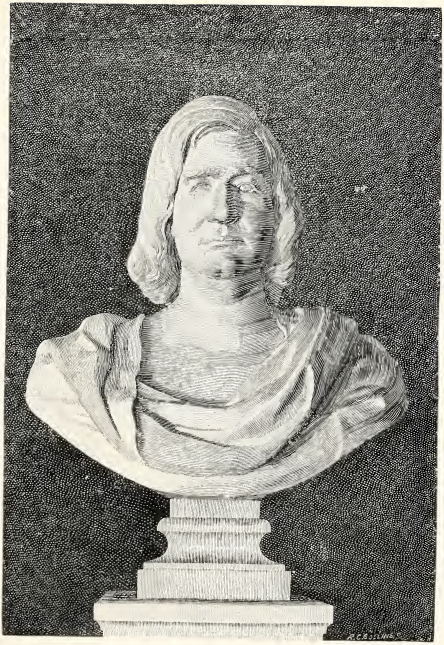
CH. XXIII. Fort Moultrie, and whatever adjacent batteries they may have erected, distant on either hand from mid-channel about three-quarters of a mile. At night, two hours before high water, with half the force on board of each tug, within relieving distance of each other, I should run in to Fort Sumter.

Fox, Memorandum, Feb. 6, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 203, 204.

These tugs are sea-boats, six feet draught, speed fourteen knots. The boilers are below, with three and a half feet space on each side, to be filled with coal. The machinery comes up between the wheel-houses, with a gangway on either hand of five to six feet, enabling us to pack the machinery with two or three thicknesses of bales of cotton or hay. This renders the vulnerable parts of the steamer proof against grape and fragments of shells, but the momentum of a solid shot would probably move the whole mass and disable the engine. The men are below, entirely protected from grape—provisions on deck. The first tug to lead in empty, to open their [the enemy's] fire. The other two to follow, with the force divided, and towing the large iron boats of the *Baltic*, which would hold the whole force should every tug be disabled, and empty they would not impede the tugs.

Fox to Blair, Feb. 23, 1861. Ibid., p. 204.

The feasibility of Captain Fox's plan thus rested upon his ability to "run the batteries," and on this point the main discussion now turned. As recorded in the diary we have quoted, the army officers believed destruction almost inevitable, while the naval officers thought a successful passage might be effected. Captain Fox, who had come to Washington, finally argued the question in person before the President, Cabinet, and assembled military officers, adducing the recorded evidence of examples and incidents which had occurred in the Crimean war, and the results of Dahlgren's experiments in firing at stationary targets; maintaining that there was no certainty whatever, and even only a minimum of chance, that land batteries could hit a



BUST OF JAMES LOUIS PETIGRU.

small object moving rapidly at right angles to their line of fire at a distance of thirteen hundred yards, especially at night. So far as mere theory could do it, he successfully demonstrated his plan, convincing the President and at least a majority of the Cabinet against the objections of General Scott and his subordinate officers. CH. XXIII.

Nevertheless, the political question, the more important of the two, yet remained to be considered. Resolved on prudent deliberation, President Lincoln now, on March 15, asked the written answer of his constitutional advisers to the following inquiry: "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Fort Sumter, under all the circumstances is it wise to attempt it?" 1861.

As requested, the members of the Cabinet returned somewhat elaborate replies, setting forth their reasons and conclusions. Two of them, Chase and Blair, agreeing with the President's own inclinations, responded in the affirmative; the five others, Seward, Cameron, Welles, Smith, and Bates, advised against the measure.

"I have not reached my own conclusion," wrote Chase, "without much difficulty. If the proposed enterprise will so influence civil war as to involve an immediate necessity for the enlistment of armies and the expenditure of millions, I cannot, in the existing circumstances of the country and in the present condition of the national finances, advise it." He argued, however, that an immediate proclamation of reasons, and the manifestation of a kind and liberal spirit towards the South, would avert such a result, and he would therefore return an affirmative answer. Chase to Lincoln, Mar. 16, 1861.

CH. XXIII. Blair had been from the first in favor of prompt and vigorous measures against the insurrection. A Democrat of the Jackson school, he would repeat Jackson's policy against nullification. He had brought forward and urged the scheme of Captain Fox. By the connivance of Buchanan's Administration, he argued, the rebellion had been permitted unchecked to grow into an organized government in seven States. It had been treated practically as a lawful proceeding; and, if allowed to continue, all Southern people must become reconciled to it. The rebels believed Northern men deficient in courage to maintain the Government. The evacuation of Sumter would convince them that the Administration lacked firmness. Sumter reënforced would become invulnerable, and would completely demoralize the rebellion. No expense or care should be spared to achieve this result. The appreciation of our stocks would reimburse the most lavish outlay for this purpose. "You should give no thought for the commander and his comrades in this enterprise. They willingly take the hazard for the sake of the country, and the honor, which, successful or not, they will receive from you and the lovers of free government in all lands."

Blair to Lincoln, Mar. 15, 1861. MS.

Seward, in the negative, argued the political issue at great length. To attempt to provision Sumter would provoke combat and open civil war. A desperate and defeated majority in the South. had organized revolutionary government in seven States. The other slave States were balancing between sympathy for the seceders and loyalty to the Union, but indicated a disposition to adhere to the

latter. The Union must be maintained, peaceably if it could, forcibly if it must, to every extremity. But civil war was the most uncertain and fearful of all remedies for political disorders. He would save the Union by peaceful policy without civil war. Disunion was without justification. Devotion to the Union was a profound and permanent national sentiment. Silenced by terror, it would if encouraged, rally and reverse the popular action of the seceding States. The policy of the time was conciliation. Sumter was practically useless. "I would not provoke war in any way now. I would resort to force to protect the collection of the revenue, because this is a necessary as well as a legitimate Union object. Even then it should be only a naval force that I would employ for that necessary purpose, while I would defer military action on land until a case should arise when we would hold the defense. In that case, we should have the spirit of the country and the approval of mankind on our side."

Seward to Lincoln, Mar.15,1861.

Cameron followed the reasoning of the army officers. Captain Fox, he said, did not propose to supply provisions for more than one or two months. The abandonment of Sumter seemed an inevitable necessity, and therefore the sooner the better.

Cameron to Lincoln, Mar.16,1861.

Welles thought the public mind was becoming reconciled to the idea of evacuation as a necessity. The strength, dignity, and character of the Government would not be promoted by a successful attempt, while a failure would be disastrous.

Welles to Lincoln, Mar.15,1861 MS.

Smith argued that Sumter was not essential to any of the duties imposed on the Government. There were other and more effective means to

CH. XXIII. vindicate its honor, and compel South Carolina to obey the laws.

Smith to Lincoln, Mar.16,1861. MS.

Bates believed the hazard greater than the gain. "True," wrote he, "war already exists by the act of South Carolina — but this Government has thus far magnanimously forborne to retort the outrage. And I am willing to forbear yet longer in the hope of a peaceful solution of our present difficulties." Pickens, Key West, etc., should, on the contrary, be strongly defended, and the whole coast from South Carolina to Texas be guarded by the entire power of the navy.

Bates to Lincoln, Mar.16,1861. MS.

Against the advice of so decided a majority, Lincoln did not deem it prudent to order the proposed expedition. Neither did his own sense of duty permit him entirely to abandon it. Postponing, therefore, a present final decision of the point, he turned his attention to the investigation of the question immediately and vitally connected with it — the collection of the revenue. On the 18th of March he directed written inquiries to three of his Cabinet officers. To the Attorney-General, whether under the Constitution and laws the Executive has power to collect duties on shipboard off shore? To the Secretary of the Treasury, whether, and where, and for what cause, any importations are taking place without payment of duties? Whether vessels off shore could prevent such importations or enforce payment? and what number and description of vessels besides those already in the revenue service? To the Secretary of the Navy, what amount of naval force he could place at the control of the revenue service, and how much additional in the future?

Lincoln to Bates, Mar.18,1861. MS.

Lincoln to Chase, Mar.18,1861. MS.

Lincoln to Welles, Mar.18,1861. MS.

Pending the receipt of replies to these inquiries, Lincoln determined to obtain information on two other points—the first, as to the present actual condition and feeling of Major Anderson; the second, as to the real temper and intentions of the people of Charleston. Captain Fox had suggested the possibility of obtaining leave to visit Sumter through the influence of Captain Hartstene, then in the rebel service at Charleston, but who had in former years been his intimate friend and comrade in command of a companion steamer of the California line. By order of the President, General Scott therefore sent him to obtain "accurate information in regard to the command of Major Anderson in Fort Sumter." As Fox anticipated, Hartstene introduced him to Governor Pickens, to whom he showed his order, and, having meanwhile had an interview with General Beauregard, was, after some delay, permitted to go to the fort under Hartstene's escort. He reported:

Cameron to Scott, Mar. 19, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 208, 209.

1861.

We reached Fort Sumter after dark [March 21], and I remained about two hours. Major Anderson seemed to think it was too late to relieve the fort by any other means than by landing an army on Morris Island. He agreed with General Scott that an entrance from the sea was impossible; but as we looked out upon the water from the parapet, it seemed very feasible, more especially as we heard the oars of a boat near the fort, which the sentry hailed, but we could not see her through the darkness until she almost touched the landing. I found the garrison getting short of supplies, and it was agreed that I might report that the 15th of April, at noon, would be the period beyond which the fort could not be held unless supplies were furnished. I made no arrangements with Major Anderson for reënforcing or supplying the fort, nor did I inform him of my plan.

Fox, Official Report, Feb. 24, 1865. "Chicago Tribune," Sept. 14, 1865.

CH. XXIII. Unlike Fox, Anderson was in no wise encouraged by the conversation, and wrote:

> I have examined the point alluded to by Mr. Fox last night. A vessel lying there will be under the fire of thirteen guns from Fort Moultrie, and Captain Foster says that at the pan-coupé or immediately on its right,—the best place for her to land,—she would require, even at high tide, if drawing ten feet, a staging of forty feet. The department can decide what the chances will be of a safe debarkation and unloading at that point under these circumstances.

Anderson to Adjutant-General, Mar. 22, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 211.

The other point on which the President sought information revealed equally decisive features. It so happened that S. A. Hurlbut, of Illinois (afterwards Major-General of Volunteers), a personal friend of Lincoln, was at the moment in Washington. This gentleman was of Charleston birth, four years a law student of the foremost citizen and jurist of South Carolina, James L. Petigru, and then in frequent correspondence with him. On March 21 the President called Mr. Hurlbut to him, and explaining that Mr. Seward insisted that there was a strong Union party in the South,—even in South Carolina,—asked him to go personally and ascertain the facts. Mr. Hurlbut telegraphed his sister in Charleston that he was coming on a visit, which, in the threatening aspect of affairs, he might not soon be able to repeat. He traveled as a private citizen, though purposely with some show of publicity. Curiosity, however, centered itself upon his traveling companion, Ward H. Lamon, who, coming with an ostensible Government mission to examine some post-office matters, was looked upon as the real Presidential messenger, was treated to a formal

1861.

audience with the Governor, and permitted to make a visit to Fort Sumter. While Lamon was hobnobbing with the young secessionists at the Charleston Hotel, Hurlbut, quartered at the house of his sister, and thus free from the inquisitive scrutiny of newspaper reporters, was quietly visiting his former neighbors and friends, in various walks of life, and being visited by them. CH. XXIII.

Of greater value than all was his confidential interview with his former legal preceptor. Mr. Petigru was at that time the best lawyer in the South, and the strongest man in the State of South Carolina so far as character, ability, and purity went, and he never surrendered nor disguised his Union convictions. Mr. Hurlbut was himself an able lawyer, a man of experience and force in politics, and a shrewd and sagacious judge of human nature. His mission remained entirely unsuspected; and after two days' sojourn, he returned to Washington and made a long written report to the President.

By appointment I met Mr. Petigru at 1 P. M. and had a private conversation with him for more than two hours. I was at liberty to state to him that my object was to ascertain and report the actual state of feeling in the city and State. Our conversation was entirely free and confidential. He is now the only man in the city of Charleston who avowedly adheres to the Union. . . From these sources I have no hesitation in reporting as unquestionable — that separate nationality is a fixed fact, that there is an unanimity of sentiment which is to my mind astonishing, that there is no attachment to the Union. . . There is positively nothing to appeal to. The sentiment of national patriotism, always feeble in Carolina, has been extinguished and overridden by the acknowledged doctrine of the paramount allegiance to the State. False

CH. XXIII. political economy diligently taught for years has now become an axiom, and merchants and business men believe, and act upon the belief, that great growth of trade and expansion of material prosperity will and must follow the establishment of a Southern republic. They expect a golden era, when Charleston shall be a great commercial emporium and control for the South, as New York does for the North.

Hurlbut to Lincoln, Report, Mar. 27, 1861. MS.

These visits to Charleston added two very important factors to the problem from which the Cabinet, and chiefly the President, were to deduce the unknown. Very unexpectedly to the latter, and no doubt to all the former as well, a new light was now suddenly thrown upon the complicated question. The fate of Sumter had been under general discussion nearly three weeks. The Cabinet and the high military and naval officers had divided in opinion and separated into opposing camps. As always happens in such cases, suspicion and criticism of personal motives began to develop themselves, though, at this very beginning, as throughout his whole after-administration, they were held in check by the generous faith and unvarying impartiality of the President. Hitherto the sole issue was the relief or abandonment of Sumter; but now, by an apparent change of advice and attitude on the part of General Scott, the fate of Fort Pickens was also drawn into discussion.

So far as is known, the loyalty and devotion of General Scott never wavered for an instant; but his proneness to mingle political with military considerations had already been twice manifested. The first was when in his memorial entitled "Views," etc., addressed to President Buchanan, October 29, 1860, he suggested the formation of

four new American Unions if the old should be dismembered. The second was more recent. On the day preceding Lincoln's inauguration, the general had written a letter to Seward. In this he advanced the opinion that the new President would have to choose one of four plans or policies: 1st. To adopt the Crittenden compromise, and change the Republican to a Union party; 2d. By closing or blockading rebel ports or collecting the duties on shipboard outside; 3d. Conquer the States by invading armies, which he deprecated; and 4th. Say to the seceded States: "Wayward sisters, depart in peace!" It must be noted that between three of these alternatives he gives no intimation of preference. The letter was simply a sign of the prevailing political unrest, and therefore remained unnoticed by the President, to whom it was referred.

CH. XXIII.

Scott to Seward, Mar. 3, 1861. Scott, "Autobiography," Vol. II., pp. 625–628.

When Lincoln assumed the duties of government, Scott had among other things briefly pointed out the existing danger at Fort Pickens, and the President by his verbal order of March 5, directing "all possible vigilance for the maintenance of all the places," had intended that that stronghold should be promptly reënforced. He made inquiries on this head four days later, and to his surprise found nothing yet done. Hence he put his order in writing, and sent it to the War Department for record March 11, and once more gave special directions in regard to Pickens, assuming the omission had occurred through preoccupation about Sumter. Upon this reminder, Scott bestirred himself, and at his instance the war steamer *Mohawk* was dispatched, March 12, carrying a

Meigs, Diary, Mar. 31, 1861. MS.

CH. XXIII. messenger with orders to Captain Vogdes to land his company at Fort Pickens and increase the garrison. Both President and Cabinet had since then considered that point disposed of for the moment.

1861. On the evening of March 28, the first state dinner was given by the new occupants of the Executive Mansion. Just before the hour of leave-taking, Lincoln invited the members of his Cabinet into an adjoining room for a moment's consultation; and when they were alone he informed them, with evident emotion, that General Scott had that day advised the evacuation of Fort Pickens as well as Fort Sumter. The general's recommendation was formulated as follows, in his written memorandum to the Secretary of War:

> It is doubtful, however, according to recent information from the South, whether the voluntary evacuation of Fort Sumter alone would have a decisive effect upon the States now wavering between adherence to the Union and secession. It is known, indeed, that it would be charged to necessity, and the holding of Fort Pickens would be adduced in support of that view. Our Southern friends, however, are clear that the evacuation of both the forts would instantly soothe and give confidence to the eight remaining slave-holding States, and render their cordial adherence to this Union perpetual. The holding of Forts Jefferson and Taylor on the ocean keys depends on entirely different principles, and should never be abandoned; and indeed the giving up of Forts Sumter and Pickens may be best justified by the hope that we should thereby recover the States to which they geographically belong by the liberality of the act, besides retaining the eight doubtful States.

Scott, Memorandum. W. R. Vol. I., pp. 200, 201. Blair to Welles, May 17, 1873. Welles, "Lincoln and Seward," p. 65.

A long pause of blank amazement followed the President's recital, broken at length by Blair in

strong denunciation, not only of this advice, but of Scott's general course regarding Sumter. He charged that Scott was transcending his professional duties and "playing politician." Blair's gestures and remarks, moreover, were understood by those present as being aimed specially at Seward, whose peace policy he had, with his usual impulsive aggressiveness, freely criticised. Without any formal vote, there was a unanimous expression of dissent from Scott's suggestion, and under the President's request to meet in formal council next day, the Cabinet retired. That night Lincoln's eyes did not close in sleep. It was apparent that the time had come when he must meet the nation's crisis. His judgment alone must guide, his sole will determine, his own lips utter the word that should save or lose the most precious inheritance of humanity, the last hope of free government on the earth. Only the imagination may picture that intense and weary vigil.

CH. XXIII.

Meigs, Diary. MS.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE REBEL GAME

Ch. XXIV. THE rebel conspirators were not unmindful of the great advantages they had hitherto derived from their complaints, their intrigues, their assumptions, their arrogant demands. No sooner was 1861. the provisional government organized at Montgomery than they appointed a new embassy of three commissioners to proceed to Washington and make the fourth effort to assist, protect, and if possible to establish the rebellion through negotiation. They not only desired to avert a war, but, reasoning from the past, had a well-grounded faith that they would secure peaceful acquiescence in their schemes. The commissioners were instructed to solicit a reception in their official character, and if that were refused, to accept an unofficial interview; to insist on the *de facto* and *de jure* independence of the Confederate States; but nevertheless to accede to a proposition to refer the subject of their mission to the United States Senate, or to withhold an answer until the Congress of the United States should assemble and pronounce a decision in the premises, provided the existing peaceful status were rigidly maintained.

Toombs to the Commissioners, Feb. 27, 1861. MS.

This modest programme was made necessary by the half-fledged condition of the rebellion: its

personal jealousies were not yet hushed; its notions of States rights were not yet swallowed up in an imperious military dictatorship; above all, its military preparation consisted mainly of a self-sacrificing enthusiasm. Notwithstanding the two months' drill and battery-building at Charleston, Davis did not agree with Governor Pickens that the moment had come to storm Sumter. "Fort Sumter should be in our possession at the earliest moment possible," wrote the rebel war secretary, but "thorough preparation must be made before an attack is attempted. . . A failure would demoralize our people and injuriously affect us in the opinion of the world as reckless and precipitate." Therefore they made Beauregard a brigadier-general and sent him to command in the harbor of Charleston. Beauregard's professional inspection justified this prudence. He wrote:

Walker to Pickens, Mar. 1, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 259.

> If Sumter was properly garrisoned and armed, it would be a perfect Gibraltar to anything but constant shelling night and day from the four points of the compass. As it is, the weakness of the garrison constitutes our greatest advantage, and we must for the present turn our attention to preventing it from being reënforced. This idea I am gradually and cautiously infusing into the minds of all here; but should we have to open our batteries upon it, I hope to be able to do so with all the advantages the condition of things here will permit. All that I ask is time for completing my batteries and preparing and organizing properly my command.

Beauregard to Walker, Mar. 6, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 26.

The first of the three commissioners, Martin J. Crawford, arrived in Washington the day before Lincoln's inauguration. He would have nothing more to do with Buchanan, he wrote. "His fears for his personal safety, the apprehensions for the

Ch. XXIV. security of his property, together with the cares of state and his advanced age, render him wholly disqualified for his present position. He is as incapable now of purpose as a child."

Crawford to Toombs, Mar. 3, 1861. MS.

With the arrival of the second commissioner, John Forsyth, they prepared to begin operations upon the new Administration. It was comparatively easy to call into caucus the active and disguised secessionists who yet remained in the city. Wigfall, Mason, Hunter, and Breckinridge were still in the Senate; Virginia and the other border States had a number of sympathizing Congressmen in the House; Bell, Crittenden, and Douglas, though loyal, could be approached with professions of peace; Seward, in order to gain information, had kept himself during the whole winter in relation with all parties, and had openly proclaimed that his policy was one of peace and conciliation.

Senate Speech, "Globe," Jan. 12, 1861, p. 343.

The prospect of beginning negotiations seemed flattering; nevertheless, their first caucus over the inaugural agreed that "it was Lincoln's purpose at once to attempt the collection of the revenue, to reënforce and hold Forts Sumter and Pickens, and to retake the other places." A day or two later, on comparing the fragmentary gossip they had raked together, in which the difficulties of reënforcing Sumter were dimly reflected, with a general conversation alleged to have been held by one of their informants with Seward, they framed and reported to Montgomery a theory of probable success in their mission.

Washington to Walker, Mar. 5, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 263.

Seward, they thought, was to be the ruling power of the new Administration. Seward and Cameron were publicly committed to a peace policy. They

would establish an understanding with the Secretary of State: CH. XXIV.

> This gentleman is urgent for delay. The tenor of his language is to this effect: I have built up the Republican party; I have brought it to triumph; but its advent to power is accompanied by great difficulties and perils. I must save the party and save the Government in its hands. To do this, war must be averted; the negro question must be dropped; the "irrepressible" conflict ignored; and a Union party to embrace the border slave States inaugurated. I have already whipped Mason and Hunter in their own State. I must crush out Davis, Toombs, and their colleagues in sedition in their respective States. Saving the border States to the Union by moderation and justice, the people of the Cotton States, unwillingly led into secession, will rebel against their leaders and reconstruction will follow.

The commissioners, therefore, deemed it their duty to support Mr. Seward's policy. "Until we reach the point of pacific negotiations, it is unimportant what may be his subsequent hopes and plans. It is well that he should indulge in dreams which we know are not to be realized." They, of course, make no mention of the arguments, agencies, and influences which we may infer they employed in their deceitful intent to foster these dreams; unless, indeed, they were instrumental in provoking the Senate debate of March 6 and 7, in which 1861.
Clingman attacked the inaugural as an announcement of war, while Douglas defended it as a manifesto of peace, "for the purpose," as Mr. Forsyth wrote that Douglas told him, "of fixing that construction on it and of tomahawking it afterwards if it [the Administration] departed from it." Forsyth to Toombs, Mar. 8, 1861. MS.

Acting upon this asserted anxiety of Seward for delay and for peace, the commissioners now agreed

CH. XXIV. upon what they elaborately described in a long dispatch to Montgomery as a most ingenious plan. They would force the Administration to accept or reject their mission, and thereby confront the immediate issue of peace or war, unless Seward would consent to maintain the present military status. Having reached this conclusion, they laboriously drew up a memorandum which they purposed to ask Seward to sign, and sent it to the State Department by an "agent," but Mr. Seward was at home ill, and could not be seen.

Their long dispatches home, and their mysterious allusions to conversations, to agents, and intermediaries, convey the impression that they were "in relation" with the Secretary of State; but whether they were duped by others, or whether they were themselves duping the Montgomery cabinet, indisputable indications in these documents contradict their assertions. At last, however, their vigilance was rewarded with what they considered an item of important news, and they hurried off several telegrams to Montgomery: "Things look better here than was believed." "The impression prevails in Administration circles that Fort Sumter will be evacuated within ten days." This was on Saturday night, March 9, and so far from being exclusive or advance information, it was substantially printed in next morning's newspapers. After four days' consideration by the Lincoln Government, and extended discussion in a Cabinet meeting, the loss of Sumter seemed unavoidable; and the rumor was purposely given out to prepare the public mind, if the need should finally come for the great sacrifice.

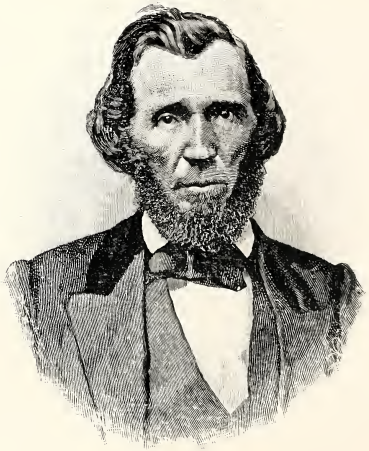
The Commissioners to Toombs, Mar. 9, 1861. MS.

Ibid.

"New York Herald," Mar. 10, 1861.



JOHN FORSYTH.



MARTIN J. CRAWFORD.

The Jefferson Davis cabinet at Montgomery clutched at the report with avidity. Under this hope they were no longer satisfied with the "existing peaceful status" specified in their instructions of February 27, and repeated in the prepared memorandum of the commissioners. "Can't bind our hands a day without evacuation of Sumter and Pickens," replied Toombs imperatively by telegraph on Monday, March 11. Until Sumter should be evacuated it was idle to talk of peaceful negotiation, he added in his written dispatch to the commissioners, while they were further instructed to "pertinaciously demand" the withdrawal of the troops and vessels from Pickens and Pensacola.

Toombs to the Commissioners, Mar. 11, 1861. MS.

Ibid., Mar. 14, 1861. MS.

Thus spurred into activity, the commissioners deemed it incumbent on them to make an effort. The whole tenor of their previous dispatches was calculated to convey the impression that they were twisting the Secretary of State at pleasure between their diplomatic thumb and finger. On Monday, March 11, they sent him their first message — not the demand of Toombs that day received by telegraph, not even the mild suggestion of their original instructions to maintain the status and appeal to Congress, but a meek inquiry whether they would be allowed to make a sort of back-door visit to the State Department. To describe it in their own words: "We availed ourselves of the kind consent of Senator Hunter, of Virginia, to see Mr. Seward, and learn if he would consent to an informal interview with us." Mr. Seward, of course, received Senator Hunter politely, for he still professed to be a loyal Senator representing a loyal State, and gave him the stereo-

The Commissioners to Toombs, Mar. 12, 1861. MS.

CH. XXIV. typed diplomatic reply, that "he would be obliged to consult the President." The next morning Seward sent Hunter a note of irreproachable courtesy, but of freezing conclusiveness. "It will not be in my power," he wrote, "to receive the gentlemen of whom we conversed yesterday. You will please explain to them that this decision proceeds solely on public grounds and not from any want of personal respect."

Seward to Hunter, Mar. 12, 1861. MS.

This was a cold bath to the commissioners, and the theories of their own finesse, and of the torturing perplexities into which Seward had been thrown, became untenable, and they reported:

> To-day at 11 o'clock Mr. Hunter brought us the promised reply, a copy of which is appended to this dispatch. It is polite; but it was considered by us at once as decisive of our course. We deemed it not compatible with the dignity of our Government to make a second effort, and took for granted that, having failed in obtaining an unofficial interview with the Secretary of State, we should equally fail with the President. Our only remaining course was plain, and we followed it at once in the preparation of a formal note to the State Department informing the United States Government of our official presence here, the objects of our mission, and asking an early day to be appointed for an official interview.

They then repeat the gossip of the day — what Mr. Lincoln was said to have told a gentleman from Louisiana, that "there would be no war and that he was determined to keep the peace"; and what Crittenden told Crawford, "that General Scott was also for peace and would sustain Mr. Seward's policy." Finally, showing in what complete ignorance they were of events happening about them, they ask with bewildered curiosity,

"Can it be that while they refuse to negotiate with us to keep the Republican party in heart, they mean to abandon both forts on military grounds and thus avoid the occasion of a collision, or do they mean to refer the questions raised by our note to the Senate? Time only can determine, and we await the result. We are still of the opinion that Fort Sumter will be evacuated. The opinion gains ground here that Lieutenant Slemmer and garrison will also be withdrawn from Fort Pickens."

The Commissioners to Toombs, Mar. 12, 1861. MS.

Toombs was ready to sue or bluster as occasion demanded. "You have shown to the Government of the United States," he wrote back to the commissioners, "with commendable promptness and becoming dignity that you were not supplicants for its grace and favor, and willing to loiter in the antechambers of officials to patiently await their answer to your petition; but that you are the envoys of a powerful confederacy of sovereignties, instructed to present and demand their rights."

Nevertheless, instead of recalling these neglected envoys, he instructs them to "communicate freely and often," and to employ a secretary to assist them, "at such monthly compensation as you may deem reasonable." The hint to remain was hardly necessary. The commissioners apparently had no idea of abandoning their intrigues, unpromising as they were.

Toombs to the Commissioners, Mar. 20, 1861. MS.

Their secretary, John T. Pickett, now went to the State Department for an answer to the commissioners' formal note. Seward replied (March 15) in a lengthy and courteous but dignified memorandum that he did not perceive in the "Con-

CH. XXIV. federate States" a rightful and accomplished revolution or an independent nation; that he could not act on the assumption or in any way admit that they constituted a foreign power with which diplomatic relations ought to be established; that he had no authority, nor was he at liberty, to recognize the commissioners as diplomatic agents, or hold correspondence or other communication with them.

Seward, Memorandum, Mar. 15, 1861. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. I. Documents, pp. 43, 44.

This paper, if delivered, would have terminated the labors and functions of the commissioners. But they were in no hurry to return empty-handed to Montgomery, and still fondly nursed the theory so elaborately described in their long dispatches. One of them repeated it with emphasis in a private letter to a member of the Montgomery cabinet.

> We are feeling our way here cautiously. We are playing a game in which time is our best advocate, and if our Government could afford the time I feel confident of winning. There is a terrific fight in the Cabinet. Our policy is to encourage the peace element in the fight, and at least blow up the Cabinet on the question.

Forsyth to Walker, Mar. 14, 1861. MS.

This dispatch is a frank confession that the rebel embassy was so far a failure, and that its future opportunity lay solely in the barren regions of hotel gossip and newspaper rumors. The commissioners would merit no further historic mention had they not unexpectedly secured a most important ally—John A. Campbell, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, appointed from Alabama, and in the confidence and, as it soon turned out, in the secret interest of the South and the rebellion.

Justice Campbell now made himself the volun-

tary intermediary between the commissioners and the Secretary of State. Owing to his station and professions, Seward gave him undue intimacy and confidence, enabling Campbell, under guise of promoting peace, to give aid and comfort to the enemies of the United States, in violation of his oath and duty. The details of the intrigue rest entirely upon rebel statements, and mainly upon those of Campbell himself, who gave both a confidential and a semi-official version to Jefferson Davis; the latter Davis transmitted in a special message to the Confederate Congress to "fire the Southern heart." Campbell having thus made his share of the transaction official, and having for a quarter of a century stood before the public accusing Seward and the Lincoln Administration of "equivocating conduct" and "systematic duplicity," history must adjudge the question as well as it may with the help of his own testimony. CH. XXIV.

It has already been stated that Seward's official refusal to receive the commissioners was being prepared at the State Department. The Assistant Secretary had promised to send it to the commissioners' hotel. The commissioners thus relate the beginning of Campbell's intrigue:

> The interview between Colonel Pickett and the Assistant Secretary of State occurred on Friday morning, the 14th[1] inst. Immediately thereafter, and within a brief space of time after Colonel Pickett's statement to us, the Hon. John A. Campbell, of the Supreme Court of the United States, sought an interview with Mr. Crawford of this commission, and after stating what he knew to be the wish and desire of Mr. Seward to preserve the peace

[1] By the almanac Friday was the 15th. There is, therefore, an error either in the day of the week or day of the month.

CH. XXIV. between the two Governments, asked if there could be no further delay for an answer to our note to the Government, stating at the same time that he had no doubt if it were pressed that a most positive though polite rejection would be the result.

The Commissioners to Toombs, Mar. 22, 1861. MS.

Commissioner Crawford's official reply to this overture is best described by Toombs's formula that he should "pertinaciously demand" the evacuation of Sumter and maintenance of the "status" elsewhere; the alternative and confidential reply we can only conjecture. But it may well be presumed that Campbell fully revealed to Crawford his sympathy with the rebellion and his purpose to aid it, and that he was in return thoroughly instructed in the game, which was "to encourage the peace element in the fight, and at least blow up the Cabinet on the question."

1861. Thus instructed and prepared, Justice Campbell on the same day (March 14 or 15) made a voluntary call on Mr. Seward, and in the general conversation which he induced evidently played his part of the game of peace and reconciliation with consummate ability. He probably painted the "dreams which we know are not to be realized" in such rosy colors as to call forth from Seward the hopeful observation "that a civil war might be prevented by the success of my [Campbell's] mediation." The impression upon Seward that Campbell was laboring honestly for the preservation of the Union was also strengthened by his having brought with him Justice Nelson, to whom the slightest suspicion of disloyalty has never attached. It seems clear that these professions of patriotic zeal threw Mr. Seward off his guard as to Campbell's motives, and that he

Campbell to Seward, April 13, 1861. Moore, "Rebellion Record." Vol. I., Documents, pp. 426–428.

accepted his intervention as a Union peacemaker, not as a rebel emissary. CH. XXIV.

Seward replied confidentially, "that it was impossible to receive the commissioners in any diplomatic capacity or character, or even to see them personally." Campbell adds that he said "it was not desirable to deny them or to answer them." As part of a general policy of delay and avoidance of conflict he may have said and meant it; as an immediate and urgent diplomatic step he certainly did not mean it, because his Assistant Secretary had already promised to send the answer to the commissioners' hotel, when for mere temporary delay some other expedient might have been used. Continuing his conversation and unguardedly enlarging his confidence, Seward, in answer to Campbell's direct inquiry, ventured the opinion that Sumter would be evacuated and collision avoided at Charleston. The idea was not new; the rumor had been openly and half-officially printed in the newspapers nearly a whole week; the commissioners had telegraphed it to Montgomery. Campbell, however, caught eagerly at the suggestion, and proposed to write the peaceful news to Jefferson Davis; and Seward, with a momentary excess of enthusiasm, authorized him (so Campbell relates) to write: "Before this letter reaches you Sumter will be evacuated, or the orders will have issued for that purpose—and no change is contemplated at present in respect to Pickens." Campbell rushed off in a fever of delight to tell the commissioners, and magnified the confidence to the proportions of a pledge. The incident began to grow more rapidly than the story of the three

Campbell to Jefferson Davis, April 3, 1861. MS.

Ibid.

CH. XXIV. black crows. The commissioners, on their part, hurried a telegram to Montgomery: "By pressing we can get an answer to our official note to-morrow. If we do, we believe it will be adverse to recognition and peace. We are sure that within five days Sumter will be evacuated. We are sure that no steps will be taken to change the military status. With a few days' delay a favorable answer may be had. Our personal interests command us to press. Duty to our country commands us to wait. What shall we do?" To all of which Toombs answered laconically, "Wait a reasonable time and then ask for instructions."

The Commissioners to Toombs, Mar.15,1861. MS.

It is needless to point out the absurd variance of this announcement with Seward's alleged statement, which was simply an opinion that orders would be issued to evacuate Sumter within five days. He undoubtedly believed every word of this at the moment. Seward was then, as he declared to Lincoln in writing, in favor of evacuation; and Scott's written draft of an order to that effect, under date of the 11th, was in the President's hands. The President had as yet announced no decision. On the 15th, for the first time, the Cabinet voted—five to evacuate, two to attempt to supply. Seward had still every reason to suppose that the necessity, the Cabinet majority, General Scott's influence, and Lincoln's desire to avoid war would, acting together, verify his prediction. Presuming that he was talking to a friend and not an enemy, to a judge and not an advocate, to a unionist and not a rebel, he undoubtedly and properly thought his words were received as a prediction, and not as a pledge.

Seward to Lincoln, Mar.15,1861. Opinion on Sumter.

The five days elapsed, but Lincoln sent no order to Anderson, and announced no decision to the Cabinet. He was still patiently seeking, and had not found his way out of the dilemma. He had not yet beheld "the salvation of the Lord." He wished to decide, not upon impulse or even necessity, but upon judgment and advantage. If, like the farmer in his favorite illustration, he could not plow through the log, perhaps he might plow around it. He was meditating on the visit of Fox to Sumter, of Lamon and Hurlbut to Charleston; he was deliberating about a diversion upon the Virginia Convention; above all, he was waiting to hear from his order to reënforce Fort Pickens, dispatched on the 12th of March. His Cabinet ministers did not yet understand him. Seward on the one hand, and Blair on the other, unused to men of his fiber, began to fear this was vacillation, indecision, executive incompetence. The atmosphere of Washington had hitherto largely produced two classes of men—those who bluster and domineer, those who protest and yield. Lincoln belonged to neither class; and his persistent non-committal, his silent hopefulness, his patient and well-considered inaction, baffled their prophecy. Such tenacity of purpose, combined with such reticence of declaration, was an anomaly in recent Federal administration.

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The hopes of the rebels, so unexpectedly inflated, began once more to collapse. Governor Pickens sent inquiries to the commissioners. Toombs telegraphed them, "We can't hear from you." Campbell was summoned and dispatched to the State Department. He had interviews on March 21 and

Toombs to the Commissioners, Mar. 20, 1861. MS.

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22. But in reality Seward was no wiser than he had been in the previous interviews, and could only repeat his beliefs and his predictions, and declare, in his philosophical vein, that "governments could not move with bank accuracy."

The Commissioners to Toombs, Mar. 29, 1861. MS. Campbell to Seward, April 13, 1861. Moore, "Rebellion Record." Vol. I., Documents, p. 427.

For a third time the conspirators grew impatient, and again Campbell, on Saturday, March 30, and Monday, April 1, went to the State Department as the messenger of rebellion. By this time Seward had real information. A second Cabinet vote had been taken, on March 29, in which the majority was reversed. The President had ordered the preparation of the Sumter expedition; and Seward himself, though still advising the abandonment of Sumter, was preparing an expedition to reënforce Fort Pickens.

Seward at this point must have realized how injudicious he had been to give Campbell any confidence whatever, since to preserve secrecy for his own project he must abruptly break off the intimacy. Perhaps he had by this time divined that he was dealing with a public enemy. At all events, whatever may have been his reasons, he took occasion to correct any misunderstanding which might previously have sprung up by giving Campbell a written memorandum (April 1), as follows: "The President may desire to supply Sumter, but will not do so without giving notice to Governor Pickens"; adding verbally (Campbell says) that he still did not believe the attempt would be made, and that there was no design to reënforce Sumter. Campbell acknowledges that he took notice of this very important correction and definition. "There was a departure here from the pledges of the pre-

vious month," he writes; "but with the verbal explanation I did not consider it a matter then to complain of."

Campbell to Seward, April 13, 1861. Moore, "Rebellion Record." Vol. I., Documents, p. 427.

The commissioners and their game here drop into the background, and Justice Campbell takes up the rôle of leading conspirator. Two days afterwards we find him making a confidential report to the insurrectionary chief at Montgomery, as follows:

I do not doubt that Sumter will be evacuated shortly, without any effort to supply it; but in respect to Pickens I do not think there is any settled plan, and it will not be abandoned spontaneously, and under any generous policy, though perhaps they may be quite willing to let it be beleaguered and reduced to extremities. I can only infer as to this. All that I have is a promise that the status will not be attempted to be changed prejudicially to the Confederate States without notice to me. It is known that I make these assurances on *my own responsibility.* I have no right to mention any name or to pledge any person. I am the only responsible person to you, I consenting to accept such assurances as are made to me and to say, "I have confidence that this will or will not be done." I have no expectation that there will be bad faith in the dealings with me.

Now I do not see that I can do more. I have felt them in a variety of forms as to the practicability of some armistice or truce that should be durable and would relieve the anxiety of the country. But at present there can be no compact, treaty, or recognition of any kind. There will be no objection to giving the commissioners their answer; but if the answer is not called for it will not be sent, and it is intimated that it would be more agreeable to withhold it. So far as I can judge, the present desire is to let things remain as they are, without action of any kind. There is a strong indisposition for the call of Congress, and it will not be done except under necessity. The radicals of the Senate went off in anger, and Trumbull's coercion resolution was offered after a

CH. XXIV. contumelious interview with the President. My own notion is that the inactive policy is as favorable to you as any that this Administration could adopt for you, and that I would not interrupt it.

Here the learned judge might have stopped, and perhaps would have left posterity to question his method rather than his motives. But inexorable History demanded her tribute of truth: under her master-spell he went on, and in the concluding paragraph of the letter his own hand recorded a confession little to have been expected from an officer whose duty it was to expound and to administer the law of treason as written in the Constitution of the United States and the acts of Congress.

Campbell to Jefferson Davis, April 3, 1861. MS.

The great want of the Confederate States is peace. I shall remain here some ten or fifteen days. My own future course is in some manner depending upon circumstances and the opinions of friends. At present I have access to the Administration I could not have except under my present relations to the Government, and I do not know who could have the same freedom. I have therefore deferred any settlement on the subject until the chance of being of service at this critical period has terminated. This letter is strictly confidential and private.

There is no need of comment on this "aid and comfort" to the enemies of his Government by a member of the highest court of the United States. It only remains to note the acknowledgment and estimate of it by Jefferson Davis, replying from Montgomery under date of April 6:

Accept my thanks for your kind and valuable services to the cause of the Confederacy and of peace between those who, though separated, have many reasons to feel

towards each other more than the friendships common among nations. Our policy is, as you say, peace. . . In any event I will gratefully remember your zealous labor in a sacred cause, and hope your fellow-citizens may at some time give you acceptable recognition of your service, and appreciate the heroism with which you have encountered a hazard from which most men would have shrunk. CH. XXIV.

Jefferson Davis to Campbell, April 6, 1861. MS.

While this direct correspondence between Davis and Campbell was being carried on, the commissioners, to whom A. B. Roman had been sent as a reënforcement, were, partly as a matter of form, partly for ulterior purposes, kept in Washington by the Montgomery cabinet to "loiter in the ante-chambers of officials." The occupation seems to have grown irksome to them; for, nowise deceived or even encouraged by Campbell's pretended "pledges," they asked, under date of March 26, "whether we shall dally longer with a Government hesitating and doubting as to its own course, or shall we demand our answer at once?" On April 2, Toombs gave them Jefferson Davis's views at length. He thought the policy of Mr. Seward would prevail. He cared nothing for Seward's motives or calculations. So long as the United States neither declare war nor establish peace, "it affords the Confederate States the advantages of both conditions, and enables them to make all the necessary arrangements for the public defense, and the solidifying of their Government, more safely, cheaply, and expeditiously than they could were the attitude of the United States more definite and decided." The commissioners were, therefore, to make no demand for their answer, but maintain their present position. In view of

The Commissioners to Toombs, Mar. 26, 1861. MS.

Toombs to the Commissioners, April 2, 1861. MS.

CH. XXIV. this confident boast of the chief of the rebellion of "the advantages of both conditions," his subsequent accusation of bad faith on the part of the Lincoln Administration is culminating proof of the insincerity and tortuous methods of the rebel game.

CHAPTER XXV

VIRGINIA

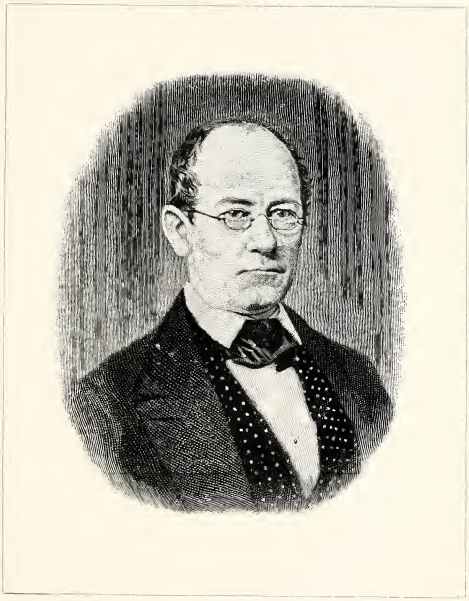
CIVIL war, though possible, did not at the moment seem imminent or necessary: Lincoln had declared in his inaugural that he would not begin it; Jefferson Davis had written in his instructions to the commissioners that he did not desire it. This threw the immediate contest back upon the secondary question — the control and adhesion of the border slave States; and of these Virginia was the chief subject of solicitude. The condition of Virginia had become anomalous; it was little understood by the North, and still less by her own citizens. She retained all the ideal sentiment growing out of her early devotion to and sacrifices for the Union; but it was warped by her coarser and stronger material interest in slavery. She still deemed she was the mother of presidents; whereas she had degenerated into being, like other border States, the mother of slave-breeders and of an annual crop of black-skinned human chattels to be sold to the cotton, rice, and sugar planters of her neighboring commonwealths. She thought herself the leader of the South; whereas she was only a dependent of the Gulf States. She yet believed herself the teacher of original statesmanship;

CH. XXV. whereas she had become the unreasoning follower of Calhoun's disciples—the Ruffins, the Rhetts, and the Yanceys of the ultra South.

The political demoralization of Virginia was completed by the John Brown raid. From that time she dragged her anchors of state; her faith in both Constitution and liberty was gone. The true lesson of that affair was indeed the very reverse. The overwhelming popular sentiment of the North denounced the outrage; the national arms defended Virginia and suppressed the invasion; the State vindicated her local authority by hanging the captured offenders. Thus public opinion, Federal power, and State right united in a precedent amounting of itself to an absolute guaranty, but which might have been easily crystallized into statute or even constitutional law.

Sagacious statesmanship would have plucked this flower of safety. On the contrary, her blind partisanship spurned the opportunity, distrusted government, and sought refuge in force. Her then Governor confesses that from that period "we began to prepare for the worst. We looked carefully to the State armory; and whilst we had the selection of the State quota of arms we were particular to take field ordnance instead of altered muskets, and when we left the gubernatorial chair there were in the State armory at Richmond 85,000 stands of infantry arms and 130 field-pieces of artillery, besides $30,000 worth of new revolving arms purchased from Colt. Our decided opinion was that a preparation of the Southern States in full panoply of arms, and prompt action, would have prevented civil war."

Henry A. Wise, "Seven Decades," p. 250.



JOHN LETCHER.

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Many strong external signs indicated the persistent adherence of Virginia to the Union. Her Legislature refused the proposition of South Carolina for a conference of the Southern States, made in the winter of 1859–60. In the Presidential election her citizens voted, by a slight plurality, for Bell and Everett and their platform of "The Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws," while the votes cast for Douglas after his strong coercion declaration at Norfolk and the votes cast for Lincoln, added to the Bell and Everett vote, appeared to indicate a decided Union preponderance.[1] Notwithstanding these manifestations of allegiance, public sentiment took on a tone and a determination which, paradoxical as it may seem, was rebellion in guise of loyalty. It is perhaps best illustrated by the declaration of ex-Governor Wise that he meant to fight in the Union,[2]

[1] "The vote was so close that Governor Letcher, who had supported Douglas, issued certificates of election to nine Bell and Everett electors and six Breckinridge and Lane electors. The highest vote polled for a Bell elector was 74,524, and the highest for a Breckinridge elector 74,306, only 218 majority. The Douglas electors received 16,223 votes [the Lincoln electors 1929 votes]. As Mr. Lincoln was elected and the vote of Virginia was of no consequence, the Breckinridge electors, for different reasons, did not qualify, and fifteen votes were cast for Bell and Everett." — William Lamb, to the authors, Feb. 21, 1888.

[2] "As to parting from the Union in my affections, I shall never do that. As to leaving its flag, whenever I leave this confederacy, this north star confederacy, which makes the needle tremble northward, sir, I shall carry the old flag of the Union out with me; and if ever I have to fight, — so help me God! — I will fight with the star-spangled banner still in one hand and my musket in the other. I will never take any Southern cross or any palmetto for my flag. I will never admit that a Yankee can drive me from the Union and take from me our capital. I will take from him forts; I will take from him flags; I will take from him our capital; I will take from him, if I can, my whole country, and save the whole. Will that satisfy the gentleman as to fighting in the Union?" — Speech of H. A. Wise in the Virginia Convention, April 10, 1861.

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not out of it. To the nation at large the phrase had a pretty and patriotic sound; but when explained to be a determination to fight the Federal Government "in the Union," it became as rank treason as secession itself.

However counterfeit logic or mental reservations concealed it, the underlying feeling was to fight, no matter whom, and little matter how, for the protection of slavery and slave property. In this spirit Virginia continued her military preparations. To this end half a million dollars was voted in the winter of 1859–60, and a million more in that of 1860–61. Commissioners were appointed to purchase arms; companies were raised, officers appointed, regiments organized, camps of instruction formed. It was one of these that Floyd sent Hardee to inspect and drill in November, 1860. Before the end of January, this appeal to military strength by Virginia was paraded in the United States Senate as a menace, to extort a compromise and constitutional guarantees for slavery. Nor did the threat seem an empty one. The State professed to have an actual army of 62 troops of cavalry, numbering 2547 men; 14 companies of artillery, numbering 820 men; and 149 companies of infantry, numbering 7180 men. All these were uniformed and armed; while 6000 men additional were formed into companies, ready to have arms put into their hands.

Report, Adjutant-General of Virginia, Feb. 27, 1861.

Governor Letcher, the successor of Wise, had begun his administration with the announced belief that disunion was "not only a possible but a highly probable event." The defeat of his favorite, Douglas, and the success of Lincoln, served, therefore, as a pretended justification of

Letcher, Inaugural Message, Jan. 7, 1860.

his fears, if not an actual stimulant of his hopes. The Presidential election was scarcely over when he called an extra session of the Legislature, to "take into consideration the condition of public affairs" consequent on the excitement produced by "the election of sectional candidates for President and Vice-President." That body met January 7, 1861; the doctrine of non-coercion, South Carolina secession, and the Fort Sumter affair had become every-day topics. On Federal affairs Governor Letcher's message was a medley of heterogeneous and contradictory arguments and recommendations. He declared a disruption of the Union inevitable. He desired a national convention. He thought that four republics might be formed. He scolded South Carolina for her precipitate action. He joined a correct and a false quotation of Lincoln's sentiments. He opposed a State convention. He recommended sending commissioners to other slave States. He proposed terms to the North, and thought they would be "freely, cheerfully, and promptly assented to." He said, "Let the New England States and western New York be sloughed off." He wanted railroads to Kansas and direct trade to Europe. And finally he summed up: "Events crowd upon each other with astonishing rapidity. The scenes of to-day are dissolved by the developments of to-morrow. The opinions now entertained may be totally revolutionized by unforeseen and unanticipated occurrences that an hour or a day may bring forth." The truth was, that in Governor Letcher's hands the "Old Dominion" was adrift towards rebellion without rudder or compass.

Governor Letcher, Proclamation, Nov. 15, 1860.

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His quarrel with South Carolina turned upon an important point. The irascible Palmetto State was offended that Virginia had a year before rejected her proposal for a Southern conference. In retaliation she now intimated that she would help to destroy Virginia's slave-market. "The introduction of slaves from other States," said her Governor, "which may not become members of the Southern Confederacy, and particularly the border States, should be prohibited by legislative enactment, and by this means they will be brought to see that their safety depends upon a withdrawal from their enemies, and a union with their friends and natural allies." Mississippi made a similar threat. "As it is more than probable," said her executive, "that many of the citizens of the border States may seek a market for their slaves in the Cotton States, I recommend the passage of an act prohibiting the introduction of slaves into this State unless their owners come with them and become citizens, and prohibiting the introduction of slaves for sale by all persons whomsoever." Governor Letcher grew very indignant over these declarations. "These references to the border States," said he, "are pregnant with meaning, and no one can be at a loss to understand what that meaning is. While disavowing any unkind feeling towards South Carolina and Mississippi, I must still say that I will resist the coercion of Virginia into the adoption of a line of policy whenever the attempt is made by Northern or Southern States."

Governor Gist, Message, Nov. 27, 1860.

Governor Letcher, Message, Jan. 7, 1861.

Incensed against the North and distrustful of the South, the Governor pushed forward his military preparations. Especially did he cast a

longing eye at Fort Monroe. "As far back as January 8" (1861), says he, "I consulted with a gentleman whose position enabled him to know the strength of that fortress, and whose experience in military matters enabled him to form an opinion as to the number of men that would be required to capture it. He represented it to be one of the strongest fortifications in the world, and expressed his doubts whether it could be taken unless assailed by water as well as by land, and simultaneously." Since Governor Letcher had neither a fleet nor a properly equipped army, he did not follow up this design. The discussion of the project, however, illustrates the condition of his allegiance to the flag of his country, and the Constitution he was then under oath to uphold.

Governor Letcher, Message, Dec. 2, 1861.

Like the Governor, the Legislature at once put itself in an attitude of quasi-rebellion, by resolving on the second day of the session, that it would resist any attempt of the Federal Government to coerce a seceding State. It soon passed an act to assemble a convention; and by a large appropriation for defense, already mentioned, by issuing treasury notes, by amending the militia laws, and by authorizing counties to borrow money to purchase arms, and especially by its debates, further increased the prevailing secession undertow during the whole of its extra session, from January 7 to April 4.

The election for a convention was held February 4, and provoked a stirring contest. Its result was apparently for union; the Union members claimed a majority of three to one. But this was evidently an exaggerated estimate. The precise result could

1861.

CH. XXV. not be well defined. Politics had become a Babel. Discussion was a mere confusion of tongues. Party organization was swallowed up in intrigue; and conspiracy, not constitutional majorities, became the basis and impulse of legislation.

1861. The Virginia Convention met February 13, and its proceedings reflect a maze of loose declamation and purposeless resolves. It had no fixed mind, and could, therefore, form no permanent conclusion. The prevailing idea of the majority seemed to be expressed in a single phrase of one of its members, that "he would neither be driven by the North nor dragged by the Cotton States." It was virtually a mere committee of observation, waiting the turn of political winds and tides. It gave two encouraging though negative signs of promise; the first, that it had undoubtedly been chosen by a majority of voters really attached to the Union and desiring to remain in it; the second, that during a session of well-nigh a month it had not as yet passed an ordinance of secession, which had so far been a quick result in other State conventions.

As said at the beginning of this chapter, the course of the border States, and especially of Virginia, was on all hands the subject of chief solicitude. Her coöperation was absolutely essential to the secession government at Montgomery. This point, though not proclaimed, was understood by Jefferson Davis, and to powerful intrigues from that quarter many otherwise unaccountable movements may doubtless be ascribed. Neither was her adherence to the Union undervalued by Lincoln. Seward was deeply impressed both with the necessity and the possibility of saving her from

secession "as a brand from the burning." He relied (too confidently, as the event proved) on the significance of the late popular vote. He sent an agent to Richmond, who brought him hopeful news. He had already proposed to strengthen the hands of the Virginia unionists by advising Lincoln to nominate George W. Summers to fill the existing vacancy on the bench of the United States Supreme Court. Under his prompting, perhaps, Lincoln now thought it possible to bring his personal influence to bear on the Virginia Convention. He authorized Seward to invite Summers, or some equally influential and determined Union leader, to come to Washington. It is not likely that he had any great faith in such an effort; for the refusal or neglect of Scott, Gilmer, and Hunt to accept a Cabinet appointment, offered to each of them with more or less distinctness, had proved that Southern Unionism of this type was mere lip-service and not a living principle. It so turned out in this instance. Summers, pleading important business in the convention, excused himself from coming. It would appear, however, that he and others selected one John B. Baldwin as a proper representative, who came to Washington and had an interview with the President on the morning of April 4, 1861. There is a direct conflict of evidence as to what occurred at this interview. The witnesses are Mr. Baldwin himself and John Minor Botts, both of whom gave their testimony under oath before the Reconstruction Committee of Congress in 1866, after the close of the war.

Seward to Lincoln, Mar. 9, 1861. MS.

Mr. Botts testifies that on the 7th of April he called upon the President, who related to him, in

CH. XXV. confidence, that a week or ten days previously he had written to Summers to come to Washington, and he, instead of obeying the summons, had, after that long delay, sent Baldwin. On Baldwin's
1861. arrival (on the 5th of April, as Botts relates the story) Lincoln took him into a private room in the Executive Mansion, and said to him in substance:

Mr. Baldwin, why did you not come here sooner? I have been waiting and expecting some of you gentlemen of that convention to come to me for more than a week past. I had a most important proposition to make to you. But I am afraid you have come too late. However, I will make the proposition now. We have in Fort Sumter, with Major Anderson, about eighty men. Their provisions are nearly exhausted. I have not only written to Governor Pickens, but I have sent a special messenger[1] to him to say that I will not permit these people to starve; that I shall send them provisions. If he fires on that vessel, he will fire upon an unarmed vessel loaded with bread. But I shall at the same time send a fleet along with her, with instructions not to enter the harbor of Charleston unless that vessel is fired into; and if she is, then the fleet is to enter the harbor and protect her. Now, Mr. Baldwin, that fleet is now lying in the harbor of New York, and will be ready to sail this afternoon at 5 o'clock; and although I fear it is almost too late, yet I will submit the proposition which I intended when I sent for Mr. Summers. Your convention in Richmond has been sitting now nearly two months, and all that they have done has been to shake the rod over my head. You have recently taken a vote in the Virginia Convention on the right of secession, which was rejected by ninety to forty-five, a majority of two-thirds, showing the strength of the Union party in that convention. If you will go back to Richmond, and get that Union majority to adjourn and go home without passing the ordinance of secession, so anxious am I for the preservation of the peace of this country, and to save Virginia and the other

[1] This messenger was not sent until the evening of April 6.

border States from going out, that I will take the responsibility of evacuating Fort Sumter, and take the chance of negotiating with the Cotton States. CH. XXV.

Mr. Botts here asked how Baldwin received that proposition.

Sir (replied Lincoln, with a gesture of impatience), he would not listen to it for a moment; he hardly treated me with civility. He asked me what I meant by an adjournment; did I mean an adjournment *sine die?* Why, of course, Mr. Baldwin, said I, I mean an adjournment *sine die.* I do not mean to assume such a responsibility as that of surrendering that fort to the people of Charleston upon your adjournment, and then for you to return in a week or ten days and pass your ordinance of secession.

Mr. Botts relates that he asked permission of the President to go himself and submit that proposition to the Union members of the convention, but that Lincoln replied it was too late, the fleet had sailed. Further, that Baldwin returned to Richmond without even disclosing the President's offer; and that he eventually became an active secessionist, and held a commission in the rebel army.[1]

On the material point Baldwin's testimony is directly to the contrary. He states that Seward's messenger reached Richmond April 3; that at the 1861
request of Summers he immediately returned with him to Washington and called on the President on the morning of April 4; that Lincoln took him into a private room and said, in substance: "I am afraid you have come too late; I wish you could have been here three or four days ago. Why do you not adjourn the Virginia Convention?" "Ad-

[1] Testimony of John Minor Botts, Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 1st Sess., Thirty-ninth Congress.

CH. XXV. journ it how?" asked Baldwin. "Do you mean *sine die?*" "Yes," said Lincoln; "*sine die.* Why do you not adjourn it? It is a standing menace to me which embarrasses me very much."

Baldwin then relates how he made a grandiloquent speech to the President about the balance of power, the safeguards of the Constitution, and the self-respect of the convention; that the Union members had a clear majority of nearly three to one; they were controlling it for conservative results, and desired to have their hands upheld by a conciliatory policy; that if he had the control of the President's thumb and finger for five minutes he could settle the whole question. He would issue a proclamation, call a national convention, and withdraw the forces from Sumter and Pickens. But Mr. Baldwin declares and reiterates that he received from Mr. Lincoln "no pledge, no undertaking, no offer, no promise of any sort." "I am as clear in my recollections," he says, "as it is possible to be under the circumstances, that he made no such suggestion as I understood it, and said nothing from which I could infer it."[1]

A careful analysis and comparison with established data show many discrepancies and errors in the testimony of both of these witnesses. Making due allowances for the ordinary defects of memory, and especially for the strong personal and political bias and prejudice under which they both received their impressions, the truth probably lies midway

[1] Testimony of John B. Baldwin. Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 1st Session, Thirty-ninth Congress. The article, "A Piece of Secret History," in the "Atlantic Monthly" for April, 1875, contains only the substance of Baldwin's testimony before the Reconstruction Committee.

between their extreme contradictory statements. The actual occurrence may therefore be summed up about as follows: CH. XXV.

Mr. Seward had an abiding faith in the Unionism and latent loyalty of Virginia and the border States. He wished by conciliation to re-awaken and build them up; and thereby not merely retain these States, but make them the instruments, and this feeling the agency, to undermine rebellion and finally reclaim the Cotton States. Lincoln did not fully share this optimism; nevertheless, he desired to avoid actual conflict, and was willing to make any experimental concession which would not involve the actual loss or abandonment of military or political advantage. The acts of the previous Administration had placed Fort Sumter in a peril from which, so the military authorities declared, he could not extricate it. His Cabinet advised its evacuation. Public opinion would justify him in sacrificing the fort to save the garrison. He had ordered Fort Pickens reënforced; he was daily awaiting news of the execution of his announced policy to "hold, occupy, and possess" the Government posts. Pickens once triumphantly secured, the loss of Sumter could be borne. But might not the loss of Sumter be compensated? Might he not utilize that severe necessity, and make it the lever to procure the adjournment of the Virginia Convention, which, to use his own figure, was daily shaking the rod over his head? This we may assume was his reasoning and purpose when about March 20, either directly or through Seward, he invited Summers, the acknowledged leader of the Union members of the convention, to Washington.

CH. XXV. Summers, however, hesitated, delayed, and finally refused to come. The anxiously-looked-for news of the reënforcement of Fort Pickens did not arrive. The Cabinet once more voted, and changed its advice. The President ordered the preparation of the Sumter expedition. A second expedition to Fort Pickens had been begun. Another perplexing complication, to be described in the next chapter, had occurred. At this juncture Baldwin made his appearance, but clearly he had come too late. By this time (April 4, 1861) his presence was an embarrassment, and not a relief. Fully to inform him of the situation was hazardous, impossible; to send him back without explanation was impolite and would give alarm at Richmond. Lincoln, therefore, opened conversation with him, manifesting sufficient personal trust to explain what he intended to have told Summers. This called forth Baldwin's dogmatic and dictatorial rejoinder, from which Lincoln discovered two things: first, that Baldwin was only an embryo secessionist; and, second, that the Virginia Convention was little else than a council of rebellion. Hence the abrupt termination of the interview, and the unexplained silence at Richmond.

CHAPTER XXVI

PREMIER OR PRESIDENT?

AT noon on the 29th of March the Cabinet assembled and once more took up the absorbing question of Sumter. All the elements of the problem were now before them — Anderson's condition and the prospects of relief as newly reported by Fox; the state of public opinion in Charleston as described by Hurlbut; the Attorney-General's presentation of the legal aspects of an attempt at collecting the customs on shipboard; the Secretary of the Treasury's statement of the condition and resources of the revenue service; the report of the Secretary of the Navy as to what ships of war he could supply to blockade the port of Charleston; and, finally, the unexpected attitude of General Scott in advising the evacuation of Fort Pickens. All these features called out so much and such varied discussion, that at length the Attorney-General, taking up a pen, rapidly wrote on a slip of paper a short summing-up of his own conclusions. This he read aloud to the President, who thereupon asked the other members of the Cabinet to do the same. They all complied, and we have therefore the exact record of the matured

Bates, Diary. MS.

CH. XXVI. opinions of the Cabinet members then present. The importance of the occasion renders these memoranda of enduring interest. Mr. Seward wrote:

First. The dispatch of an expedition to supply or reënforce Sumter would provoke an attack, and so involve a war at that point.

The fact of preparation for such an expedition would inevitably transpire and would therefore precipitate the war — and probably defeat the object. I do not think it wise to provoke a civil war beginning at Charleston and in rescue of an untenable position.

Therefore I advise against the expedition in every view.

Second. I would call in Captain M. C. Meigs forthwith. Aided by his counsel, I would at once, and at every cost, prepare for a war at Pensacola and Texas, to be taken, however, only as a consequence of maintaining the possessions and authority of the United States.

Seward, Memorandum. MS. *Third.* I would instruct Major Anderson to retire from Sumter forthwith.

Mr. Chase wrote:

If war is to be the consequence of an attempt to provision Fort Sumter, war will just as certainly result from the attempt to maintai ı possession of Fort Pickens.

I am clearly in favor of maintaining Fort Pickens, and just as clearly in favor of provisioning Fort Sumter.

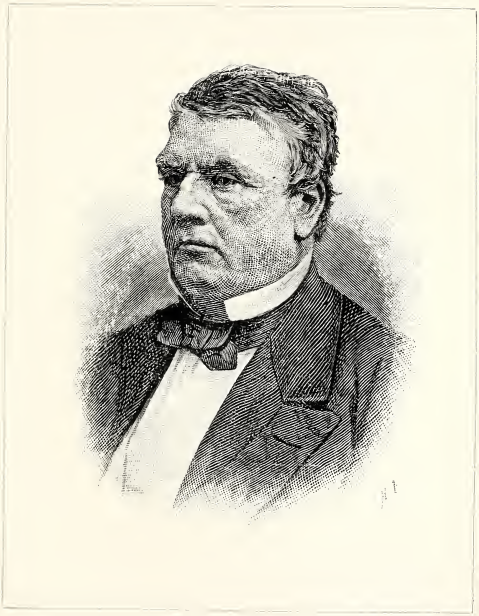
If that attempt be resisted by military force Fort Sumter should, in my judgment, be reënforced.

If war is to be the result, I perceive no reason why it may not be best begun in consequence of military resistance to the efforts of the Administration to sustain troops of the Union, stationed under the authority of the Government, in a fort of the Union, in the ordinary course of service.

Chase, Memorandum. MS.

Mr. Welles wrote:

I concur in the proposition to send an armed force off Charleston, with supplies of provisions and reënforcements for the garrison at Fort Sumter, and of communicating at the proper time the intentions of the Government



JOHN MINOR BOTTS.

to provision the fort, peaceably if unmolested. There is little probability that this will be permitted, if the opposing forces can prevent it. An attempt to force in provisions without reënforcing the garrison at the same time might not be advisable; but armed resistance to a peaceable attempt to send provisions to one of our own forts will justify the Government in using all the power at its command to reënforce the garrison and furnish the necessary supplies. CH. XXVI.

Fort Pickens and other places retained should be strengthened by additional troops, and, if possible, made impregnable.

The naval force in the Gulf and on the Southern coast should be increased. Accounts are published that vessels having on board marketable products for the crews of the squadron at Pensacola are seized — the inhabitants we know are prohibited from furnishing the ships with provisions or water; and the time has arrived when it is the duty of the Government to assert and maintain its authority. Welles, Memorandum. MS.

Mr. Smith wrote:

Viewing the question whether Fort Sumter shall be evacuated as a political one, I remark that the effect of its evacuation upon the public mind will depend upon the concurrent and subsequent action of the Government. If it shall be understood that by its evacuation we intend to acknowledge our inability to enforce the laws, and our intention to allow treason and rebellion to run their course, the measure will be extremely disastrous and the Administration will become very unpopular. If, however, the country can be made to understand that the fort is abandoned from necessity, and at the same time Fort Pickens and other forts in our possession shall be defended, and the power of the Government vindicated, the measure will be popular and the country will sustain the Administration.

Believing that Fort Sumter cannot be successfully defended, I regard its evacuation as a necessity, and I advise that Major Anderson's command shall be unconditionally withdrawn.

CH. XXVI.

At the same time I would adopt the most vigorous measures for the defense of the other forts, and if we have the power I would blockade the Southern ports, and enforce the collection of the revenue with all the power of the Government.

Smith, Memorandum. MS.

Mr. Blair wrote:

First. As regards General Scott, I have no confidence in his judgment on the questions of the day. His political views control his judgment, and his course as remarked on by the President shows that, whilst no one will question his patriotism, the results are the same as if he was in fact traitorous.

Second. It is acknowledged to be possible to relieve Fort Sumter. It ought to be relieved without reference to Pickens or any other possession. South Carolina is the head and front of this rebellion, and when that State is safely delivered from the authority of the United States it will strike a blow against our authority from which it will take us years of bloody strife to recover.

Third. For my own part, I am unwilling to share in the responsibility of such a policy.

Blair, Memorandum. MS.

Mr. Bates wrote:

It is my decided opinion that Fort Pickens and Key West ought to be reënforced and supplied, so as to look down opposition at all hazards — and this whether Fort Sumter be or be not evacuated.

It is also my opinion that there ought to be a naval force kept upon the Southern coast sufficient to command it, and if need be actually close any port that practically ought to be closed, whatever other station is left unoccupied.

It is also my opinion that there ought to be immediately established a line of light, fast-running vessels, to pass as rapidly as possible between New York or Norfolk at the North and Key West or other point in the Gulf at the South.

As to Fort Sumter — I think the time is come either to evacuate or relieve it.

Bates, Memorandum. MS.

CH. XXVI.

The majority opinion of the Cabinet on the 15th of March had been against the expediency of an attempt to provision Fort Sumter; but now, after a lapse of two weeks, the feeling was changed in favor of the proposed measure. Irrespective of this fresh advice, however, the President's opinion was already made up. On the day previous he had instructed Captain Fox to prepare him a short order for the ships, men, and supplies he would need for his expedition, and that officer complied with characteristic and promising brevity:

Fox to Lincoln, Mar. 28, 1861. MS.

Steamers *Pocahontas* at Norfolk, *Pawnee* at Washington, *Harriet Lane* at New York, to be under sailing orders for sea, with stores, etc., for one month. Three hundred men to be kept ready for departure from on board the receiving ships at New York. Two hundred men to be ready to leave Governor's Island in New York. Supplies for twelve months for one hundred men to be put in portable shape, ready for instant shipping. A large steamer and three tugs conditionally engaged.

Fox, Memorandum. W. R. Vol. I., p. 227.

The Cabinet meeting over, the President wrote at the bottom of this preliminary requisition the following order to the Secretary of War: "Sir: I desire that an expedition, to move by sea, be got ready to sail as early as the 6th of April next, the whole according to memorandum attached, and that you coöperate with the Secretary of the Navy for that object." This order and its duplicate to the Secretary of the Navy, duly signed and transmitted to the two departments, Captain Fox hurried to New York to superintend the details of preparation in person.

Lincoln to the Secretary of War, Mar. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. I., p. 226.

Lincoln to the Secretary of the Navy, Mar. 29, 1861. "Galaxy," Nov., 1870, p. 619.

It will be observed that the President's order is simply to prepare the expedition; "which expedi-

CH. XXVI. tion," in his own language, was "intended to be ultimately used or not, according to circumstances." But he was by this time convinced that the necessity would arise. Nothing had yet been heard from the order to reënforce Fort Pickens sent two weeks previously; on the contrary, there were rumors through the Southern newspapers that the *Brooklyn*, containing the troops, had left her anchorage off Pensacola and gone to Key West. As a matter of fact, she had first transferred her troops to the *Sabine;* but this was not and could not be known, and the necessary inference was that the *Brooklyn* had carried them away with her. The direction to land them would therefore unavoidably fail, and the fort remain liable to be carried by an assault; and both Sumter and Pickens be thus left within the grasp of the secessionists. Such was the contingency which had decided the President to prepare the Sumter expedition.

Lincoln, Message to Congress, July 4, 1861.

Ibid.

The logic of daily events had by this time also wrought a change in the mind of Seward. In his written opinion of March 15 he had declared, "I would not provoke war in any way now"; but on the 29th, apparently alarmed, like the rest, at the advice of General Scott to make further concession to the rebels, he wrote, "I would at once, and at every cost, prepare for a war at Pensacola and Texas." That very afternoon, as he had suggested in this same paper, he brought Captain Montgomery C. Meigs, the engineer officer in charge of the work on the new wings of the Capitol building, to the President. One reason for selecting him, in addition to his special training and acknowledged merit, was that he had in January

personally accompanied the reënforcements then sent to Key West and Tortugas. CH. XXVI.

On the way to and from the President's, Seward explained to Meigs that he wished the President to see some military man who would not talk politics; that they had Scott and Totten, but no one would think of putting either of those old men on horseback. They were in a difficulty. Scott had advised giving up both Sumter and Pickens. For his part, his policy had been to give up Sumter; but he wished to hold Pickens, making the fight there and in Texas, throwing the burden of the war, which all men of sense saw must come, upon those who, by revolting, had provoked it. Meigs, Diary. MS.

The President talked freely with Captain Meigs, and after some inquiries about Sumter asked him whether Fort Pickens could be held. Meigs replied, "Certainly, if the navy would do its duty." The President then asked him whether he could go down there again and take general command of those three great fortresses, Taylor, Jefferson, and Pickens, and keep them safe. Meigs answered that he was only a captain, and could not command the majors who were there. Here Seward broke in with: "I understand how that is; Captain Meigs must be promoted." "But there is no vacancy," answered the modest captain.

Mr. Seward, however, made light of all difficulties, and told the President if he wanted this thing done to put it in Meigs's charge. When Pitt wished to conquer Canada, Seward said, he sent for a young man whom he had noticed in the society of London, and told him to take Quebec,— to ask for the necessary means and do it,— and it was done.

Ch. XXVI. Would the President do this now? Lincoln replied he would consider it, and let him know in a day or two.

Two days afterwards (Sunday, March 31) Meigs was about starting for church when Colonel Erasmus D. Keyes, General Scott's military secretary, called and took him to Mr. Seward, who requested them to go forthwith and in consultation with General Scott to put upon paper an estimate and project for relieving and holding Fort Pickens, and to bring it to the President before four o'clock that afternoon. The two officers went directly to the engineer's bureau to inspect the necessary charts of Pensacola harbor and drawings of the fortifications, and over these they matured their plans. The rapid lapse of the few hours allowed compelled them to report to the President before seeing General Scott. Lincoln heard them read their paper, and then directed them to submit it to the general. "Tell him," said he, "that I wish this thing done, and not to let it fail unless he can show that I have refused him something he asked for as necessary."

Meigs, Diary. MS.

The officers obeyed, and on the way encountered Mr. Seward, who went with them. "General Scott," said he, on entering the old soldier's presence, "you have formally reported to the President your advice to evacuate Fort Pickens; notwithstanding this, I now come to bring you his order, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to reënforce and hold it to the last extremity." The old general had his political crotchets, but he was a soldier and a disciplinarian. "Sir," replied he, drawing himself up to his full height, "the great Frederick used to say, 'When the king commands,

all things are possible.' It shall be done." Meigs and Keyes submitted their plan, which he approved in the main, adding a few details they had in their haste overlooked; the project was further discussed and definitely adopted. CH. XXVI.

Fort Pickens stands on the western extremity of Santa Rosa Island, and serves, in connection with its twin fort, McRae, on the mainland opposite, to guard the entrance to Pensacola harbor. But in this case the two forts intended to render assistance to each other were held by opposing forces, bent not upon protecting but upon destroying each other, and restrained only by the existence of the "Sumter and Pickens truce," described in a previous chapter. So far as a mere cannonade might go, Pickens was perhaps as strong as McRae; but Lieutenant Slemmer in Pickens had only a handful of Union men, forty-six soldiers and thirty ordinary seamen all told, while some thousands of rebels were either encamped near or within reach of the secession general Braxton Bragg, himself a trained and skillful soldier. The chief danger was that Bragg might organize a large body of men, and by means of boats, crossing the bay at night or in a fog, carry Fort Pickens by a sudden assault before the reënforcements in the Union fleet could be landed, as they were by the terms of the truce authorized to do in such an emergency.

The substance of Meigs's plan was, that while a transport vessel bearing troops and stores landed them at Fort Pickens, outside the harbor, a ship-of-war, arriving simultaneously, should boldly steam past the hostile batteries of Fort McRae, enter the harbor, and take up such a position within as to be

CH. XXVI. able to prevent any crossing or landing by the rebels. The ship destined to run the batteries would necessarily encounter considerable peril, not only from the guns of McRae, but also from those of Fort Barrancas and supposed batteries at the navy yard — all, like McRae, on the mainland, and forming part of the harbor defenses.

For such coöperation Meigs needed a young, talented, and daring naval officer, and accordingly he made choice of Lieutenant David D. Porter, a companion and intimate friend, who, as he believed, combined the requisite qualities.

One important characteristic of this Pickens expedition was to be its secrecy. Seward in his argument on Sumter had much insisted that preparation for reënforcement would unavoidably come to the knowledge of the rebels, and enable them to find means to oppose it. This argument applied with even greater force to Fort Pickens; the rebels controlled both the post and the telegraph throughout the South, and it was thought that upon the first notice of hostile design Bragg would assault and overwhelm the fort. Besides, the orders transmitted through regular channels two weeks before had apparently failed. But now that the ships to supply Sumter were being got ready, it was doubtless thought that under this guise the Pickens relief could be prepared without suspicion.

On Monday, April 1, 1861, Captain Meigs, Colonel Keyes, and Lieutenant Porter were busy, under the occasional advice of Seward and General Scott, in perfecting the details of their plans and in drawing up the formal orders required. These were in due time signed by the President himself, it being part

of the plan that no one but the officers named, not even the Secretaries of War or Navy, should have knowledge of them. This was an error which only the anomalous condition and extreme peril of the Government would have drawn Lincoln into, and it was never repeated. He doubtless supposed they were entirely consistent with the Sumter plans, especially as General Scott's written request for his signature accompanied the papers — the general being perfectly cognizant of both expeditions.

Meigs, in "National Intelligencer," Sept. 16, 1865.

> The immediate departure of a war steamer, with instructions to enter Pensacola harbor and use all measures in its power to prevent any attack from the mainland upon Fort Pickens, is of prime importance. If the President, as Commander-in-Chief, will issue the order of which I inclose a draft, an important step towards the security of Fort Pickens will be taken.

Gen. Scott to Seward, April 1, 1861. MS.

But although useful to secrecy, this course was bound to produce confusion and bad discipline; and such was its immediate result. That afternoon the commandant of the Brooklyn navy yard received two telegrams, in very similar language, directing him to "fit out the *Powhatan* to go to sea at the earliest possible moment." One was signed by the Secretary of the Navy, the other by the President; the former intending the ship to go to Sumter, the latter to Pickens, and neither being aware of the other's action. Neither had reason to anticipate any such conflict of orders: the *Powhatan* was not included in Fox's original requisition, and Meigs did not even know that the Sumter expedition was being prepared.

On the same afternoon several additional orders, made out under Seward's supervision, were brought

CH. XXVI. to Lincoln. Supposing they all related to this enterprise, he signed them without reading; but it soon turned out that two of them related to a matter altogether different. These orders changed the duty of several naval officers: Captain Garrett J. Pendergrast was to be sent to Vera Cruz on account of "important complications in our foreign relations"; and Captain Silas H. Stringham was to go to Pensacola.

When these last-mentioned orders reached the hands of the Secretary of the Navy, to whom they were addressed and immediately transmitted, that official was not only greatly mystified but very seriously troubled in mind. He hastened to the President, whom he found alone in the executive office, writing. "What have I done wrong?" Lincoln inquired playfully, as he raised his head, and with his ever-accurate intuition read trouble in the countenance of his Secretary. Mr. Welles presented the anomalous papers and asked what they meant; he had heard of no "foreign complications," and he preferred Stringham in his present duty. Mr. Welles says:

> The President expressed as much surprise as I felt, that he had signed and sent me such a document. He said Mr. Seward, with two or three young men, had been there through the day on a matter which Mr. Seward had much at heart; that he had yielded to the project of Mr. Seward, but as it involved considerable detail, and he had his hands full, and more too, he had left Mr. Seward to prepare the necessary papers. These papers he had signed, some of them without reading, trusting entirely to Mr. Seward, for he could not undertake to read all papers presented to him; and if he could not trust the Secretary of State, whom could he rely upon in a public matter that concerned us all? He seemed disinclined to

disclose or dwell on the project, but assured me he never would have signed that paper had he been aware of its contents, much of which had no connection with Mr. Seward's scheme. . The President reiterated they were not his instructions, and wished me distinctly to understand they were not, though his name was appended to them — said the paper was an improper one — that he wished me to give it no more consideration than I thought proper — treat it as canceled — as if it had never been written. CH. XXVI.

Welles, in "Galaxy," Nov., 1870, pp. 624, 625.

Mr. Welles acted upon this verbal assurance, and was highly gratified that the President thus corrected what he felt to be an encroachment upon the duties and powers of the Navy Department. Nevertheless it is apparent that he had his doubts whether Lincoln had fully and unreservedly given him his confidence in this affair. In these surmises he was correct; a circumstance had occurred between the President and Seward which the former could not communicate, and so far as is known never did communicate to any person but his private secretary, and of which the President's private papers have preserved the interesting record. In order to understand it rightly, a brief glance at contemporary affairs is needful.

It will hardly be possible for the readers of history in our day to comprehend the state of public sentiment in the United States during the month of March, 1861. The desire for peace; the hope of compromise; the persistent disbelief in the extreme purposes of the South; and, strangest of all, a certain national lethargy, utterly impossible to account for — all seemed to mark a decadence in patriotic feeling. The phenomenon is attested not only in the records of many public men willing

CH. XXVI. to abandon constitutional landmarks and to sacrifice elementary rights of mankind, but also shown in the words and example of military officers in their consenting to shut their eyes to the truths and principles of their own profession — that it is the right of the Government to repel menaces as well as blows, and that building batteries is as effective and aggressive war as firing cannon-balls.

This perversion of public opinion in fact extended back to the meeting of Congress in December. Under the spell of such a political nightmare the revolution had been half accomplished. The Union flag had been fired upon, the Federal laws defied, the Secession Government organized and inaugurated. The work of the conspirators was done, but the popular movement had not yet fully ratified it. The difficult problem was presented to the Lincoln Administration, not alone whether it should endeavor to knock down the revolutionary edifice half built, but also whether such an effort might not excite the whole Southern people to rise *en masse* to complete it.

From our point of view the answer is easy; but it was not of so ready solution in March, 1861. Lincoln in his hesitation to provision Sumter at all hazards was not executing his own inclinations, but merely submitting to what for the time seemed the military and, more than all, the political necessities of the hour. The Buchanan Administration had first refused and then postponed succor to the fort. Congress had neglected to provide measures and means for coercion. The conservative sentiment of the country protested loudly against

everything but concession. His own Cabinet was divided in council. The times were "out of joint." Public opinion was awry. Treason was applauded and patriotism rebuked. Laws were held to be offenses, and officials branded as malefactors. In Lincoln's own forcible simile, sinners were "calling the righteous to repentance."

It must be remembered, too, that during the month of March, 1861, Lincoln did not know the men who composed his Cabinet. Neither, on the other hand, did they know him. He recognized them as governors, senators, and statesmen, while they yet looked upon him as a simple frontier lawyer at most, and a rival to whom chance had transferred the honor they felt to be due to themselves. The recognition and establishment of intellectual rank is difficult and slow. Perhaps the first real question of the Lincoln Cabinet was, "Who is the greatest man?" It is pretty safe to assert that no one—not even he himself—believed it was Abraham Lincoln. Bearing this in mind, we shall be better able to understand and explain acts done and acts omitted during that memorable month.

In this state of affairs the policy of the new Administration was necessarily passive, expectant, cautious, and tentative. Other causes contributed to its embarrassments. The change from a long Democratic to a Republican régime involved a sweeping change of functionaries. The impending revolution made both sides suspicious and vindictive; the new appointees could not, as in ordinary times, lean upon the experience and routine knowledge of the old. The new party was not yet homo-

CH. XXVI. geneous. A certain friction mutually irritated Republicans of Whig, of Democratic, or of Free-soil antecedents against each other. Douglas was artfully leading a Senate debate to foster and strengthen the anti-war feeling of the North. The Cabinet had not become a working unit. Each Secretary was beset by a horde of applicants, by over-officious friends, by pressing and most contradictory advice.

Seward naturally took a leading part in the new Cabinet. This was largely warranted by his prominence as a party manager; his experience in the New York governorship and in the United States Senate; the quieting and mediating attitude he had maintained during the winter; the influence he was supposed to wield over the less violent Southerners; the information he had gained from the Buchanan Cabinet; his intimacy with General Scott; his acknowledged ability and talent; his optimism, which always breathed hope and imparted confidence. During the whole of March he had been busy with various measures of administration. He had advised appointments, written diplomatic notes and circulars, carried on a running negotiation with the rebel commissioners, sought to establish relations with the Virginia Convention, sent Lander to Texas to kindle a "back fire" against secession, elaborated his policy of evacuating Sumter, proposed a change of party name and organization, and set on foot the secret expedition to Fort Pickens.

All this activity, however, did not appear to satisfy his desires and ambition. His philosophic vision took a yet wider range. He was eager to

enlarge the field of his diplomacy beyond the boundaries of the republic. Regarding mere partisanship as a secondary motive, he was ready to grapple with international politics. He would heal a provincial quarrel in the zeal and fervor of a continental crusade. He would smother a domestic insurrection in the blaze and glory of a war which must logically be a war of conquest. He would supplant the slavery question by the Monroe Doctrine. And who shall say that these imperial dreams did not contemplate the possibility of changing a threatened dismemberment of the Union into the triumphant annexation of Canada, Mexico, and the West Indies? CH. XXVI.

On this same first day of April, while Meigs and Porter were busy with plans and orders about Fort Pickens, Seward submitted to Lincoln the following extraordinary state paper, unlike anything to be found in the political history of the United States:

SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CONSIDERATION, April 1, 1861.

First. We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy, either domestic or foreign.

Second. This, however, is not culpable, and it has even been unavoidable. The presence of the Senate, with the need to meet applications for patronage, have prevented attention to other and more grave matters.

Third. But further delay to adopt and prosecute our policies for both domestic and foreign affairs would not only bring scandal on the Administration, but danger upon the country.

Fourth. To do this we must dismiss the applicants for office. But how? I suggest that we make the local

CH. XXVI. appointments forthwith, leaving foreign or general ones for ulterior and occasional action.

Fifth. The policy at home. I am aware that my views are singular, and perhaps not sufficiently explained. My system is built upon this *idea* as a ruling one, namely, that we must

CHANGE THE QUESTION BEFORE THE PUBLIC FROM ONE UPON SLAVERY, OR ABOUT SLAVERY, for a question upon UNION OR DISUNION.

In other words, from what would be regarded as a party question, to one of *Patriotism or Union.*

The occupation or evacuation of Fort Sumter, although not in fact a slavery or a party question, is so *regarded.* Witness the temper manifested by the Republicans in the free States, and even by the Union men in the South.

I would therefore terminate it as a safe means for changing the issue. I deem it fortunate that the last Administration created the necessity.

For the rest I would simultaneously defend and reënforce all the forts in the Gulf, and have the navy recalled from foreign stations to be prepared for a blockade. Put the island of Key West under martial law.

This will raise distinctly the question of *Union* or *Disunion.* I would maintain every fort and possession in the South.

FOR FOREIGN NATIONS.

I would demand explanations from Spain and France, categorically, at once.

I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia, and send agents into Canada, Mexico, and Central America, to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention.

And, if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France,

Would convene Congress and declare war against them.

But whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it.

For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly.

Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or CH. XXVI.

Devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide.

It is not in my especial province.

But I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility. MS.

It is a little difficult to imagine what must have been the feelings of a President, and particularly of a frank, loyal, and generous nature like that of Lincoln, on receiving from his principal councilor and anticipated mainstay of his Administration such a series of proposals. That he should delegate his Presidential functions and authority; that he should turn his back upon the party which elected him; that he should ignore the political battle which had been fought and the victory for moral government which had been won; that he should by an arbitrary act plunge the nation into foreign war; that he should ask his rival to rule in his stead—all this might be romantic statesmanship, but to the cool, logical mind of the President it must have brought thoughts excited by no other event of his most eventful life. What was to be said in answer? The tender of a grave issue like this presupposed grave purposes and determinations. Should he by a fitting rebuke break up his scarcely formed Cabinet and alienate the most powerful leader after himself, who might perhaps carry with him the organized support of all the Northern States which had voted for this rival at Chicago?

The President sent his reply the same day. He armed himself with his irresistible logic, his faultless tact, his limitless patience, his kindest but

CH. XXVI. most imperturbable firmness. Only the "hand of iron in the glove of velvet" could have written the following answer:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, April 1, 1861.

HON. W. H. SEWARD.

MY DEAR SIR: Since parting with you I have been considering your paper dated this day, and entitled "Some thoughts for the President's consideration." The first proposition in it is, "*First*, We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy, either domestic or foreign."

At the beginning of that month, in the inaugural, I said, "The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts." This had your distinct approval at the time; and, taken in connection with the order I immediately gave General Scott, directing him to employ every means in his power to strengthen and hold the forts, comprises the exact domestic policy you now urge, with the single exception that it does not propose to abandon Fort Sumter.

Again, I do not perceive how the reënforcement of Fort Sumter would be done on a slavery or party issue, while that of Fort Pickens would be on a more national and patriotic one.

The news received yesterday in regard to St. Domingo certainly brings a new item within the range of our foreign policy; but up to that time we have been preparing circulars and instructions to ministers and the like, all in perfect harmony, without even a suggestion that we had no foreign policy.

Upon your closing propositions, that "whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it,

"For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly,

"Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or

"Devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide," I remark that if this must be done, I must do it. When

a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress I wish, and suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all the Cabinet. CH. XXVI.

Your ob't serv't,

A. LINCOLN. MS.

In this reply not a word is omitted which was necessary, and not a hint or allusion is contained that could be dispensed with. The answer was conclusive and ended the argument. So far as is known, the affair never reached the knowledge of any other member of the Cabinet, or even the most intimate of the President's friends; nor was it probably ever again alluded to by either Lincoln or Seward. Doubtless it needed only the President's note to show the Secretary of State how serious a fault he had committed, for all his tireless industry and undivided influence continued to be given for four long years to his chief, not only without reserve, but with a sincere and devoted personal attachment. Lincoln, on his part, easily dismissed the incident from his thought with that grand and characteristic charity which sought only to cherish the virtues of men—which readily recognized the strength and acknowledged the services of his Secretary, to whom he unselfishly gave, to his own last days, his generous and unwavering trust.

END OF VOL. III.