II.

THE DIARY OF A PUBLIC MAN.

UNPUBLISHED PASSAGES OF THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

[As a contribution to what may be called the interior history of the American Civil War, the editor of the "North American Review" takes great pleasure in laying before his readers a series of extracts from the diary of a public man intimately connected with the political movement of those dark and troubled times. He is not permitted to make public the whole of this diary, and he has confined his own editorial supervision of it to formulating under proper and expressive headings the incidents and events referred to in the extracts which have been put at his service. When men still living, but not now in the arena of politics, are referred to, it has been thought best to omit their names, save in two or three cases which will explain themselves; and, in regard to all that is set down in the diary, the editor has a firm conviction that the author of it was actuated by a single desire to state things as they were, or at least as he had reason at the time to believe that they were. Those who are most familiar with the true and intimate history of the exciting times covered by this diary will be the most competent judges of the general fidelity and accuracy of this picture of them; nor can it be without profit for the young men of the present generation to be thus brought face to face, as it were, with the doubts, the fears, the hopes, the passions, and the intrigues through which the great crisis of 1861 was reached. It is always a matter of extreme delicacy to decide upon the proper moment at which private memorials of great political epochs should see the light. If there is danger by a premature publicity of wounding feelings which should be sacred, there is danger also in delaying such publications until all those who figured on the stage of political affairs have passed away, and no voice can be lifted to correct or to complete the tales told in their pages. In this instance it is hoped that both of these perils have been avoided. While many of the leading personages whose individual tendencies, ideas, or interest, gravely and decisively af-

fected the cause of American history just before and throughout the Civil War are now no more, many others survive to criticise with intelligence and to elucidate with authority the views and the judgments recorded in this diary from day to day under the stress of each day's crowding story.—EDITOR.]

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN AND SOUTH CAROLINA.

Washington, December 28, 1860.—A long conversation this evening with Mr. Orr, who called on me, which leaves me more than anxious about the situation. He assures me that he and his colleagues received the most positive assurances to-day from President Buchanan that he would receive them and confer with them, and that these assurances were given them by Mr. B——, who certainly holds the most confidential relations with the President, not only as an editor of the official paper but personally. He declared to Mr. Orr that Anderson's movement from Moultrie to Sumter was entirely without orders from Washington, and offered to bring him into communication with Mr. Floyd on that point, which offer Mr. Orr very properly declined, on the ground that he represented a "foreign state," and could not assume to get at the actions and purposes of the United States Government through any public officer in a private way, but must be first regularly recognized by the head of the United States Government. He said this so seriously that I repressed the inclination to smile which involuntarily rose in me. I have known Mr. Orr so long and like him so much that I am almost equally loath to think him capable of playing a comedy part in such a matter as this, and of really believing in the possibility of the wild scheme upon which the secession of South Carolina seems to have been projected and carried out. He absolutely insists that he sees no constitutional reason why the Federal Government should refuse to recognize the withdrawal of South Carolina from the Union, since the recognition of the Federal Government by South Carolina is conceded to have been essential to the establishment of that Government. He brought up the old cases of North Carolina and Rhode Island, and put at me, with an air of expected triumph, the question, "If Massachusetts had acted on the express language of Josiah Quincy at the time of the acquisition of Louisiana, declaring the Constitution abolished by that acquisition, what legal authority would there have been in the Executive of the United States to declare Massachusetts in rebellion and march troops to re-

duce her?" I tried to make him see that the cases were not analogous, but without effect, nor could I bring him to admit my point that the provision made in the Constitution for the regulation of Congressional elections in the several States by Congress itself, in case any State should refuse or neglect to ordain regulations for such elections, carried with it the concession to the Federal Government of an implied power to prevent any particular State from invalidating the general compact by a failure to fulfill its particular obligations. He intimated to me that for his own part he would be perfectly willing to let the claim of the United States over the Federal property in South Carolina be adjudicated by the Supreme Court, under a special convention to that effect between South Carolina and the United States, after the President had recognized the action by which South Carolina withdrew her "delegations of sovereignty" to the Federal Government. He was careful to impress on me, however, that this was simply his own personal disposition, and not his disposition as a Commissioner.

All this was but incidental to his main object in calling on me, which was to urge my coöperation with Mr. Seward to strengthen the hands of the President in ordering Major Anderson back at once to Fort Moultrie. He explained to me that, by this unauthorized transfer of his small force to Fort Sumter, Anderson had immensely strengthened the war secessionists, not only in South Carolina but in other States, who were loudly proclaiming it as unanswerable evidence of an intention on the part of the United States to coerce South Carolina, and to take the initiative in plunging the country into a horrible civil strife, which would be sure to divide the North, and in which the West would eventually find itself on the side of the South. He had seen Mr. Seward during the day, who had fully agreed with him that Anderson's movement was a most unfortunate one, and had suggested that the matter might be arranged if South Carolina would evacuate Fort Moultrie and allow Anderson to reoccupy that post, both parties agreeing that Fort Sumter should not be occupied at all by either. This would, in fact, Mr. Orr said, be conceding almost everything to the United States, as Sumter could not be held against a sea force, and Moultrie commands the town. His explanation of Anderson's movement is that he lost his head over the excitement of two or three of his younger officers, who were not very sensible, and who had got themselves into hot water on shore with some of the brawling and silly young Sea Island bloods of Charleston. As to the

willingness of South Carolina to come into such an arrangement of course he could not speak, though he did not believe that Moultrie would have been occupied to-day excepting to afford a basis for it. I agreed with him that anything which could properly be done to avert an armed collision between the forces of the United States and those of any State, in the present troubled and alarmed condition of the public mind, ought to be done; but I frankly told him I did not believe Mr. Buchanan would take the responsibility of ordering Anderson to evacuate Fort Sumter and return to Fort Moultrie, and asked him what reason, if any, he had to think otherwise. He hesitated a little, and finally told me that Mr. Seward had given him reason to think the decision could be brought about through the influence of Senator ——, whose term expires in March, but who has great personal weight with the President, and, as a Southern man by birth and a pronounced Breckenridge Democrat, no inconsiderable hold upon the more extreme Southern men, particularly of the Gulf States. Mr. Seward, in fact, told him that the subject had been discussed by him with this gentleman last night pretty fully, and that he thought Mr. Buchanan could be led to see that the crisis was an imminent one, and must be dealt with decisively at once.

SOUTH CAROLINA NOT IN FAVOR OF A CONFEDERACY.

For his own part, Mr. Orr admitted that he deprecated above all things any course of action which would strengthen the Confederate party in South Carolina. He did not wish to see a Confederate States government formed, because he regarded it—and there I agreed with him—as sure to put new obstacles in the way of the final adjustment so imperatively necessary to the well-being of all sections of the country. He thought that if the United States Government would at once adjust the Fort Sumter difficulty, and recognize the secession of South Carolina as an accomplished fact within the purview of the Constitution, the Independent party, as he called it, in South Carolina would at once come forward and check the now growing drift toward a new Confederacy. The most earnest and best heads in South Carolina, he said, had no wish to see the State linked too closely with the great cotton-growing Gulf States, which had already "sucked so much of her blood." They looked to the central West and the upper Mississippi and Ohio region as the railway history of the State indicated, and would

not be displeased if the State could be let entirely alone, as Rhode Island tried to be at the time when the Constitution was formed. In short, he pretty plainly admitted that South Carolina was more annoyed than gratified by the eagerness of Georgia and the Gulf States to follow her lead, and that nothing but the threatening attitude given to the United States by such acts as the occupation of Fort Sumter could determine the victory in that State of the Confederate over the Independent movement.

I could not listen to Mr. Orr without a feeling of sympathy, for it was plain to me that he was honestly trying to make the best of what he felt to be a wretched business, and that at heart he was as good a Union man as anybody in Connecticut or New York. But when I asked him whether South Carolina, in case her absolute independence could be established, would not at once proceed to make herself a free State, and whether, wedged into the Gulf and the middle West as she is, she would not make any protective system adopted by the rest of the country a failure, he could not answer in the negative. He got away from the point pretty smartly though, by asking me whether a free-trade policy adopted from South Carolina to the Mexican border would not be a harder blow at our Whig system than a free-trade policy confined to South Carolina. I asked him whether Governor Pickens, who seems, from what Mr. Orr told me—there is absolutely nothing trustworthy in the papers about it—to have ordered the occupation of Moultrie and Fort Pinckney, is really in sympathy with the secession movement. He smiled, and asked me if I knew Mrs. Pickens. "Mrs. Pickens, you may be sure," he said, "would not be well pleased to represent a petty republic abroad. But I suppose you know," he went on, "that Pickens is the man who was born insensible to fear. I don't think he is likely to oppose any reasonable settlement, but he will never originate one." One of Mr. Orr's colleagues, whom I did not think it necessary or desirable to see, came for him and took him away in a carriage. Almost his last words were, "You may be perfectly sure that we shall be received and treated with."

SENATOR DOUGLAS ON BUCHANAN AND LINCOLN.

He had hardly gone before Mr. Douglas called, in a state of some excitement. He had a story, the origin of which he would not give me, but which, he said, he believed: that Anderson's

movement was preconcerted through one Doubleday, an officer, as I understood him, of the garrison, with "Ben Wade," and was intended to make a pacific settlement of the questions at issue impossible. I tried to reason him out of this idea, but he clung to and dwelt on it till he suddenly and unconsciously gave me the cue to his object in bringing it to me by saying: "Mind, I don't for a moment suspect Lincoln of any part in this. Nobody knows Abe Lincoln better than I do, and he is not capable of such an act. Besides, it is quite incompatible with what I have heard from him" —he had said, when he checked himself with a little embarrassment, I thought, and went on—"what I have heard of his programme. A collision and civil war will be fatal to his Administration and to him, and he knows it—he knows it," Mr. Douglas repeated with much emphasis. "But Wade and that gang are infuriated at Seward's coming into the Cabinet, and their object is to make it impossible for Lincoln to bring him into it. I think, as a friend of Seward's, you ought to understand this."

I thanked him, but put the matter off with some slight remark, and, without giving him my authority, asked him if he thought it likely Mr. Buchanan would receive the South Carolina Commissioners. "Never, sir! never," he exclaimed, his eyes flashing as he spoke. "He will never dare to do that, sir!" "What, not if he has given them to understand that he will?" I replied. "Most certainly not, if he has given them to understand that he will. That would make it perfectly certain, sir, perfectly certain!" He then launched out into a kind of tirade on Mr. Buchanan's duplicity and cowardice. I tried to check the torrent by dropping a remark that I had merely heard a rumor of the President's intentions, but that was only pouring oil on the flames. "If there is such a rumor afoot," he said, "it was put afoot by him, sir; by his own express proceeding, you may be sure. He likes to have people deceived in him—he enjoys treachery, sir, enjoys it as other men do a good cigar—he likes to sniff it up, sir, to relish it!" He finally cooled off with a story of his having got a political secret out about the Kansas-Nebraska business, which he wished propagated without caring to propagate it himself, or have his friends do so, by the simple expedient of sending a person to tell it to the President, after first getting his word on no account to mention it to any one. "Within six hours, sir, within six hours," he exclaimed, "it was all over Washington, as I knew it would be!"

SECRETARY FLOYD AND THE PLOT TO ABDUCT BUCHANAN.

Washington, December 29th.—This resignation of Floyd is of ill-omen for the speedy pacification of matters, as he would hardly have deprived Virginia of a seat in the Cabinet at this moment if he thought the corner could be turned. He is not a man of much account personally, and is, I believe, of desperate fortunes, at least such is the current rumor here; but it was of considerable importance that the post he held should be held by a Southern man at this juncture, if only to satisfy the country that South Carolina does not at all represent the South as a body in her movement, and his withdrawal at this moment, taken in conjunction with the lawless proceedings at Pittsburg the other day, will be sure to be interpreted by the mischief-makers as signifying exactly the contrary. The effects of all this upon our trade at this season of the year are already more disastrous than I can bear to think of. My letters from home grow worse and worse every week. No sort of progress is making in Congress meanwhile. B—— has just left me after half an hour of interesting talk. He shares my views as to the effect of Floyd's withdrawal; but a little to my surprise, I own, has no doubt that Floyd is a strong secessionist, though not of the wilder sort, and founds this opinion of him on a most extraordinary story, for the truth of which he vouches. Certainly Wigfall has the eye of a man capable of anything—"The eye of an old sea-rover," as Mary G—— describes it, but it staggers me to think of his contriving such a scheme as B—— sets forth to me. On Mr. Cushing's return from Columbia the other day, *re infecta*, Wigfall (who, by the way, as I had forgotten till B—— reminded me of it, is a South Carolinian by birth) called together a few "choice spirits," and proposed that President Buchanan should be kidnapped at once, and carried off to a secure place, which had been indicated to him by some persons in his confidence. This would call Mr. Breckenridge at once into the Executive chair, and, under the acting-Presidency of Mr. Breckenridge, Wigfall's theory was, the whole South would feel secure against being "trapped into a war." He was entirely in earnest, according to B——'s informant—whose name B—— did not give me, though he did tell me that he could not have put more faith in the story had it come to him from Wigfall himself—and had fully prepared his plans. All that he needed was to be sure of certain details as to the opportunity of getting

safely out of Washington with his prisoner, and so on, and for these he needed the coöperation of Floyd.

He went to Floyd's house—on Christmas night, I think B—— said—with one companion to make this strange proposal, which takes one back to the "good old days" of the Scottish Stuarts, and there, in the basement room, Floyd's usual cozy corner, set it forth and contended for it earnestly, quite losing his temper at last when Floyd positively refused to connive in any way at the performance. "Upon my word," said B——, when he had got through with his strange story, "I am not sure, do you know, that Wigfall's solution wouldn't have been a good one, for then we should have known where we are; and now where are we?" He agrees with Mr. Douglas in thinking that President Buchanan probably has given the South Carolina Commissioners to understand that he will receive them, and also that he as certainly will not receive them. That mission of Cushing's was a most mischievously foolish performance, and he was the last man in the whole world to whom such a piece of work ought to have been confided, if it was to have been undertaken at all. After sending Cushing to her Convention to treat and make terms, it will be difficult for the President to make South Carolina or anybody else understand why he should not at least receive her Commissioners. It is this perpetual putting of each side in a false light toward the other which has brought us where we are, and, I much fear, may carry us on to worse things. B—— has seen Cushing since he got back, and tells me he never saw a man who showed clearer traces of having been broken down by sheer fright. "He is the boldest man within four walls, and the greatest coward out of doors," said B——, "that I ever knew in my life!" His description, from Cushing's account, of the people of Charleston, and the state of mind they are in, was at once comical and alarming in the highest degree. Certainly, nothing approaching to it can exist anywhere else in the country, or, I suspect, out of pandemonium.

WERE THE CAROLINIANS CHEATED?

January 1st.—I took the liberty of sending to-day to Mr. Orr, who brought me the story about President Buchanan's intentions toward the South Carolina Commissioners, to ask him what he thought now of his informant. To my surprise, he tells me that Mr. B——, whom I had supposed to be entirely devoted to the personal interests of the President, persists in his original story,

and either is or affects to be excessively irritated at the position in which he has now been placed. Mr. Orr wishes the Commissioners to go home and make their report, but his colleagues insist upon sending in a letter to the President, which I fear will not mend matters at all; and which certainly must add to the difficulty about that wretched Fort Sumter, notwithstanding the singular confidence which Mr. Seward seems to feel in his own ability ultimately to secure a satisfactory arrangement of that affair by means quite outside of the operations of the present Government, whatever those means may be. The South Carolina Commissioners profess to have positive information from New York that the President has ordered reënforcements to be sent to Sumter, and they are convinced, accordingly, that he has been trifling with them simply to gain time for perfecting what they describe as a policy of aggression.

WAS THE CONFEDERACY MEANT TO BE PERMANENT?

January 13th.—A very long and interesting conversation with Senator Benjamin on the right of Louisiana to seize Federal posts within her territory without even going through the formality of a secession. He is too able and clear-headed a man not to feel how monstrous and indefensible such action is, but he evidently feels the ground giving way under him, and is but a child in the grasp of his colleague, who, though not to be compared with him intellectually, has all that he lacks in the way of consistency of purpose and strength of will. Virginia, he is convinced, will not join the secession movement on any terms, but will play the chief part in bringing about the final readjustment.

My own letters from Richmond are to the same tenor. After a while I told him what I had heard yesterday from Mr. Aspinwall, whom it seems he knows very well, and offered to read him the remarkable letter from Mr. Aspinwall's lawyer, a copy of which Mr. Aspinwall, at my request, was so good as to leave with me. It illustrates Benjamin's alertness and accuracy of mind that before he had heard six sentences of the letter read he interrupted me with a smile, saying: "You need not tell me who wrote that letter, Mr. ——. I recognize the style of my excellent friend Mr. B——, of New York, and I can tell you what he goes on to say." Which he accordingly proceeded to do, to my great surprise, with most extraordinary correctness and precision. In fact, I inferred necessarily that the views expressed by Mr. Aspinwall's counsel must have been largely drawn from Mr. Benjamin himself, so completely do

they tally with his own diagnosis of the position, which is, curiously enough, that the leaders of the inchoate Confederacy are no more at one in their ultimate plans and purposes than, according to my best information, are the leaders in South Carolina. Mr. Benjamin thinks that the ablest of them really regard the experiment of a new Confederation as an effectual means of bringing the conservative masses of the Northern people to realize the necessity of revising radically the instrument of union. In his judgment, the Constitution of 1789 has outlived its usefulness. Not only must new and definite barriers be erected to check the play of the passions and opinions of one great section upon the interests and the rights of another great section, but the conditions under which the Presidency is created and held must be changed. The Presidential term must be longer, the President must cease to be reëligible, and a class of Government functionaries, to hold their places during good behavior, must be called into being. I could detect, I thought, in his views on these points, a distinctly French turn of thought, but much that he said struck me as eminently sound and sagacious. He thinks not otherwise nor any better of President Buchanan than Mr. Douglas, though his opinion of Mr. Douglas is anything but flattering.

He agrees with me that, by permitting the South Carolina forces to drive off by force the Star of the West, the Government have practically conceded to South Carolina all that she claims in the way of sovereignty, though he is not surprised, as I own I am, at the indifference, not to say apathy, with which this overt defiance to the Federal authority and this positive insult to the Federal flag have been received by the people of the North and West. Certainly, since we are not at this moment in the blaze of civil war, there would seem to be little reason to fear that we shall be overtaken by it at all. The chief peril seems to me now to lie in the long period of business prostration with which we are threatened, especially if Mr. Benjamin's views are correct. I do not believe that his Confederate Government will lose the opportunity of establishing its free-trade system wherever its authority can extend while conducting negotiations for a new organization of the Union, and irreparable damage may in this way be done our great manufacturing interests before any adjustment can be reached.

SEWARD AND VIRGINIA.

February 8, 1861.—I can anticipate nothing from the Peace Convention. The Virginians are driving things, as I told Mr. Seddon

to-day, much too vehemently; and the whole affair already assumes the aspect rather of an attempt to keep Virginia from seceding than of a settled effort to form a bridge for the return of the already seceded States. Nor am I at all reassured by his singular confidence in Mr. Seward, and his mysterious allusions to the skillful plans which Mr. Seward is maturing for an adjustment of our difficulties. He obviously has no respect for Mr. Seward's character, and in fact admitted to me to-day as much, telling me a story of Mr. Seward's visit to Richmond, and of a dinner there given him by a gentleman of distinction whose name he mentioned, but it has escaped me. At this dinner, according to Mr. Seddon, a number of gentlemen were invited to meet Governor Seward expressly because of their greater or less known sympathy with what were regarded as his strong views on the subject of slavery. Among these was Mr. Benjamin Watkins Leigh, a man conspicuous for the courageous way in which he maintained the ground that gradual emancipation was the policy which Virginia ought to adopt. I noted this name particularly, because, in mentioning it, Mr. Seddon said: "Leigh couldn't come, and it was well he couldn't, for he was such an old Trojan that, if Governor Seward had made the avowal before him which he made before the rest of the company, I believe Leigh would have been hardly restrained from insulting him on the spot."

This avowal was in effect as follows: After dinner, in the general conversation, some one venturing to ask Governor Seward how he could utter officially what the Virginians regarded as such truculent language in regard to the way in which New York should treat Southern reclamations for runaway slaves, Governor Seward threw himself back in his chair, burst out laughing violently, and said: "Is it possible you gentlemen suppose I believe any such —— nonsense as that? It's all very well, and in fact it's necessary, to be said officially up there in New York for the benefit of the voters, but surely we ought to be able to understand each other better over a dinner-table!" Now, it doesn't matter in the least whether Mr. Seward did or did not say just this in Richmond. Something he must have said which makes it possible for such a story to be told and believed of him by men like Mr. Seddon; and it is a serious public misfortune at such a time as this that such stories are told and believed by such men of the man who apparently is to control the first Republican Administration in the face of the greatest difficulties any American Administration has ever been called upon to encounter. From what Mr. Seward tells me, it is plain that he has more weight

with Mr. Lincoln than any other public man, or than all other public men put together; and I confess I grow hourly more anxious as to the use that will be made of it.

THE NEW YORK SENATORIAL CONTEST BETWEEN GREELEY AND EVARTS.

I had a long conversation this evening with ——, of New York, on the issue of this senatorial election at Albany, which also puzzles me considerably, and is far from throwing any cheerful light on the outlook. He could tell me nothing of Judge Harris, the newly elected Senator, excepting that there is apparently nothing to tell of him beyond a good story of Mr. Thurlow Weed, who, being asked by some member of the Legislature, when Harris began to run up in the balloting, whether he knew Harris personally and thought him safe, replied: "Do I know him personally? I should rather think I do. I invented him!" Mr. —— says there is more truth than poetry in this. He is a warm personal friend of Mr. Evarts, who was generally designated as the successor of Mr. Seward, and he does not hesitate to say that he believes Mr. Evarts was deliberately slaughtered by Mr. Weed at the instigation of Mr. Seward. They are the most incomprehensible people, these New York politicians; one seems never to get at the true inside of the really driving-wheel. In his indignation against Mr. Weed my friend —— was almost fair to Mr. Greeley. He says that Mr. Weed did not hesitate to say in all companies during the contest at Albany that he believed Mr. Greeley wishes to see secession admitted as of the essence of the Constitution, not only because he sympathizes with the Massachusetts abolitionists who proclaim the Union to be a covenant with hell, but because he thinks he might himself be elected President of a strictly Northern Confederacy. In respect to Mr. Evarts he tells me that he has reason to believe Mr. Seward does not wish to be succeeded in the Senate by a man of such signal ability as a debater, who is at the same time so strong with the conservative classes. As the chief of Mr. Lincoln's Administration, Mr. Seward will have to deal with the reëstablishment of the Union by diplomatic concessions and compromises; and, while much of his work must necessarily be done in the dark and through agencies not appreciable by the public at all, he fears lest the whole credit of it should be monopolized with the public by such a skillful and eloquent champion as Mr. Evarts in the

Senate. "In other words," said Mr. ——, "he would much prefer a voting Senator from New York to a talking Senator from New York while he is in the Cabinet." On this theory it is, my friend most positively asserts, that Mr. Evarts was "led to the slaughter." Unquestionably, as the ballots show, the Harris movement must have been preconcerted, and, if Harris is the kind of man my friend Mr. —— makes him out to be, Mr. Seward will have nobody to interfere between him and the public recognition of whatever he may have it in his mind to do or to attempt. Whether a strong man in the Senate would not have been of more use to the country than a "voting Senator" under the present and prospective circumstances of the case, it is of little consequence now to inquire.

Hayne I am told is going home to-morrow, and this Sumter business gets no better. It is beginning to be clear to me that the President means to leave it, if he can, as a stumbling-block at the threshold of the new Administration. And, in the atmosphere of duplicity and self-seeking which seems to be closing in upon us from every side, I do not feel at all sure that these South Carolinians are not playing into his hands. If they could drive away the Star of the West, there is nothing to prevent their driving out Major Anderson, I should suppose.

MR. LINCOLN'S RELATIONS TO MR. SEWARD.

New York, February 20th.—A most depressing day. Mr. Barney came to see me this morning at the hotel, from breakfasting with Mr. Lincoln at Mr. Grinnell's, to see if I could fix a time for meeting Mr. Lincoln during the day or evening. I explained to him why I had come to New York, and showed him what I thought best of Mr. Rives's letter from Washington of last Sunday. He was a little startled, but insisted that he had very different information which he relied upon, and, finding I could not be sure of any particular hour before dinner, he went pretty fully with me into the question about Mr. Welles, and gave me what struck me as his over-discouraging ideas about Mr. Seward. He assured me in the most positive terms that Mr. Lincoln has never written one line to Mr. Seward since his first letter from Springfield inviting Seward to take the Department of State. This is certainly quite inconsistent with what I have understood from Mr. Draper, and still more with the very explicit declarations made to me by Reverdy Johnson; nor can I at all comprehend Mr. Johnson's views in regard to the im-

portance of Judge Robertson's mission to the South, if Mr. Barney's statement is correct. Of course, I did not intimate to him that I had any doubts on that head, still less my reasons and grounds for entertaining such doubts; but, after making due allowance for his intense personal dislike and distrust of Mr. Seward, about which I thought he was more than sufficiently explicit in his conversation with me, I can not feel satisfied that he is incorrect. If he is correct, matters are in no comfortable shape. He admitted, though I did not mention to him that I knew anything on that point, that Seward has written repeatedly and very fully to Mr. Lincoln since the election, but he is absolutely positive that Mr. Lincoln has not in any way replied to or even acknowledged these communications. I really do not see how he can possibly be mistaken about this, and, if he is not, I am not only at a loss to reconcile Mr. Seward's statements with what I should wish to think of him, but much more concerned as to the consequences of all this. . . .

Mr. Barney said that Mr. Lincoln asked after me particularly this morning, and was good enough to say that he recollected meeting me in 1848, which may have been the case; but I certainly recall none of the circumstances, and can not place him, even with the help of all the pictures I have seen of such an extraordinary-looking mortal, as I confess I ought to be ashamed of myself once to have seen face to face, and to have then forgotten. Mr. Barney says the breakfast was a failure, nobody at his ease, and Mr. Lincoln least of all, and Mr. Weed, in particular, very vexatious. Mr. Aspinwall, who came in just as Mr. Barney went out, confirms this. He says that Mr. Lincoln made a bad impression, and he seemed more provoked than I thought necessary or reasonable at a remark which Mr. Lincoln made to him on somebody's saying, not in very good taste, to Mr. Lincoln, that he would not meet so many millionaires together at any other table in New York. "Oh, indeed, is that so? Well, that's quite right. I'm a millionaire myself. I got a minority of a million in the votes last November." Perhaps this was rather a light and frivolous thing for the President-elect to say in such a company, or even to one of the number; but, after all, it shows that he appreciates the real difficulties of the position, and is thinking of the people more than of the "millionaires," and I hope more than of the politicians. I tried to make Mr. Aspinwall see this as I did, but he is too much depressed by the mercantile situation, and was too much annoyed by Mr. Lincoln's evident failure to show any adequate sense of the gravity of the position.

THE BUSINESS ASPECT OF SECESSION.

He had hardly gone, when in came S——, with a face as long as his legs, to show me a note from Senator Benjamin, to whom he had written inquiring as to the effect, if any, which the farce at Montgomery would be likely to have upon patent rights. Benjamin writes that of course he can only speak by inference, and under reserve, but that, in his present judgment, every patent right granted by the United States will need to be validated by the Government of the Confederate States before it can be held to be of binding force within the territory of the new republic. No wonder S—— is disquieted! If the thing only lasts six months or a year, as it easily may unless great and I must say at present not-to-be-looked-for political judgment is shown in dealing with it, what confusion and distress will thus be created throughout our manufacturing regions! I have no doubt myself, though I could not get Mr. Draper to see it as I do to-day, that these Confederate contrivers will at once set negotiations afoot in England and in France for free-trade agreements in some such form as will inevitably hamper us badly in readjusting matters for the national tariff, even after we effect a basis of political accommodation with them. . . .

MR. LINCOLN ON NEW YORK, MAYOR WOOD, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT.

My conversation with Mr. Lincoln was brief and hurried, but not entirely unsatisfactory—indeed, on the main point quite the reverse. He is entirely clear and sensible on the vital importance of holding the Democrats close to the Administration on the naked Union issue. "They are," he said to me, "just where we Whigs were in '48 about the Mexican war. We had to take the Locofoco preamble when Taylor wanted help, or else vote against helping Taylor; and the Democrats must vote to hold the Union now, without bothering whether we or the Southern men got things where they are, and we must make it easy for them to do this, because we can't live through the case without them," which is certainly the simple truth. He reminded me of our meeting at Washington, but I really couldn't recall the circumstances with any degree of clearness. He is not a great man certainly, and, but for something almost woman-like in the look of his eyes, I should say the most ill-favored son of Adam I ever saw; but he is crafty and sensible, and owned to me

that he was more troubled by the outlook than he thought it discreet to show. He asked me a number of questions about New York, from which I gathered for myself that he is not so much in the hands of Mr. Seward as I had been led to think, and I incline to believe that Mr. Barney is nearer the truth than I liked this morning to think. He was amusing about Mayor Wood and his speech, and seems to have a singularly correct notion of that worthy. He asked me what I had heard of the project said to be brewing here for detaching New York City not only from the Union but from the State of New York as well, and making it a kind of free city like Hamburg. I told him I had only heard of such visionary plans, and that the only importance I attributed to them was, that they illustrated the necessity of getting our commercial affairs back into a healthy condition as early as possible. "That is true," he replied; "and nobody feels it more than I do. And as to the free city business—well, I reckon it will be some time before the front door sets up housekeeping on its own account," which struck me as a quaint and rather forcible way of putting the case.

I made an appointment for Washington, where he will be at Willard's within a few days, and agreed to write to ——. My cousin V—— came to me with a most amusing account of the President-elect at the opera in Mr. C——'s box, wearing a pair of huge *black* kid gloves, which attracted the attention of the whole house, hanging as they did over the red velvet box-front. V—— was in the box opposite, where some one, pointing out the strange, dark-looking giant opposite as the new President, a lady first told a story of Major Magruder of the army, a Southern man, who took off his hat when a procession of Wide-awakes passed his Broadway hotel last year and said, "I salute the pall-bearers of the Constitution"; and then rather cleverly added, "I think we ought to send some flowers over the way to the undertaker of the Union."

During one of the *entr'actes*, V—— went down into what they call the "directors' room" of the Academy, where shortly after appeared Mr. C—— with Mr. Lincoln, and a troop of gentlemen all eager to be presented to the new President. V—— said Mr. Lincoln looked terribly bored, and sat on the sofa at the end of the room with his hat pushed back on his head, the most deplorable figure that can be imagined, putting his hand out to be shaken in a queer, mechanical way. I am afraid V—— has a streak of his sarcastic grandmamma's temper in him.