

Century June 1889

CAN THE EMPEROR FORGET?

RUMBLE of drums in the flashing and crashing of battle;
Rushing of horses, with foam upon nostrils and flanks;
Clashing of bayonets, striking of swords, and the rattle
Of wrath in the standing, of death in the fast-falling ranks.

Trample the blood in the turf till the earth is afire,
Burning in gore: be it English or French, it is blood.
Profligate waste of it, spendthrift contempt of it! Dire
The flow of it, thus making crimson the Waterloo mud!

“Death to the enemy!” Children may suffer and languish;
Wives may speak softly of one who is baring his heart.
“Death to the enemy! Forward!” No thought of the anguish
Of wounds, with the cannon-wheels pressing their red sides apart.

What of the Emperor? Austerlitz, Jena, Marengo?
Can he foresee that the conquering eagle must fall,
Beating his wings on the traitor wind? Forward the men go—
“Viva Napoleon! Death to the enemy, all!”

Falling like rain come the bullets, and falling like flowers
Drop the French musketry, rising no more from the plain.
See the firm brow of Napoleon: massive it lowers.
Shout for his victory! Never, ah, never again!

Back from the mud that is crimson, and back from the corpses
That lie by the cannon with eyes that can stare at the sun
Without shrinking. “Awake! They are leaving you, dumb-gazing forces!”
Aye, shout in their ears, but they move not. Their battle is done.

Done. And the Emperor? Exiled. Napoleon defeated?
He who has conquered the world? Say that rather the sun
Fell from his course and was chained by the earth. Fate has meted
His portion. March back what is left of you, soldiers! 'T is done.

Far in that isle he is ceaselessly walking his prison,
As a lion his cage, who is thinking of night-dews that wet
His mane, and the servient sun that to dry it had risen.
Monarch then, prisoner now. Can the lion forget?

Hark to the guns, that are greeting with long detonation
Him who is back from the stranger; is home again—home!
“Vive l'Empereur!” Hush! What mean you, fool? This coronation
Is dust crowned with dust, and the sky is the Invalides' dome.

“Vive l'Empereur!” Will they cease in their idiot babble?
Never more “Vive l'Empereur!” Men, he lies on his shield,
Broad-browed and yellow. Those hands are so white; did they dabble
In men's blood? And hold,—did those thin lips cry “Fire!” on the field?

Hark to the resonant guns! Remember, my brothers,
Thundering Waterloo's cannon and bright bayonets!
Oh, how they rattled! To him they were once as a mother's
Lullaby. “Vive l'Empereur!” Silence. Ah, he forgets!

Louise Morgan Smith.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A HISTORY.¹

THE POMEROY CIRCULAR — THE CLEVELAND CONVENTION — THE RESIGNATION OF CHASE.

BY JOHN G. NICOLAY AND JOHN HAY, PRIVATE SECRETARIES TO THE PRESIDENT.

THE POMEROY CIRCULAR.



BEFORE the close of the year 1863 the public mind became greatly preoccupied with the subject of the next presidential election. Though the general drift of opinion was altogether in favor of intrusting to Mr. Lincoln the continuation of the work which he had thus far so well conducted, this feeling was by no means unanimous. It will seem strange to future students of the events of this time that the opposition in the Republican party to Mr. Lincoln, whose name will stand in history as the liberator of the slaves, came almost entirely from the radical antislavery element. The origins of this opposition have been so fully stated in other portions of this work, that it is not worth while to set them forth at any length in this place. They were principally the action of the President in regard to the administration of affairs in Missouri; the conflict between General Frémont and the Missouri conservatives, and between General Schofield and the Missouri radicals; the retention in command of various generals, who, from the radical point of view, had "no heart in the cause"; the deliberation with which the great antislavery acts of the President were performed; and, in general, the dissatisfaction with the slow progress of the war, of eager and ardent spirits imperfectly informed as to the processes of the Government and the facts of the situation. At the end of the year 1863 and the beginning of the following year all these elements of discord were seeking a rallying-point. This it was not easy to find. Every one sufficiently acquainted with practical politics to note the drift of public opinion saw the hopelessness of contending against the popularity of the President. There was not a Republican general in the field, of sufficient prominence to be thought of, who would give the least encouragement for the use of his name against Mr. Lincoln. In neither House of Congress was there a statesman who for a moment would enter into such a contest; and in the higher circles of the Administration there was only one man so short-sighted as not to perceive the expediency of the President's

renomination and the impossibility of preventing it. Mr. Chase alone had the indiscretion to encourage the overtures of the malcontents, and the folly to imagine that he could lead them to success. Pure and disinterested as he was, and devoted with all his energies and powers to the cause of the country, he was always singularly ignorant of the current of public thought and absolutely incapable of judging men in their true relations. He was surrounded by sycophants who constantly assured him of his own strength with the people, and who convinced him at last that all manifestations to the contrary were the result of mystifications set on foot by his enemies. He regarded himself as the friend of Mr. Lincoln; to him and to others he made strong protestations of friendly feeling, which he undoubtedly thought were sincere; but he held so poor an opinion of the President's intellect and character in comparison with his own, that he could not believe the people so blind as deliberately to prefer the President to himself. In November, 1863, he wrote to his son-in-law, Governor Sprague: "If I were controlled by merely personal sentiments, I should prefer the reelection of Mr. Lincoln to that of any other man; but I doubt the expediency of reelecting anybody, and I think a man of different qualities from those the President has will be needed for the next four years." Of course, he adds, "I am not anxious to be regarded as that man; and I am quite willing to leave that question to the decision of those who agree in thinking that some such man should be chosen." To another he wrote early in December: "I have not the slightest wish to press any claims upon the consideration of friends or the public. There is certainly a purpose, however, to use my name, and I do not feel bound to object to it."² He never admitted to himself that he had any personal desire for the place, and in this letter he continued: "Were the post in which these friends desire to place me as low as it is high, I should feel bound to render in it all the service possible to our common country." Yet he always felt that he could render better service in the higher places than in the lower, and when it was once in contemplation

² Chase to Spencer, Dec. 4, 1863.

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to offer him a seat on the Supreme Bench he distinctly intimated he would accept no place there but that of Chief-Justice. There never was a man who found it so easy to delude himself. He believed that he was indifferent to advancement and anxious only for the public good; yet in the midst of his enormous labors he found time to write interminable letters to every part of the country, all protesting his indifference to the Presidency but indicating his willingness to accept it, and painting pictures so dark of the chaotic state of affairs among his colleagues that the irresistible inference was that only he could save the country. For instance, he wrote to the editor of a religious newspaper, saying :

Had there been here an Administration in the true sense of the word — a President conferring with his Cabinet and taking their united judgments, and with their aid enforcing activity, economy, and energy in all departments of public service — we could have spoken boldly and defied the world. But our condition here has always been very different. I preside over the funnel; everybody else, and especially the Secretaries of War and the Navy, over the spigots — and keep them well open, too. Mr. Seward conducts the foreign relations with very little let or help from anybody. There is no unity and no system, except so far as it is departmental. There is progress, but it is slow and involuntary; just what is coerced by the irresistible pressure of the vast force of the people. How, under such circumstances, can anybody announce a policy which can only be made respectable by union, wisdom, and courage?¹

A few days later he wrote to another:

The Administration cannot be continued as it is. There is, in fact, no Administration, properly speaking. There are departments and there is a President. The latter leaves administration substantially to the heads of the former, deciding himself comparatively few questions. These heads act with almost absolute independence of each other.²

He could not bring himself to feel that the universal demonstrations in favor of the reëlection of Mr. Lincoln were genuine. He regarded himself all the while as the serious candidate, and the opposition to him as knavish and insincere. To one of his adherents he wrote:

It is impossible to reform and investigate without stirring up slanderers and revilers, both among those whose wrong-doings are exposed and unrighteous profits taken away, and among those, too, who think they see a good chance to take advantage of clamor to the injury of a public man, who, they fear, stands too well with the people.³

To another adherent in Ohio he wrote :

I cannot help being gratified by the preference expressed for me in some quarters, for those who express it are generally men of great weight, and high character, and independent judgment. . . . They think there will be a change in the current, which, so far as it is not spontaneous, is chiefly managed by the Blairs.⁴

He said that he should be glad to have Ohio decidedly on his side, and that if Ohio should express a preference for any other person he would not allow his name to be used. This was quite an unnecessary engagement, as no candidate could possibly be nominated without the support of his own State.

Indifferent as he claimed to be in regard to his personal prospects, he yet wrote on the 6th of February⁵ promising to try to find a place for a man recommended by the editor of the "Evening Post," and complaining with some bitterness that that paper had not uttered a kind word in reference to him for some months past. There was, in fact, no limit to these overtures of the Secretary in every direction which he thought might be serviceable to him. A few days after the death of Archbishop Hughes, we find him writing to Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati, reporting the efforts which he is making in every quarter to have the Western prelate appointed the successor of the dead archbishop.⁶ On the 18th of January he wrote to a friend of his in Toledo, Ohio, Mr. James C. Hall, formally announcing his candidacy for the Presidency. He told him that a committee of prominent senators, representatives, and citizens had been organized to promote his election; that a sub-committee had conferred with him, and he had consented to their wishes. He then went on to say :

If I know my own heart, I desire nothing so much as the suppression of this rebellion and the establishment of union, order, and prosperity on sure and safe foundations; and I should despise myself if I felt capable of allowing any personal objects to influence me to any action which would affect, by one jot or tittle, injuriously, the accomplishment of those objects. And it is a source of real gratification to believe that those who desire my nomination desire it on public grounds alone, and will not hesitate in any matter which may concern me to act upon such grounds and on such grounds only.

He added that he desired the support of Ohio, and that if he did not receive it he would cheerfully acquiesce.

All through the winter this quasi-candidacy continued. It seemed of the utmost importance to the Secretary and his few adherents, though

¹ Chase to the Rev. J. Leavitt, Jan. 24, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 562.

² Chase to Dickson, Jan. 27, 1864. *Ibid.*, p. 564.

³ Chase to Gilbert, Jan. 30, 1864. *Ibid.*, p. 567.

⁴ Chase to Flamen Ball, Feb. 2, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 570.

⁵ Chase to Bailey. *Ibid.*, p. 571.

⁶ Chase to Purcell, Feb. 1, 1864. *Ibid.*, p. 568.

it really formed an imperceptible eddy beside the vast current in which the will of the people was sweeping forward to its purpose. Being confined exclusively to politicians, it had, of course, its principal manifestation in the city of Washington. It played its little part in the election of Speaker of the House of Representatives. An attempt was made to identify Mr. Colfax, the most popular candidate for that office, with the adherents of Mr. Chase; but upon hearing of this he at once sought an audience with the President and positively repudiated any such connection. When Congress had organized, the message of the President was received with an enthusiasm which for the moment swept out of sight every trace of opposing opinion. From that moment there was no further question in regard to the Republican nomination.

There was at one time an effort on the part of some of the leading spirits in the Union League, a secret Republican organization which had been very zealous and effective in political work throughout the Union, to commit it to some measure hostile to Mr. Lincoln. This had alarmed even so experienced and astute an observer as Thurlow Weed, who sent to Mr. Seward in the autumn of 1863 a warning that "loyal leagues, into which Odd Fellows and Know Nothings rush, are fixing to control delegate appointments for Mr. Chase."¹ Mr. Seward accepted this warning somewhat too readily, induced by his inveterate anti-masonic prejudices; these fears had no substantial foundation. Some of the leaders of the League, sympathizing strongly with the radicals of Missouri, had indeed from time to time made efforts to commit the order against the President; but such attempts failed there, as elsewhere, on account of the overwhelming tide of contrary opinion, and when the principal chapter of the order met in Washington on the 10th of December, they elected a list of officers who were almost all either friends of Mr. Lincoln or men of sufficient sagacity not to oppose him.

From the beginning Mr. Lincoln had been fully aware of Mr. Chase's candidacy and of everything that was done for its promotion. It was impossible for him to remain unconscious of it; and although he discouraged all conversation on the subject and refused to read letters relating to it, he could not entirely shut the matter out from his cognizance. He had his own opinion of the taste and judgment displayed by Mr. Chase in his criticisms of himself and of his colleagues in the Cabinet; but he took no notice of them.

I have determined [he said] to shut my eyes, so far as possible, to everything of the sort. Mr. Chase

¹ MS.

makes a good Secretary, and I shall keep him where he is. If he becomes President, all right. I hope we may never have a worse man. I have observed with regret his plan of strengthening himself. Whenever he sees that an important matter is troubling me, if I am compelled to decide in a way to give offense to a man of some influence, he always ranges himself in opposition to me and persuades the victim that he has been hardly dealt with, and that he would have arranged it very differently. It was so with General Frémont, with General Hunter when I annulled his hasty proclamation, with General Butler when he was recalled from New Orleans, with these Missouri people when they called the other day. I am entirely indifferent as to his success or failure in these schemes so long as he does his duty at the head of the Treasury Department.²

When Rosecrans was removed from the command of the Army of the Cumberland, Mr. Chase pursued the same course. His spiteful comments on that act were reported to the President, who simply laughed at the zealous friend who brought him the news. When told that such tactics might give Mr. Chase the nomination, he said he hoped the country would never do worse. He regretted, however, that the thing had begun, because although it did not annoy him, his friends thought it ought to. He went on appointing by the dozen Mr. Chase's partisans and adherents to places in the Government. He knew perfectly what he was doing, and allowed himself the luxury of a quiet smile as he signed their commissions. He heard more of such gossip than was amusing or agreeable to him. He said on one occasion, "I wish they would stop thrusting that subject of the Presidency into my face. I do not want to hear anything about it."

Of course one reason for the magnanimity with which Mr. Lincoln endured this rivalry of his able and ambitious minister of finance was his consciousness of the inequality of the match between them. Although his renomination was a matter in regard to which he refused to converse much, even with intimate friends, he was perfectly aware of the drift of things. In capacity of appreciating popular currents and in judgment of individual character Mr. Chase was as a child beside him; and he allowed the opposition to himself in his own Cabinet to continue, without question or remark, with all the more patience and forbearance because he knew how feeble it was.

The movement in favor of Mr. Chase culminated in the month of February in a secret circular signed by Senator Pomeroy of Kansas, and widely circulated through the Union. It is admitted by Mr. Chase's sincerest admirers that the weak point of his character was the incapacity shown in his judgment of men and

² J. H., Diary, Oct. 16, 1863.

his choice of intimates; and in no instance was this defect more glaringly exhibited than in the selection of such a man as Senator Pomeroy to conduct his canvass for the Presidency. The two Kansas senators, Lane and Pomeroy, hated each other intensely, and as long as they were in office together wrangled persistently over the patronage of their State. The President once wrote to Pomeroy, after declining an interview with him :

I wish you and Lane would make a sincere effort to get out of the mood you are in. It does neither of you any good; it gives you the means of tormenting my life out of me, and nothing else.¹

Each thought the other got the advantage of him, each abused the President roundly behind his back; but Lane, being the more subtle and adroit politician of the two, never allowed himself to be put in an attitude of open hostility to the Administration. Pomeroy's resentment drove him at last into a mood of sullen animosity towards the President, and it was under his weak leadership that the elements of opposition to Mr. Lincoln at last came together. As the confidential circular issued by the committee of which Pomeroy was the head was the most considerable effort made within the Republican party to defeat the renomination of Mr. Lincoln, we give the document, to show upon how slender a foundation this opposition was based.

The movements recently made throughout the country to secure the renomination of President Lincoln render necessary counter-action on the part of those unconditional friends of the Union who differ from the policy of the Administration.

So long as no efforts were made to forestall the political action of the people, it was both wise and patriotic for all true friends of the Government to devote their influence to the suppression of the rebellion; but when it becomes evident that party and the machinery of official influence are being used to secure the perpetuation of the present Administration, those who conscientiously believe that the interests of the country and of freedom demand a change in favor of vigor and purity and nationality, have no choice but to appeal at once to the people before it is too late to secure a fair discussion of principles.

Those in behalf of whom this appeal is made have thoughtfully surveyed the political field, and have arrived at the following conclusions: *First*, that even were the reelection of Mr. Lincoln desirable, it is practically impossible against the union of influences which will oppose him. *Second*, that should he be reelected, his manifest tendency towards compromises and temporary expedients of policy will become stronger during a second term than it has been in the first, and the cause of human liberty, and the dignity of the nation, suffer proportionately, while the war may continue to languish

¹ Lincoln to Pomeroy, May 12, 1864. MS.

during his whole Administration, till the public debt shall become a burden too great to be borne. *Third*, that the patronage of the Government through the necessities of the war has been so rapidly increased, and to such an enormous extent, and so loosely placed, as to render the application of the one-term principle absolutely essential to the certain safety of our republican institutions. *Fourth*, that we find united in Hon. Salmon P. Chase more of the qualities needed in a President during the next four years than are combined in any other available candidate. His record is clear and unimpeachable, showing him to be a statesman of rare ability and an administrator of the highest order, while his private character furnishes the surest available guarantee of economy and purity in the management of public affairs. *Fifth*, that the discussion of the Presidential question, already commenced by the friends of Mr. Lincoln, has developed a popularity and strength in Mr. Chase unexpected even to his warmest admirers; and while we are aware that its strength is at present unorganized, and in no condition to manifest its real magnitude, we are satisfied that it only needs a systematic and faithful effort to develop it to an extent sufficient to overcome all opposing obstacles. For these reasons the friends of Mr. Chase have determined on measures which shall present his claims fairly and at once to the country. A central organization has been effected, which already has its connections in all the States, and the object of which is to enable his friends everywhere most effectually to promote his elevation to the Presidency. We wish the hearty coöperation of all those who are in favor of the speedy restoration of the Union on the basis of universal freedom, and who desire an administration of the Government during the first period of its new life which shall to the fullest extent develop the capacity of free institutions, enlarge the resources of the country, diminish the burdens of taxation, elevate the standard of public and private morality, vindicate the honor of the Republic before the world, and in all things make our American nationality the fairest example for imitation which human progress has ever achieved. If these objects meet your approval, you can render efficient aid by exerting yourself at once to organize your section of the country, and by corresponding with the chairman of the National Executive Committee for the purpose either of receiving or imparting information.

Of this circular, sent broadcast over the country, many copies of course fell into the hands of the President's friends, and they soon began to come to the Executive Mansion. The President, who was absolutely without curiosity in regard to attacks upon himself, refused to look at them, and they accumulated unread in the desk of his secretary. At last, however, the circular got into print, and it appeared in the "National Intelligencer" of Washington on the morning of the 22d of February. Mr. Chase at once wrote to the President to assure him that he had no knowledge of the existence of the letter before seeing it in print. He gave a brief account of the solicitations of his friends, in compliance with which he had

consented to be a candidate for the Presidency, adding, with his usual nobility of phrase :

I have never wished that my name should have a moment's thought in comparison with the common cause of enfranchisement and restoration, or be continued before the public a moment after the indication of a preference by the friends of that cause for another. I have thought this explanation due to you as well as to myself. If there is anything in my action or position which in your judgment will prejudice the public interests under my charge, I beg you to say so. I do not wish to administer the Treasury Department one day without your entire confidence. For yourself I cherish sincere respect and esteem, and, permit me to add, affection. Differences of opinion as to administrative action have not changed these sentiments, nor have they been changed by assaults upon me by persons who profess themselves the special representatives of your views and policy. You are not responsible for acts not your own; nor will you hold me responsible except for what I do or say myself. Great numbers now desire your reëlection. Should their wishes be fulfilled by the suffrage of the people, I hope to carry with me into private life the sentiments I now cherish, whole and unimpaired.

The President next day acknowledged the receipt of this letter, and promised to answer it more fully when he could find time to do so. The next week he wrote at greater length :¹

I would have taken time to answer yours of the 22d sooner, only that I did not suppose any evil could result from the delay, especially as, by a note, I promptly acknowledged the receipt of yours, and promised a fuller answer. Now, on consideration I find there is really very little to say. My knowledge of Mr. Pomeroy's letter having been made public came to me only the day you wrote, but I had, in spite of myself, known of its existence several days before. I have not yet read it, and I think I shall not. I was not shocked or surprised by the appearance of the letter, because I had had knowledge of Mr. Pomeroy's committee and of secret issues which, I supposed, came from it and of secret agents who, I supposed, were sent out by it, for several weeks. I have known just as little of these things as my friends have allowed me to know. They bring the documents to me, but I do not read them; they tell me what they think fit to tell me, but I do not inquire for more. I fully concur with you that neither of us can be justly held responsible for what our respective friends may do without our instigation or countenance; and I assure you, as you have assured me, that no assault has been made upon you by my instigation or with my countenance. Whether you shall remain at the head of the Treasury Department is a question which I do not allow myself to consider from any standpoint other than my judgment of the public service, and, in that view, I do not perceive occasion for a change.²

¹ Lincoln to Chase, Feb. 29, 1864. MS.

² After this correspondence had passed, Mr. Pomeroy, who, whatever his defects of character, did not lack courage, rose in his place in the Senate (March 10), reiterated with added energy his criticisms of the

Before the President wrote this letter the candidacy of Mr. Chase had already passed completely out of sight. In fact, it never could have been said to exist except in the imagination of Mr. Chase and a narrow circle of adherents. He was by no means the choice even of the great body of the radicals who were discontented with Mr. Lincoln. So early as the 17th of December, 1863, Mr. Medill, the editor of the "Chicago Tribune," who represented the most vehement Republican sentiment of the North-west, wrote:

I presume it is true that Mr. Chase's friends are working for his nomination, but it is all lost labor; Old Abe has the inside track so completely that he will be nominated by acclamation when the convention meets. . . . The people will say to Chase: "You stick to finance and be content until after 1868"; and to Grant, "Give the rebels no rest; put them through; your reward will come in due time"; but Uncle Abe must be allowed to boss the reconstruction of the Union.

And from the opening of the year 1864 the feeling in favor of the renomination of Lincoln grew so ardent and so restless that it was almost impossible for the most discreet of the Republican leaders to hold the manifestations of the popular preference in check. An attempt was made by the Treasury officials in Indiana to prevent the State convention which met in February from declaring for Lincoln, but it was all in vain. Wherever any assembly of Republicans came together fresh from the people the only struggle was as to who should get first on the floor to demand the President's renomination. Mr. Chase's principal hope was, of course, founded upon the adhesion of his friends in Ohio; but the result there, as elsewhere, proved how blind he was to the course of politics. The governor of the State wrote to the President³ that he was mortified to hear that he had been set down as a Chase man.

The fact that Mr. Chase has been laboring, for the past year at least, with an eye single to promoting his own selfish purposes, totally regardless of the consequences to the Government, as I believe has been the case, is alone sufficient to induce me to oppose him; but aside from this, the policy inaugurated under your lead must be maintained, and it would be suicidal to change leaders in the midst of the contest.

This is only a specimen of dozens of letters which came from the leading men of the State, who had been relied upon by Mr. Chase to promote his canvass; and finally the feeling grew so strong in Ohio that although no au-

President and his eulogy of Mr. Chase, and claimed that the latter had nothing to do with the circular, but had been "drafted into the service" without his consent.

³ Tod to Lincoln, Feb. 24, 1864.

thorized convention of Republicans was to meet at that time, the Union members of the legislature took the matter in hand and gave, on the 25th of February, the *coup de grâce* to the Secretary's candidacy. They held a full caucus, and nominated Mr. Lincoln for reëlection, at the demand, as they said, of the people and the soldiers of Ohio. The State of Rhode Island, which Mr. Chase had expected the personal influence of his son-in-law, Governor Sprague, to secure for him, also made haste to range itself with the other States of the North; and as more than a month before the great State of Pennsylvania had by the unanimous expression of the Union members of its legislature declared for Lincoln, the Secretary at last concluded that the contest was hopeless, and wrote another letter to Mr. Hall, referring to his former statement that should his friends in Ohio manifest a preference for another he would acquiesce in that decision, and adding:

The recent action of the Union members of our legislature indicates such a preference. It becomes my duty, therefore,—and I count it more a privilege than a duty,—to ask that no further consideration be given to my name. It was never more important than now that all our efforts and all our energies should be devoted to the suppression of the rebellion, and to the restoration of order and prosperity, on solid and sure foundations of union, freedom, and impartial justice; and I earnestly urge all with whom my counsels may have weight to allow nothing to divide them while this great work, in comparison with which persons and even parties are nothing, remains unaccomplished.

In the closing line of this letter occurs the first intimation of that feeling of revolt against the Republican party which afterwards led Mr. Chase to seek the nomination of the Democrats. In numerous letters written during the spring he reiterated his absolute withdrawal from the contest, but indulged in sneers and insinuations against the President, which show how deeply he was wounded by his discomfiture.¹

THE CLEVELAND CONVENTION.

BEFORE the snows melted, it had become evident to the most narrow and malignant of Mr. Lincoln's opponents that nothing could

prevent his renomination by the Republican convention which was to meet at Baltimore in June. There was no voice of opposition to him in any organized Republican assembly, except in Missouri, and even there the large majority of radical Republicans were willing to accept the universal verdict of their party; but there were a few earnest spirits scattered throughout the country to whom opposition to the Administration had become the habit of a lifetime. There were others not so honest, who had personal reasons for disliking the President. To these it was impossible to stand quietly by and see Mr. Lincoln made his own successor without one last effort to prevent it. The result of informal consultations among them was the publication of a number of independent calls for a mass convention of the people to meet at Cleveland, Ohio, on the 31st of May, a week before the assembling of the Republican convention at Baltimore.

The two centers of this disaffection were in St. Louis and New York. In the former city it was composed of a small fraction of a faction. The large majority of those radical politicians who had been for two years engaged in the bitter struggle with Blair and his associates still retained their connection with the Republican party, and had no intention of breaking off their relations with the Union party of the nation. It was a small fraction of their number which issued its call to the disaffected throughout the nation. Harking back to the original cause of quarrel, they had attached themselves blindly to the personal fortunes of General Frémont; they now put themselves in communication with a small club of like-minded enthusiasts in New York called the "Central Frémont Club," and invited their radical fellow-citizens to meet them in convention at Cleveland. They made no pretense of any purpose of consultation or of independent individual action. The object stated in their call was "in order then and there to recommend the nomination of John C. Frémont for the Presidency of the United States, and to assist in organizing for his election." They denounced "the imbecile and vacillating policy of the present Administration in the con-

¹ In an article published in "The Galaxy," July, 1873, by Mr. J. M. Winchell, whom Mr. Schuckers in his "Life of Chase" calls the author of the Pomeroy circular (see Schuckers' "Life of Chase," p. 500), occurs this singular passage: "The movement in favor of the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Chase, had culminated in disaster; that gentleman's chief supporters, including his senatorial son-in-law, having manifested a plentiful lack of nerve or zeal, when the critical question became public, of arraying him against his official chief, and made haste to *take him at his word of declination, diplomatically spoken, in order to rouse their flagging*

spirits." In a letter of the 7th of May (Chase to Riddle, Warden, p. 576) Mr. Chase said: "I am trying to keep all Presidential aspiration out of my head. I fancy that as President I could take care of the Treasury better with the help of a Secretary than I can as Secretary without the help of a President. But our Ohio folks don't want me enough, if they want me at all, to make it proper for me to allow my name to be used. I hope the time is not distant when I can honorably separate myself from political affairs altogether, leaving the new era to the new men whom God may raise up for it."

duct of the war, . . . its treachery to justice, freedom, and genuine democratic principles in its plan of reconstruction, whereby the honor and dignity of the nation have been sacrificed to conciliate the still existing and arrogant slave power and to further the ends of an unscrupulous partisan ambition"; they demanded the immediate extinction of slavery throughout the whole United States by congressional action, the absolute equality of all men before the law, and a vigorous execution of the laws confiscating the property of the rebels. This circular was stronger in its epithets than in its signatures; the names of the signers were, as a rule, unknown to fame. One column was headed by the name of the Rev. George B. Cheever, another by the apparently farcical signature of "Pantaleon Candidus." Perhaps the most important name affixed to this document was that of Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who wrote desiring to sign her name to the call, "taking it for granted," she said, "that you use 'men' in its largest sense." She informed the committee that they had "lifted politics into the sphere of morals and religion, and made it the duty of all true men and women to unite with them in building up the New Nation." She spelled "new nation" with capital letters, and gave occasion for a malicious accusation that her letter was merely an advertisement of a radical Frémont paper of that name which was then leading a precarious existence in New York. Mr. Samuel Bowles inferred from her letter that the convention was to be composed of "the gentler sex of both genders."

Another call was issued by the People's Committee of St. Louis, though signed by individuals from several other States. These gentlemen felt themselves

impelled on their own responsibility to declare to the people that the time had come for all independent men, jealous of their liberties and of the national greatness, to confer together and unite to resist the swelling invasion of an open, shameless, and unrestrained patronage which threatens to engulf under its destructive wave the rights of the people, the liberty and dignity of the nation;

declaring that they did not recognize in the Baltimore convention the essential conditions of a truly national convention: it was to be held, they thought, too near Washington and too far from the center of the country, its mode of convocation giving no guarantee of wise or honest deliberation. This circular was signed by B. Gratz Brown of Missouri and by a number of old-time abolitionists in the East, though its principal signers were from the ranks of the most vehement German radicals of St. Louis. Still another call was drawn up and issued by Lucius Robinson, Controller of the

State of New York. The terms of this address were properly applicable to all the Administration Republicans. It called upon the

citizens of the United States who mean to uphold the Union, who believe that the rebellion can be suppressed without infringing the rights of individuals or of States, who regard the extinction of slavery as among the practical effects of the war for the Union, and favor an amendment of the Federal Constitution for the exclusion of slavery, and who demand integrity and economy in the administration of government.

The signers of this call approached the question from an entirely different point of view from that of the radical Germans of St. Louis. In their view Mr. Lincoln, instead of being a craven and a laggard, was going entirely too fast and too far. Their favorite candidate was General Grant. Mr. Wendell Phillips, the stormy petrel of all our political disturbances, found enjoyment even in this teapot tempest. He strongly approved the convention at Cleveland, and constructed beforehand a brief platform for it.

Subdue the South as rapidly as possible. The moment territory comes under our flag reconstruct States thus: confiscate and divide the lands of rebels; extend the right of suffrage broadly as possible to whites and blacks; let the Federal Constitution prohibit slavery throughout the Union, and forbid the States to make any distinction among their citizens on account of color or race.¹

He also advised the nomination "for the Presidency of a statesman and a patriot"; by which terms he intended to exclude Mr. Lincoln.

The convention might have met, deliberated, and adjourned for all the people of the United States cared about it, had it not been for the violent and enthusiastic admiration it excited in Democratic newspapers and the wide publicity they gave to its proceedings. They described it as a gathering of the utmost dignity and importance; they pretended to discern in it a distinct line of cleavage through the middle of the Republican party. For several days before it assembled they published imaginary dispatches from Cleveland representing the streets and hotels as crowded with a throng of earnest patriots determined on the destruction of the tyrant Lincoln. The papers of Cleveland tell another story. There was no sign of political upheaval in the streets or hotels of that beautiful and thriving city. Up to the very day of the meeting of the convention there was no place provided for it, and when the first stragglers began to arrive they found no preparation made to receive them. All the public halls of any consequence were

¹ Phillips to Stallo, April 21.

engaged, and the convention at last took shelter in a small room called "Chapin's Hall." Its utmost capacity was five or six hundred persons, and it was much too large for the convention; delegates and spectators together were never numerous enough to fill it. The delegates were for the most part Germans from St. Louis. They held a preliminary meeting the night before the convention opened, and passed vigorous and loyal resolutions of the usual character. To the resolution that the rebellion must be put down, some one moved to amend by adding the words, "with God's assistance," which was voted down with boisterous demonstrations. *Non tali auxilio* was the sentiment of these materialist Missourians.

The convention met at 10 o'clock in a hall only half filled. Hoping for later arrivals, they delayed organization until nearly noon. The leaders who had been expected to give character and direction to the movement did not appear. It was hoped until the last moment that Mr. Greeley would be present, though he had never given any authority for such an expectation. He said, in answer to an inquiry, that "the only convention he took any interest in was that one Grant was holding before Richmond." Mr. Gratz Brown, the real head of the movement, was also absent. Emil Pretorius and Mr. Cheever, who, from the two extremities of the country, had talked most loudly in favor of the convention, staid away. The only persons present whose names were at all known were General John Cochrane of New York; Colonel Moss, a noisy politician from Missouri; Caspar Butz of Illinois; two or three of the old-school abolitionists; and several (not the weightiest) members of the staff of General Frémont. The delegates from the German Workingmen's Union of Chicago were discredited in advance by the publication of a card from the majority of the association they pretended to represent, declaring their intention to support the nominees of the Baltimore convention. Some one moved, as usual, the appointment of a committee on credentials; but as no one had any valid credentials, it was resolved instead to appoint a committee to enroll the names of the delegates. No action was taken even upon this proposition, because the act of enrollment would have been too fatal a confession of weakness. The committee on organization reported the name of General Cochrane for president of the convention, who made a discreet and moderate speech. He was a man of too much native amiability of character to feel personal bitterness towards any one, and too adroit and experienced a politician to commit himself irrevocably against any contingency. He had, in fact, thrown an anchor to windward by visiting the President

before the convention met and assuring him of his continued friendship. A delegate from Iowa, who seemed to have taken the convention seriously, then offered a resolution that no member of it should hold, or apply for, office under the next Administration—a proposition which was incontinently smothered. While waiting for the report of the committee on the platform, speeches were made by several delegates. Mr. Plumb attacked Mr. Lincoln as a pro-slavery politician. Colonel Moss of Missouri denounced him as the principal obstacle to freedom in America. A debate now arose on the proposition of the committee on rules that in voting for President the vote should be by States according to their representation in Congress. This was in the interest of the Grant delegates and was violently opposed by the Missourians, who formed a large majority of the convention, and had come for no purpose but to nominate Frémont. In the course of this debate the somewhat dreary proceedings were enlivened by a comic incident. A middle-aged man, who gave his name as Carr, addressed the chair, saying that he had come from Illinois as a delegate under the last call and did not want to be favored "a single mite." His ideas not flowing readily, he repeated this declaration three times in a voice continually rising in shrillness with his excitement. Something in his tone stirred the risibles of the convention, and loud laughter saluted the Illinoisan. As soon as he could make himself heard he cried out, "These are solemn times." This statement was greeted with another laugh, and the delegate now shouted at the top of his voice, "I believe there is a God who holds the universe in his hands as you would hold an egg." This comprehensive scheme of theocracy was too much for the Missouri agnostics, and the convention broke out in a tumult of jeers and roars. The rural delegate, amazed at the reception of his confession of faith, and apparently in doubt whether he had not stumbled by accident into a lunatic asylum, paused, and asked the chairman in a tone of great seriousness whether he believed in a God. The wildest merriment now took possession of the assembly, in the midst of which the Illinois theist solemnly marched down the aisle and out of the house, shaking from his feet the dust of that unbelieving convention. As soon as the laughing died away the committee on resolutions reported a set of judicious and, on the whole, undeniable propositions, such as, the Union must and shall be preserved, the constitutional laws of the United States must be obeyed, the rebellion must be suppressed by force of arms and without compromise. The platform did not greatly differ from that of Baltimore, except that it spoke in favor of one

Presidential term, declared that to Congress instead of the President belonged the question of reconstruction, and advocated the confiscation of the property of the rebels and its distribution among the soldiers.

The platform was adopted after brief debate, and a letter from Mr. Wendell Phillips was read to the convention, full of the vehement unreason which distinguished all the attempts of this matchless orator to apply his mind to the practical affairs of life. He predicted the direst results from four more years of Lincoln's administration.

Unless the South is recognized [which he apparently thought not improbable under Lincoln's nerveless policy], the war will continue; the taxation needed to sustain our immense debt, doubled by that time, will grind the laboring man of the North down to the level of the pauper labor of Europe; and we shall have a government accustomed to despotic power for eight years—a fearful peril to democratic institutions.

He denounced Mr. Lincoln's plan of reconstruction, and drew this comical parallel between him and Frémont:

The Administration, therefore, I regard as a civil and military failure, and its avowed policy ruinous to the North in every point of view. Mr. Lincoln may wish the end peace and freedom, but he is wholly unwilling to use the means which can secure that end. If Mr. Lincoln is reëlected I do not expect to see the Union reconstructed in my day, unless on terms more disastrous to liberty than even disunion would be. If I turn to General Frémont, I see a man whose first act was to use the freedom of the negro as his weapon; I see one whose thorough loyalty to democratic institutions, without regard to race, whose earnest and decisive character, whose clear-sighted statesmanship and rare military ability, justify my confidence that in his hands all will be done to save the state that foresight, skill, decision, and statesmanship can do.

With characteristic reliance on his own freedom from prejudice, he continued:

This is an hour of such peril to the Republic that I think men should surrender all party and personal partiality, and support any man able and willing to save the state.

This was, in fact, the attitude of mind of the vast majority of the people of the country; but all it meant in Mr. Phillips's case was that he was willing to vote for either Frémont or Butler to defeat Lincoln.

A feeble attempt was now made by the delegates from New York, who called themselves "War Democrats," to induce the convention to nominate General Grant. Mr. Colvin read a letter from Mr. Lucius Robinson of New York—afterwards governor of that State—attacking the errors and blunders "of the weak Executive and Cabinet," and claiming that the

hope of the people throughout the country rested upon General Grant as a candidate. Although Mr. Colvin supplemented the reading of this letter by promising a majority of one hundred thousand for Grant in the State of New York, the Missourians cheered only the louder for Frémont; and when a last effort was made by Mr. Demers of Albany to nominate Grant, he was promptly denounced as a Lincoln hireling. Colonel Moss, in the uniform of a general of the Missouri militia, arose and put a stop to the profitless discussion by moving in a stentorian voice the nomination of General Frémont by acclamation, which was at once done; and the assembly completed its work by placing John Cochrane on the ticket as its candidate for Vice-President. No one present seemed to have any recollection of the provision of the Constitution which forbids both of these officers being taken from the same State.

The convention met again in the evening and listened to dispirited and discouraging speeches of ratification. The committee appointed in the afternoon to give a name to the new party brought in that of the "Radical Democracy," and in this style it was formally christened. An executive committee was appointed, of men destitute of executive capacity, and the convention adjourned.

Its work met with no response from the country. On the day of its meeting the German press of Cleveland expressed its profound disappointment at the smallness and insignificance of the gathering, and with a few unimportant exceptions the newspapers of the country greeted the work of the convention with an unbroken chorus of ridicule. Its absurdities and inconsistencies were indeed too glaring for serious consideration. Its movers had denounced the Baltimore convention as being held too early for an expression of the deliberate judgment of the people, and now they had made their own nominations a week earlier; they had claimed that Baltimore was not sufficiently central in situation, and they had held their convention on the northern frontier of the country; they had claimed that the Baltimore delegates were not properly elected, and they had assumed to make nominations by delegates not elected at all; they had denounced the Baltimore convention as a close corporation and invited the people to assemble in mass, and when they came together they were so few they never dared to count themselves; they had pretended to desire a stronger candidate than Mr. Lincoln, and had selected the most conspicuous failure of the war; they clamored loudly against corruption in office, and one of the leading personages in the convention was a member of Frémont's staff who had been

dismissed the service for dishonesty in Government contracts.

The whole proceeding, though it excited some indignation among the friends of Mr. Lincoln, was regarded by the President himself only with amusement. On the morning after the convention a friend, giving him an account of it, said that, instead of the many thousands who had been expected, there were present at no time more than four hundred men. The President, struck by the number mentioned, reached for the Bible which commonly lay on his desk, and after a moment's search, read these words:

And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.¹

It was only among the Democratic papers that the Cleveland convention met with any support or applause. They gave it solemn and unmeasured eulogies for its independence, its patriotism, its sagacity, and even its numbers. The Copperhead papers in New York urged the radicals not to give up their attitude of uncompromising hostility to Lincoln, and predicted a formidable schism in the Republican party as a consequence of their action. But the motive of this support was so evident that it deceived nobody; and it was compared by a sarcastic observer to the conduct of the Spanish urchins accompanying a condemned Jew to an *auto-da-fé*, and shouting, in the fear that he might recant and rob them of their holiday, "Stand fast, Moses." The ticket of the two New Yorkers met with a gust of ridicule which would have destroyed more robust chances than theirs. "The New York Major-General John C. and the New York Brigadier-General John C." formed a matched ticket fated to laughter.

But if no one else took them seriously, the two generals at least saw in the circumstances no occasion for smiling. General Frémont promptly accepted his nomination.² He said:

This is not an ordinary election. It is a contest for the right even to have candidates, and not merely, as usual, for the choice among them. . . . The ordinary rights secured under the Constitution and the laws of the country have been violated, and extraordinary powers have been usurped by the Executive. It is directly before the people now to say whether or not the principles established by the Revolution are worth maintaining. . . . To-day we have in the country the abuses of a military dictation without its unity of action and vigor of execution—an Administration marked at home by disregard of constitutional rights, by its violation of

personal liberty and the liberty of the press, and, as a crowning shame, by its abandonment of the right of asylum.

The feebleness and want of principle of the Administration, its incapacity and selfishness, were roundly denounced by General Frémont, but he repudiated the cry of the Cleveland convention for confiscating the property of rebels. In conclusion he said:

If the convention at Baltimore will nominate any man whose past life justifies a well-grounded confidence in his fidelity to our cardinal principles, there is no reason why there should be any division among the really patriotic men of the country. To any such I shall be most happy to give a cordial and active support. . . . But if Mr. Lincoln should be nominated—as I believe it would be fatal to the country to indorse a policy and renew a power which has cost us the lives of thousands of men, and needlessly put the country on the road to bankruptcy—there will remain no other alternative but to organize against him every element of conscientious opposition with the view to prevent the misfortune of his reelection.

He therefore accepted the nomination, and informed the committee that he had resigned his commission in the army. General Cochrane accepted in briefer and more judicious language, holding the same views as his chief on the subject of confiscation. Later in the summer some of the partisans of Frémont, seeing that there was positively no response in the country to his candidacy, wrote to him suggesting that the candidates nominated at Cleveland and Baltimore should withdraw, and leave the field entirely free for a united effort for "a new convention which should represent the patriotism of all parties." They asked him whether in case Mr. Lincoln would withdraw he would do so.³ Although the contingency referred to was more than sufficiently remote, General Frémont with unbroken dignity refused to accede to this proposition.

Having now definitely accepted the Cleveland nomination [he said], I have not the right to act independently of the truly patriotic and earnest party who conferred that honor upon me. . . . It might, beside, have only the effect still further to unsettle the public mind and defeat the object you have in view if we should disorganize before first proceeding to organize something better.⁴

But a month later⁵ he seemed to have regarded the public mind as beyond the risk of unsettling, and he then wrote to his committee, withdrawing his name from the list of candidates. He could not, however, withhold a parting demonstration against the President.

¹ This, it will be remembered, was several years in advance of the famous reference to the Cave of Adullam in the British Parliament.

² June 4, 1864. ³ August 20. ⁴ August 25.

⁵ September 21.

In respect to Mr. Lincoln [he said] I continue to hold exactly the sentiments contained in my letter of acceptance. I consider that his administration has been politically, militarily, and financially a failure, and that its necessary continuance is a cause of regret for the country. There never was a greater unanimity in a country than was exhibited here at the fall of Sumter, and the South was powerless in the face of it; but Mr. Lincoln completely paralyzed this generous feeling. He destroyed the strength of the position and divided the North when he declared to the South that slavery should be protected. He has built up for the South a strength which otherwise they could have never attained, and this has given them an advocate on the Chicago platform.

With a final denunciation of the leading men whose reticence had "established for Mr. Lincoln a character among the people which leaves now no choice," General Frémont at last subsided into silence. General Cochrane on the same day withdrew his name from the Cleveland ticket, which had already passed into swift oblivion. His letter had none of the asperity which characterized that of his chief. He genially attacked the Chicago resolutions, and, while regretting the omissions of the Baltimore platform, he approved it in substance.

We stand within view [he said] of a rebellion suppressed, within hail of a country reunited and saved. War lifts the curtain and discloses the prospect. War has given to us Atlanta, and war offers to us Richmond. . . . Peace and division, or war and the Union. Other alternative there is none.

Two incidents which occurred in the spring of 1864 caused unusual excitement among both wings of the opposition to Mr. Lincoln. The one was the delivery of Arguelles to the Spanish authorities; the other was the seizure of two New York newspapers for publishing a forged proclamation. It was altogether natural that the pro-slavery Democrats and peace men should have objected to these acts, as one of the injured parties was a slave trader, and the others opponents of the war; but it was not the least of the absurdities of the Cleveland protestants that they also, in their anxiety to find a weapon against the President, at the very moment that they were assailing him for not overriding all law and precedent in obedience to their demand, still belabored him for these instances of energetic action in the very direction in which they demanded that he should proceed.

The case of Arguelles was a perfectly clear one; and if the surrender of a criminal is ever justified as an exercise of international comity in the absence of treaty stipulations, no objections could reasonably be made in this instance. He was a colonel in the Spanish army and lieutenant-governor of the district of Colon in Cuba. He had captured a cargo of African slaves in his official capacity, and had received

much credit for his efficiency and a considerable sum of money as his share of the prize. He went to New York immediately afterwards and purchased a Spanish newspaper which was published there; but after his departure from Cuba it was ascertained that in beginning so expensive a business in New York he did not rely exclusively upon the money he had received from the Government, but that in concert with a curate of Colon he had sold one hundred and forty-one of the recaptured Africans, had put the money in his own pocket, and had officially reported them as having died of small-pox. The Cuban Government laid these facts before the State Department at Washington, and represented that the return of this miscreant to Cuba was necessary to secure the liberation of the unfortunate victims of his cruelty and greed. It was impossible to bring the matter before the courts, as no extradition treaty existed at that period between Spain and the United States, and the American authorities could not by any legal procedure take cognizance of the crime. The President and Mr. Seward at once assumed the responsibility of acting in the only way indicated by the laws of common humanity and international courtesy. Arguelles was arrested in New York by the United States marshal, put in charge of a Spanish officer commissioned for the purpose, and by him taken to Havana. The action of the Government was furiously attacked by all the pro-slavery organs. A resolution was introduced by Mr. Johnson in the Senate demanding an explanation of the circumstances.¹ Mr. Seward answered,² basing the action of the Government upon the stipulations of the ninth article of the treaty of 1842 with Great Britain, by which the two countries agreed to use all the measures in their power to close the market for slaves throughout the world, and added:

Although there is a conflict of authorities concerning the expediency of exercising comity towards a foreign government by surrendering, at its request, one of its own subjects charged with the commission of crime within its territory, and although it may be conceded that there is no obligation to make such a surrender upon a demand therefor, unless it is acknowledged by treaty or by statute law, yet a nation is never bound to furnish asylum to dangerous criminals who are offenders against the human race; and it is believed that if in any case the comity could with propriety be practiced, the one which is understood to have called forth the resolution furnished a just occasion for its exercise.

The Captain-General of Cuba, on the arrival of Arguelles, sent his thanks to Mr. Seward³

¹ "Congressional Globe," May 26, 1864.

² May 30, 1864.

³ McPherson, "History of the Rebellion," p. 355.

for the service which he had rendered to humanity by furnishing the medium through which a great number of human beings will obtain their freedom whom the desertion of the person referred to would have reduced to slavery. His presence alone in this island a very few hours has given liberty to eighty-six.

The grand jury of New York nevertheless indicted Marshal Murray for the arrest of Arguelles on the charge of kidnapping. The marshal pleaded the orders of the President as the authority for his action, and based upon this a petition that the case be transferred to the United States court; and although the judges before whom he was taken, who happened to be Democrats, denied this petition, the indictment was finally quashed, and the only result of the President's action was the denunciation which he received in the Democratic newspapers, combined with the shrill treble of the clamor from the Cleveland convention.

The momentary suppression of the two New York newspapers, of which mention has been made, was a less defensible act, and arose from an error which was, after all, sufficiently natural on the part of the Secretary of War. On the 10th of May the "Journal of Commerce" and the "World," two newspapers which had especially distinguished themselves by the violence of their opposition to the Administration, published a forged proclamation signed with the President's name calling in terms of exaggerated depression not far from desperation for four hundred thousand troops. It was a scheme devised by two young Bohemians of the press, probably with no other purpose than that of making money by stock-jobbing. In the tremulous state of the public mind which then prevailed, in the midst of the terrible slaughter of Grant's opening campaign, the country was painfully sensitive to such news, and the forged proclamation, telegraphed far and wide, accomplished for the moment the purpose for which it was doubtless intended. It excited everywhere a feeling of consternation; the price of gold rose rapidly during the morning hours, and the Stock Exchange was thrown into violent fever. The details of the mystification were managed with some skill, the paper on which the document was written being that employed by the Associated Press in delivering its news to the journals, and it was left at all the newspaper offices in New York just before the moment of going to press. If all the newspapers had printed it the guiltlessness of each would have been equally evident; but unfortunately for the victims of the trick, the only two papers which published the forgery were those whose previous conduct had rendered them liable to the suspicion of bad faith. The fiery Secretary

of War immediately issued orders for the suppression of the "World" and "Journal of Commerce," and the arrest of their editors. The editors were never incarcerated; after a short detention, they were released. The publication of the papers was resumed after two days of interruption. These prompt measures and the announcement of the imposture sent over the country by telegraph soon quieted the excitement, and the quick detection of the guilty persons reduced the incident to its true rank in the annals of vulgar misdemeanors.

But in the memories of the Democrats of New York the incident survived, and was vigorously employed during the summer months as a means of attack upon the Administration. Governor Seymour interested himself in the matter and wrote a long and vehement letter to the district attorney of New York, denouncing the action of the Government. "These things," he said in his exclamatory style, "are more hurtful to the national honor and strength than the loss of battles. The world will confound such acts with the principles of our Government, and the folly and crimes of officials will be looked upon as the natural results of the spirit of our institutions. Our State and local authorities must repel this ruinous inference." He predicted the most dreadful consequences to the city of New York if this were not done. The harbor would be sealed up, the commerce of New York paralyzed, the world would withdraw from the keeping of New York merchants its treasures and its commerce if they did not unite in this demand for the security of persons and of property. In obedience to these frantic orders Mr. Oakey Hall, the district attorney, did his best, and was energetically seconded by Judge Russell, who charged the grand jury that the officers who took possession of these newspaper establishments were "liable as for riot"; but the grand jury, who seem to have kept their heads more successfully than either the governor or the judge, resolved that it was "inexpedient to examine into the subject." The governor could not rest quiet under this contemptuous refusal of the grand jury to do his bidding. He wrote again to the district attorney, saying, "As the grand jury have refused to do their duty, the subject of the seizure of these journals should at once be brought before some proper magistrate." He promised him all the assistance he required in the prosecution of the investigations. Thus egged on by the chief executive of the State, Mr. Hall proceeded to do the work required of him. Upon warrants issued at his instance by City Judge Russell, General Dix and several officers of his staff were arrested.¹ They

¹ July 1.

submitted with perfect courtesy to the behest of the civil authorities, and appeared before Judge Russell to answer for their acts. The judge held them over on their own recognition to await the action of another grand jury, which, it was hoped, might be more subservient to the wishes of the governor than the last; but no further action was ever taken in the matter.

During the same week which witnessed the radical fiasco at Cleveland, an attempt was made in New York to put General Grant before the country as a Presidential candidate. The committee having the matter in charge made no public avowal of their intentions; they merely called a meeting to express the gratitude of the country to the general for his signal services. They even invited the President to take part in the proceedings, an invitation which he said it was impossible for him to accept.

I approve [he wrote], nevertheless, whatever may tend to strengthen and sustain General Grant and the noble armies now under his direction. My previous high estimate of General Grant has been maintained and heightened by what has occurred in the remarkable campaign he is now conducting, while the magnitude and difficulty of the task before him do not prove less than I expected. He and his brave soldiers are now in the midst of their great trial, and I trust that at your meeting you will so shape your good words that they may turn to men and guns, moving to his and their support.¹

With such a gracious approval of the movement, the meeting naturally fell into the hands of the Lincoln men. General Grant, neither at this time nor at any other, gave the least countenance to the efforts which were made to array him in political opposition to the President.

THE RESIGNATION OF MR. CHASE.

AFTER Mr. Chase's withdrawal from his hopeless contest for the Presidency, his sentiments toward Mr. Lincoln, as exhibited in his letters and his diary, took on a tinge of bitterness which gradually increased until their friendly association in the public service became no longer possible. There was something almost comic in the sudden collapse of his candidacy; and the American people, who are quick to detect the ludicrous in any event, could not help smiling when the States of Rhode Island and Ohio ranged themselves among the first on the side of the President. This was intolerable to Mr. Chase, who, with all his great and noble qualities, was deficient in humor. His wounded self-love could find

no balm in these circumstances except in the preposterous fiction which he constructed for himself, that through "the systematic operations of the Postmaster-General and those holding office under him a preference for the reelection of Mr. Lincoln was created."² Absurd as this fancy was, he appears firmly to have believed it; and the Blairs, whom he never liked, now appeared to him in the light of powerful enemies. An incident which occurred in Congress in April increased this impression to a degree which was almost maddening to the Secretary. The quarrel between General Frank Blair and the radicals in Missouri had been transferred to Washington; and one of the Missouri members having made charges against him of corrupt operations in trade permits, he demanded an investigation, which resulted, of course, in his complete exoneration from such imputations. It was a striking instance of the bewildering power of factious hatred that such charges should ever have been brought. Any one who knew Blair, however slightly, should have known that personal dishonesty could never have offered him the least temptation. In defending himself on the floor of Congress the natural pugnacity of his disposition led him to what soldiers call an offensive return,—in fact, Frank Blair always preferred to do his fighting within the enemy's lines,—and believing the Secretary of the Treasury to be in sympathy, at least, with the assault which had been made upon his character, he attacked him with equal vigor and injustice by way of retaliation. As we have seen in another chapter, before this investigation was begun the President had promised when Blair should resign his seat in the House to restore him to the command in the Western army which he had relinquished on coming to Washington. Although he greatly disapproved of General Blair's attack upon Mr. Chase, the President did not think that he was justified on this account in breaking his word; and doubtless reasoned that sending Blair back to the army would not only enable him to do good service in the field, but would quiet an element of discord in Congress. The result, however, was most unfortunate in its effect on the feelings of Mr. Chase. He was stung to the bitterest resentment by the attack of Blair; and he held that restoring Blair to his command made the President an accomplice in his offense. From that time he took a continually darkened view both of the President's character and of his chances for reelection. "No good could come," he said, "of the probable identification of the next Administration with the Blair family." His first thought was to resign his place in the Cabinet; but on consulting his friends and finding them unani-

¹ Lincoln to F. A. Conkling, June 3, 1864.

² Chase to General Blunt, May 4, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 583.

mous against such a course, he gave it up.¹ But his letters during this month are full of ill-will to the President. To his niece he wrote: "If Congress gives me the measures I want, and Uncle Abe will stop spending so fast," he, Chase, would bring about resumption within a year. To another, he blamed the President for the slaughter at Fort Pillow.² To Governor Buckingham, who had written him a sympathetic note, he said:³ "My chief concern in the attacks made on me springs from the conviction that the influence of the men who make them must necessarily divide the friends of the Union and freedom, unless the President shall cast it off, of which I have little hope. I am willing to be myself its victim, but grieve to think our country may be also"; and adds this compliment to his correspondent at the expense of his colleagues in the Government: "How strikingly the economy and prudence shown by the narration of your excellent message contrasts with the extravagance and recklessness which mark the disbursement of national treasure." Writing to another friend, he indulges in this lumbering pleasantry: "It seems as if there were no limit to expense. . . . The spigot in Uncle Abe's barrel is made twice as big as the bung-hole. He may have been a good flatboatman and rail-splitter, but he certainly never learned the true science of cooperating." This was a dark month to him; his only fortress of refuge was his self-esteem: secure in this, he lavished on every side his criticisms and his animadversions upon his associates. "Congress," he said,⁴ "is unwilling to take the decisive steps which are indispensable to the highest degree of public credit; and the Executive does not, I fear, sufficiently realize the importance of an energetic and comprehensive policy in all departments of administration." Smarting as he did under the attack of the Blairs, he pretended to treat them with contempt. "Do not trouble yourself about the Blairs," he wrote to an adherent. "Dogs will bark at the moon, but I have never heard that the moon stopped on that account." By constantly dwelling on the imaginary coalition of Lincoln with the Blairs against him, he began at last to take heart again and to think that against adversaries so weak and so wicked there might still be a chance of victory. Only a fortnight before the gathering of the Republican convention at Baltimore he began to look beyond the already certain event of that convention, and to contemplate the possibility of defeating Mr. Lincoln after he should be nominated.

It has become quite apparent now [he said] that the importunity of Mr. Lincoln's special friends for an early convention, in order to make his nomination sure, was a mistake both for him and for the country. The convention will not be regarded as a Union convention, but simply as a Blair-Lincoln convention, by a great body of citizens whose support is essential to success. Few except those already committed to Mr. Lincoln will consider themselves bound by a predetermined nomination. Very many who may ultimately vote for Mr. Lincoln will wait the course of events hoping that some popular movement for Grant, or some other successful general, will offer a better hope of saving the country. Others, and the number seems to be increasing, will not support his nomination in any event; believing that our ill-success thus far in the suppression of the rebellion is due mainly to his course of action and inaction, and that no change can be for the worse. But these are speculations merely from my standpoint.⁵

The Secretary's relations with the President and his colleagues while he was in this frame of mind were naturally subject to much friction, and this frame of mind had lasted with little variation for more than a year. It was impossible to get on with him except by constant agreement to all his demands. He chose in his letters and his diaries to represent himself as the one just and patriotic man in the Government, who was striving with desperate energy, but with little hope, to preserve the Administration from corrupt influences. It cannot be doubted that his motives were pure, his ability and industry unusual, his integrity, of course, beyond question. He held, and justly held, that, being responsible for the proper conduct of affairs in his department, he should not be compelled to make appointments contrary to his convictions of duty. He was unquestionably right in insisting that appointments should be made on public grounds, and that only men of ability and character should be chosen to fill them; but he had an exasperating habit of assuming that nobody agreed with him in this view, and that all differences of opinion in regard to persons necessarily sprung from corrupt or improper motives on the part of those who differed with him. At the slightest word of disagreement he immediately put on his full armor of noble sentiments and phrases, appealed to Heaven for the rectitude of his intentions, and threatened to resign his commission if thwarted in his purpose. When he was not opposed he made his recommendations, as his colleagues did, on grounds of political expediency as well as of personal fitness. One day, for instance, he recommended the appointment of Rheinhold Solger as Assistant Register of

¹ Chase to Jay Cooke, May 5, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 584.

² Chase to D. T. Smith, May 9, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 587.

³ May 9, 1864. *Ibid.*

⁴ Chase to Hamilton, May 15, 1864. *Ibid.*, p. 590.

⁵ Chase to Brough, May 19, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 593.

the Treasury on the ground that "the German supporters of the Administration have had no considerable appointment in the department." He frequently gave in support of his nominees the recommendation of senators and representatives of the States where the appointments were to be made. But he always sturdily resented any suggestions from the President that an appointment proposed by him would have a bad effect politically. He had the faculty of making himself believe that his obstinacy in such matters arose purely from devotion to principle. He would not only weary the President with unending oral discussions, but, returning to the department, would write him letters filled with high and irrelevant morality, and at evening would enter in his diary meditations upon his own purity and the perversity of those he chose to call his enemies. It would hardly be wise for the ablest man of affairs to assume such an attitude. To justify it at all one should be infallible in his judgment of men. With the Secretary of the Treasury this was far from being the case. He was not a good judge of character; he gave his confidence freely to any one who came flattering him and criticizing the President, and after having given it, it was almost impossible to make him believe that the man who talked so judiciously could be a knave. His chosen biographer, Judge Warden, says: "He was indeed sought less by strong men and by good men than by weak men and by bad men."¹ A much better authority, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, while giving him unmeasured praise for other qualities calls him "profoundly ignorant of men," and says, "The baldest charlatan might deceive him into trusting his personal worth."²

Early in the year 1864 the Federal appointments in New York City began to be the subject of frequent conversation between the President and the Secretary of the Treasury. So many complaints of irregularity and inefficiency in the conduct of affairs in the New York custom house had reached Mr. Lincoln that he began to think a change in the officers there would be of advantage to the public service. Every suggestion of this sort, however, was met by Mr. Chase with passionate opposition. Mr. Lincoln had not lost confidence in the integrity or the high character of Mr. Barney, the collector of customs; he was even willing to give him an important appointment abroad in testimony of his continued esteem; but he was not satisfied with what he heard of the conduct of his office. Several of his subordinates had been detected in improper and corrupt practices, and after being defended by Mr. Chase until defense was impossible, they had been

dismissed, and in some cases punished. In the month of February, while the conduct of the custom house was under investigation in Congress, a special agent of the Treasury Department named Joshua F. Bailey came to Washington, having been summoned as a witness to testify before the committee of the House of Representatives in charge of the matter. He called on the chairman in advance, and endeavored to smother the investigation by saying, among other things, that, whatever might be developed, the President would in no case take any action. The chairman of the committee reported this impudent statement to the President, who at once communicated the fact to the Secretary of the Treasury, saying, "The public interest cannot fail to suffer in the hands of this irresponsible and unscrupulous man"; and he proposed at the same time to send Mr. Barney as minister to Portugal.³ Mr. Chase defended Bailey, and resisted with such energy the displacement of Mr. Barney that midsummer came with matters in the custom house unchanged. Mr. Chase, in his diary, gives a full account of a conversation between himself and the President⁴ in regard to this matter, in which the Secretary reiterates his assurances of confidence in the conduct of the custom house, and gives especially warm expression to his regard for Bailey, meeting the positive assertion of the chairman of the committee of the House of Representatives by saying, "I think Mr. Bailey is not the fool to have made such a suggestion." So long as he remained in office he gave this blind confidence to Bailey, who finally showed how ill he deserved it by the embezzlement of a large sum of public money, and by his flight in ruin and disgrace from the country.

In February, 1863, the Senate rejected the nomination of Mr. Mark Howard as collector of internal revenue for the district of Connecticut. Mr. Chase, hearing that this rejection was made at the instance of Senator Dixon, immediately wrote a letter demanding the renomination of Howard; or, if the President should not agree with him in this, of some one not recommended by Senator Dixon. A few days later the President wrote to Mr. Chase that after much reflection and with a great deal of pain that it was adverse to his wish, he had concluded that it was not best to renominate Mr. Howard. He recognized the constitutional right of the Senate to reject his nominations without being called to account; and to take the ground in advance that he would nominate no one for the vacant place who was favored by a senator so eminent in character and ability as Mr. Dixon seemed to him pre-

¹ Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 530.

² Reid, "Ohio in the War," Vol. I., p. 18.

³ Lincoln to Chase, Feb. 12, 1864.

⁴ June 6.

posterous. The only person from Connecticut recommended for the vacancy was Mr. Goodman, in favor of whom Senator Dixon and Mr. Loomis, the Representative in the House, cordially united. The President therefore asked Mr. Chase to send him a nomination for Goodman.¹ Immediately on the receipt of this letter Mr. Chase wrote out his resignation as Secretary of the Treasury in these words:

Finding myself unable to approve the manner in which selections for appointment to important trusts in this department have been recently made, and being unwilling to remain responsible for its administration, under existing circumstances, I respectfully resign the office of Secretary of the Treasury.²

This letter, however, never reached the President, as Senator Dixon came in before it was dispatched and discussed the matter in a spirit so entirely different from that of the Secretary that no quarrel was possible with him; and after he left, Mr. Chase wrote a letter to the President, in which he said:

I do not insist on the renomination of Mr. Howard; and Mr. Dixon and Mr. Loomis, as I understand, do not claim the nomination of his successor. . . . My only object—and I think you so understand it—is to secure fit men for responsible places, without admitting the rights of senators or representatives to control appointments, for which the President, and the Secretary, as his presumed adviser, must be responsible. Unless this principle can be practically established, I feel that I cannot be useful to you or the country in my present position.³

It is possible that the Secretary may have thought that this implied threat to resign brought both the President and the senator to reason, for the matter ended at this time by their allowing him to have absolutely his own way. Mr. Dixon wrote to the President,⁴ saying that he "preferred to leave the whole matter to the Secretary of the Treasury, believing his choice would be such as to advance the interests of the country and the Administration"; and the President, who heartily detested these squabbles over office, was glad of this arrangement. There was not a shade of difference between him and Mr. Chase as to the duty of the Administration to appoint only fit men to office, but the President always preferred to effect this object without needlessly offending the men upon whom the Government depended for its support in the war.

¹ March 2, 1863. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p.

524.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 524, 525.

³ March 3, 1863. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p.

525.

⁴ Dixon to Lincoln, March 5, 1863. MS.

⁵ Mr. Schuckers was private secretary to Mr. Chase and author of a biography of him, q. v., p. 423.

⁶ Lincoln to Chase, May 8, 1863; MS. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 527.

A few months later Mr. Lincoln was subjected to great trouble and inconvenience by the constant complaints which came to him by every mail from Puget Sound against the collector for that district, one Victor Smith, from Ohio, a friend and appointee of Mr. Chase. This Smith is described by Schuckers⁵ as

a man not very likely to become popular on the Pacific coast—or anywhere else. He believed in spirit rappings and was an avowed abolitionist; he whined a great deal about "progress"; was somewhat arrogant in manner and intolerant in speech, and speedily made himself thoroughly unpopular in his office.

No attention was paid by the Secretary to these complaints, which were from time to time referred to him by the President; but at last the clamor by letter and by deputations from across the continent became intolerable, and the President, during a somewhat protracted absence of the Secretary from Washington, ordered a change to be made in the office. In a private note to Mr. Chase, wishing to avoid giving him personal offense, he said:

My mind is made up to remove Victor Smith as collector of the customs at the Puget Sound district. Yet in doing this I do not decide that the charges against him are true. I only decide that the degree of dissatisfaction with him there is too great for him to be retained. But I believe he is your personal acquaintance and friend, and if you desire it, I will try to find some other place for him.⁶

Three days later the Secretary, having returned to Washington, answered in his usual manner, protesting once more his ardent desire to serve the country faithfully, and claiming that he had a right to be consulted in matters of appointment. He sent a blank commission for the person whom the President had concluded to appoint, but protested against the precedent, and tendered his resignation. This time again the President gave way. He drove to the Secretary's house, handed his petulant letter back to him, and begged him to think no more of the matter.⁷ Two days afterward, in a letter assenting to other recommendations for office which had come to him from the Treasury Department, he said, "Please send me over the commission for Louis C. Gunn, as you recommend, for collector of customs at Puget Sound."⁸

Any statesman possessing a sense of humor

⁷ Mr. Maunsell B. Field, in his "Memories of Many Men and Some Women," p. 303, quotes Mr. Lincoln as saying: "I went directly up to him with the resignation in my hand, and, putting my arm around his neck, said to him, 'Chase, here is a paper with which I wish to have nothing to do; take it back and be reasonable.' It was difficult to bring him to terms. I had to plead with him a long time; but I finally succeeded, and heard nothing more of that resignation."

⁸ Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 528.

would have hesitated before repeating this identical proceeding; but, as we have said, Mr. Chase was deficient in this saving sense, and he apparently saw no reason why it should not be repeated indefinitely.

Mr. John J. Cisco, the assistant treasurer at New York, who had served the Government with remarkable ability and efficiency through three administrations, resigned his commission in May, to take effect at the close of the fiscal year, the 30th of June, 1864. It was a post of great importance in a financial point of view, and not insignificant in the way of political influence. Up to this time, Mr. Chase had made all the important appointments in New York from his own wing of the supporters of the Union—the men who had formerly been connected with the Democratic party, and who now belonged to what was called the radical wing of the Republican. This matter was the source of constant complaint from those who were sometimes called the Conservative Republicans of New York, or those who had in great part formerly belonged to the Whig party, and who in later years acknowledged the leadership of Mr. Seward. The President was anxious that in an appointment so important as that which was now about to be made both sections of the party in New York should, if possible, be satisfied; and especially that no nominations should be made which should be positively objectionable to Senator Morgan, who was considered to represent more especially the city of New York and its great commercial interests. To this Mr. Chase at first interposed no objection; and it was upon full and friendly consultation and conference between him and Senator Morgan that the appointment was offered successively to Mr. Denning Duer and to Mr. John A. Stewart, both of them gentlemen of the highest standing. But both declined the office tendered them; upon which Mr. Chase suddenly resolved to appoint Mr. Maunsell B. Field, who was at that time an assistant secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Field was a gentleman of excellent social position, of fine literary culture, to whom the Secretary was sincerely attached, but who was entirely destitute of such standing in either the political or the financial circles of New York as was required by so important a place. Senator Morgan at once protested vigorously against such an appointment, which only served to confirm the Secretary in his insistence upon it. Besides his objections to Mr. Field, whom he thought in no way competent to hold such a place, Mr. Morgan urged that the political result of his appointment would be extremely unfavorable to the Union party in New York. He became thoroughly alarmed, and begged the Secretary and the President successively to make their

choice among three of the most eminent citizens of New York whose names he presented; but the Secretary's mind was made up. Without further consultation with the President, he sent him the nomination for Mr. Field on the 27th of June. The next day the President replied:

I cannot, without much embarrassment, make this appointment; principally, because of Senator Morgan's very firm opposition to it. Senator Harris has not yet spoken to me on the subject, though I understand he is not averse to the appointment of Mr. Field, nor yet to any one of the three named by Senator Morgan. . . . Governor Morgan tells me he has mentioned three names to you, to wit: R. M. Blatchford, Dudley S. Gregory, and Thomas Hillhouse. It will really oblige me if you will make choice among those three, or any other man that Senators Morgan and Harris will be satisfied with, and send me a nomination for him.¹

There have been few ministers who would have refused so reasonable and considerate a request as this, but it did not for a moment shake Mr. Chase's determination to have his own way in the matter. He sent a note to the President asking for an interview, and telegraphed to Mr. Cisco,² begging him most earnestly to withdraw his resignation and give the country the benefit of his services at least one quarter longer. He was determined, in one way or another, that neither the President nor the senators of New York should have anything to say in regard to this appointment; and conscious of his own blamelessness in all the controversy, he went home and wrote in his diary: "Oh, for more faith and clearer sight! How stable is the city of God! How disordered is the city of man!" Later in the day the President wrote him:

When I received your note this forenoon suggesting a conversation—a verbal conversation—in relation to the appointment of a successor to Mr. Cisco, I hesitated, because the difference does not, in the main part, lie within the range of a conversation between you and me. As the proverb goes, no man knows so well where the shoe pinches as he who wears it. I do not think Mr. Field a very proper man for the place, but I would trust your judgment and forego this were the greater difficulty out of the way. Much as I personally like Mr. Barney, it has been a great burden to me to retain him in his place when nearly all our friends in New York were directly or indirectly urging his removal. Then the appointment of Hogeboom to be general appraiser brought me to, and has ever since kept me at, the verge of open revolt. Now the appointment of Mr. Field would precipitate it, unless Senator Morgan, and those feeling as he does, could be brought to concur in it. Strained as I

¹ Lincoln to Chase, June 28, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 611.

² Schuckers, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 506.

already am at this point, I do not think that I can make this appointment in the direction of still greater strain.¹

In the evening the extremely tense situation was relieved by a telegram from Mr. Cisco complying with the request of the Secretary to remain another quarter. But it was not in the nature of Mr. Chase to accept this simple dénouement. He felt that the President had acted badly, and must be subjected to some discipline; and he naturally resorted to those measures which had hitherto proved so effective. He wrote to him:

The withdrawal of Mr. Cisco's resignation, which I inclose, relieves the present difficulty; but I cannot help feeling that my position here is not altogether agreeable to you, and it is certainly too full of embarrassment and difficulty and painful responsibility to allow in me the least desire to retain it. I think it my duty, therefore, to inclose to you my resignation. I shall regard it as a real relief if you think proper to accept it, and will most cheerfully render to my successor any aid he may find useful in entering upon his duties.²

In this letter Mr. Chase inclosed his formal resignation. The President received this note while very much occupied with other affairs. The first paper which met his eye was the telegram from Mr. Cisco withdrawing his resignation. Glad that the affair was so happily terminated, he laid the packet aside for some hours, without looking at the other papers contained in it. The next morning, wishing to write a congratulatory note to Mr. Chase upon this welcome termination of the crisis, he found, to his bitter chagrin and disappointment, that the Secretary had once more tendered his resignation. He took it to mean precisely what the Secretary had intended—that if he were to retain Mr. Chase as Secretary of the Treasury, it should not be hereafter as a subordinate; to refuse this resignation, to go once more to the Secretary and urge him to remain, would amount to an abdication of his constitutional powers. He therefore, without hesitation, sent him this letter:

Your resignation of the office of Secretary of the Treasury, sent me yesterday, is accepted. Of all I have said in commendation of your ability and fidelity I have nothing to unsay, and yet you and I have reached a point of mutual embarrassment in our official relations which it seems cannot be overcome or longer sustained consistently with the public service.³

At the same time he sent to the Senate the nomination of David Tod of Ohio as Secretary of the Treasury. Most people have chosen to consider this a singular selection. Yet

David Tod was by no means an unknown man. He had gained an honorable position at the bar; had been the Democratic candidate for governor in 1843; had served with credit as minister to Brazil; was first vice-president of the Charleston convention and became its president at Baltimore on the secession of Caleb Cushing; was one of the most prominent men in Ohio in railroad and mining enterprises; had been the most eminent and efficient of the war Democrats of the State; and as governor had shown executive capacity of high order.⁴ There were some superficial points of resemblance between Mr. Chase and Governor Tod that doubtless caught the attention of the President in choosing a successor to the former in such haste. Tod was a citizen of the same State with Chase, of which both had been governor; he had come into the Union party from the Democrats; he was a man of unusually dignified and impressive presence; but it is safe to say that no one had ever thought of him for the place now vacant. The nomination was presented to the Senate at its opening and was received with amazement. Not the least surprised of the statesmen in the Capitol was Mr. Chase himself, who was busy at the moment in one of the committee rooms of the Senate arranging some legislation which he needed for his department. There are many indications which go to show that his resignation of the evening before was intended, like those which had preceded it, as a means of discipline for the President. After sending it he wrote to Mr. Cisco expressing his thanks for the withdrawal of his resignation, and saying:

It relieves me from a very painful embarrassment. . . . I could not remain here and see your office made parcel of the machinery of party, or even feel serious apprehension that it might be.

Even on the morning of the 30th of June, Mr. Chase wrote to the President recommending a considerable increase of taxation, saying that there would be a deficit by existing laws of about eighty millions.

On the other hand, there is nothing to show, up to the instant that he was informed of the nomination of Tod, that he expected his official career to end on that day. The news for that moment created something like consternation in political circles at the capital. Mr. Washburne hurried to the White House, saying the change was disastrous; that at this time of military unsuccess, financial weakness, congressional hesitation on questions of conscription, and imminent famine in the West, it was

¹ Lincoln to Chase, June 28, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 613.

² Chase to Lincoln, June 29, 1864.

³ Lincoln to Chase, June 30, 1864. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 614.

⁴ Reid, "Ohio in the War."

ruinous. The Senate Committee on Finance, to which the nomination of Tod had been referred, came down in a body to talk with the President about it. The President gave this account of the interview: "Fessenden was frightened, Conness was angry, Sherman thought we could not have gotten on together much longer anyhow, Cowan and Van Winkle were indifferent."¹ They not only objected to any change, but specially protested against the nomination of Tod as too little known and too inexperienced for the place. The President replied that he had little personal acquaintance with Tod, that he had nominated him on account of the high opinion he had formed of him as governor of Ohio; but that the Senate had the duty and responsibility of passing upon the question of fitness, in which it must be entirely untrammelled; he could not, in justice to himself or to Tod, withdraw the nomination. The impression of the undesirability of the change rather deepened during the day. Mr. Hooper of Massachusetts, an intimate friend of both the President and Mr. Chase, and the man upon whom both principally relied for the conduct of financial legislation in the House, spoke of the crisis in deep depression. He said he had been for some time of the opinion that Mr. Chase did not see his way entirely clear to raising the funds which were necessary; that his supplementary demand for money sent in at the close of the session after everything had been granted which he asked, looked like an intention to throw an anchor to windward in case he was refused. Mr. Hooper said he had waked this morning feeling a little vexed that Chase had done this, that he thought it was an attempt to throw an unfair responsibility upon Congress; but now this resignation came to relieve him of all responsibility; his successor would have an enormous work to do; the future was troubled; there remained the great practical problem, regularly recurring, to raise one hundred millions a month.

I do not clearly see [he said] how it is to be done; the talent of finance in its national aspect is something entirely different from banking. Most bankers criticize Mr. Chase, but he has a faculty of using the knowledge and experience of others to the best advantage; that has sufficed him hitherto; a point has been reached where he does not clearly see what comes next, and at this point the President allows him to step from under his load.¹

This view of the case has a color of confirmation in a passage of the diary of Mr. Chase of the 30th of June, which goes to show at least a mixed motive in his resignation. After his resignation had been accepted, Mr. Hooper

¹ J. H., Diary.

² Chase, Diary. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 618.

had called upon him and, evidently hoping that some reconciliation was still possible, told him that, several days before, the President had spoken to him in terms of high esteem, indicating his purpose of making him Chief-Justice in the event of a vacancy, a post which Mr. Chase had long before told the President was the one he most desired. Mr. Chase answered that had such expression of good-will reached him in time it might have prevented the present misunderstanding, but that now he could not change his position. "Besides," he adds, "I did not see how I could carry on the department without more means than Congress was likely to supply, and amid the embarrassment created by factious hostility within, and both factious and party hostility without the department."²

At night the President received a dispatch from Mr. Tod declining the appointment on the ground of ill-health. The President's secretary went immediately to the Capitol to communicate this information to the senators, so that no vote might be taken on the nomination. Early the next morning the President sent to the Senate the nomination of William Pitt Fessenden, senator from Maine. When he gave the nomination to his secretary, the latter informed him that Mr. Fessenden was then in the ante-room waiting to see him. He answered, "Start at once for the Senate, and then let Fessenden come in." The senator, who was chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, began immediately to discuss the question of the vacant place in the Treasury, suggesting the name of Mr. McCulloch. The President listened to him for a moment with a smile of amusement, and then told him that he had already sent *his* nomination to the Senate. Fessenden leaped to his feet, exclaiming, "You must withdraw it. I cannot accept." "If you decline," said the President, "you must do it in open day, for I shall not recall the nomination." "We talked about it for some time," said the President, "and he went away less decided in his refusal."

The nomination was instantly confirmed, the executive session lasting no more than a minute. It gave immediate and widespread satisfaction. There seemed to be no difference of opinion in regard to Mr. Fessenden; the only fear was that he would not accept. His first impulse was to decline; but being besieged all day by the flattering solicitations of his friends, it was impossible for him to persist in refusing. The President was equally surprised and gratified at the enthusiastic and general approval the nomination had met with. He said:¹

It is very singular, considering that this appointment is so popular when made, that no one ever



WILLIAM PITT FESSENDEN.
(AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRADY.)

mentioned his name to me for that place. Thinking over the matter, two or three points occurred to me: first, his thorough acquaintance with the business; as chairman of the Senate Committee of Finance he knows as much of this special subject as Mr. Chase; he possesses a national reputation and the confidence of the country; he is a radical without the petulant and vicious fretfulness of many radicals. There are reasons why this appointment ought to be very agreeable to him. For some time past he has been running in rather a pocket of bad luck; the failure to renominate Mr. Hamlin makes possible a contest between him and the Vice-President, the most popular man in Maine, for the election which is now imminent. A little while ago in the Senate you know Trumbull told him his ill-temper had left him no friends, but this sudden and most gratifying manifestation of good feeling over his appointment, his instantaneous confirmation, the earnest entreaties of everybody that he should accept, cannot but be very grateful to his feelings.

Mr. Chase left a full record in his diaries and letters of the sense of injury and wrong done him by the President. He especially resented the President's reference to the "embarrassment in our official relations." "I had found a good deal of embarrassment from him," he said; "but what he had found from me I could not imagine, unless it has been caused by my unwillingness to have offices distributed as spoils or benefits. . . . He has never given me the active and earnest support I was entitled to." After Mr. Fessenden was appointed, the ex-Secretary entered in his diary his approval of the selection:

He has the confidence of the country, and many who have become inimical to me will give their

confidence to him and their support. Perhaps they will do more than they otherwise would to sustain him, in order to show how much better a Secretary he is than I was.

Before Mr. Fessenden accepted his appointment he called on Mr. Chase and conversed fully with him on the subject. Mr. Chase frankly and cordially advised him to accept, telling him that all the great work of the Department was now fairly blocked out and in progress, that the organization was all planned and in many ways complete, and all in a state which admitted of completion. His most difficult task would be to provide money. "But he would have advantages," said Mr. Chase, "which I had not. Those to whom I had given offense would have no cause of ill-will against my successor, and would very probably come to his support with zeal increased by their ill-will to me; so that my damage would be to his advantage, especially with a certain class of capitalists and bankers."

The entries in Mr. Chase's diary continue for several days in the same strain. He congratulates himself on his own integrity; he speaks with severity of the machinations of imaginary enemies. On the 2d of July he remarks the passage of the bill giving the Secretary of the Treasury control over trade in the rebel States and authority to lease abandoned property and to care for the freedmen, and adds: "How much good I expected to accomplish under this bill! Will my successor do this work? I fear not. He had not the same heart for this measure that I had." On the Fourth of July the ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, and the snapping of crackers awoke him to the reflection that "if the Government had been willing to do justice, and had used its vast powers with equal energy and wisdom, the struggle might have been happily terminated long ago." Later in the same day Mr. Fessenden came to see him, and informed him that he had been discussing with the President the subject of appointments in the Treasury Department, and that Mr. Lincoln had requested him not to remove any friends of Governor Chase unless there should be a real necessity for it. Mr. Chase persuaded himself that if the President had spoken to him in that tone he would have withdrawn his resignation.

Why did he not? [he mused.] I can see but one reason—that I am too earnest, too antislavery, and say too radical, to make him willing to have me connected with the Administration: just as my opinion that he is not earnest enough, not antislavery enough, not radical enough, but goes naturally with those hostile to me, rather than with me, makes me willing and glad to be disconnected from it.

How far his animosity against the President had misled this able, honest, pure, and otherwise sagacious man may be seen in one single phrase. Referring to the President's refusal to sign the reconstruction bill, he put down his deliberate opinion that neither the President nor his chief advisers had abandoned the idea of possible reconstruction with slavery; and this in spite of the President's categorical statement, "While I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation or by any of the acts of Congress," and of his declaration that such action

would be "a cruel and an astounding breach of faith." But after all these expressions of that petulant injustice which was only a foible in a noble character, the greatest financial Secretary which the country had known since Hamilton had a perfect right, in laying down the high office he had borne with such integrity and such signal success, to indulge in the meditation which we find in his diary of June 30:

So my official life closes. I have laid broad foundations. Nothing but wise legislation and especially bold yet judicious provision of taxes, with fair economy in administration, and energetic yet prudent military action, . . . seems necessary to insure complete success.

THE WATER-SEEKER.

WHO makes a road through regions rough and lone,
Who plants and rears a tree where shade is none,
Who scores the furrow in a soil untamed,
Is fit in song heroic to be named.

Nor scanter praise be his whose patient force
Gives to an arid land a water-course,
Gradual, but grateful as the jet that broke
From forth the ledge that felt the prophet's stroke.

Behold a toiler in far Idaho,
'Mid foothills where, in summer's steady glow,
The slender-shafted cottonwood looks dim,
The swarthy dust-cloud veils the horizon's rim.

As day by day his toil the stream extends,
Sometimes the grasses harsh a footfall bends—
His wife and child, the genii of the stream,
Before him rise as in a lovely dream!

Edith M. Thomas.

THE IRRIGATING DITCH.

PICTURES OF THE FAR WEST.—VII.



HE word "desert" is used, in the West, to describe alike lands in which the principle of life, if it ever existed, is totally extinct, and those other lands which are merely "thirsty."

West of the Missouri there are immense, sad provinces devoted to drought. They lie beneath skies that are pitilessly clear. The great snow-fields, the treasury of waters, are far away, and the streams which should convey the treasure are often many days' journeys apart. These wild water-courses are

Nature's commissaries sent from the mountains to the relief of the plains; but they scamper like pickpockets. They make away with the stores they were charged to distribute. They hurry along, making the only sound to be heard for miles in those vacant lands which they have defrauded. Year by year, or century by century, they plow out their barren channels: gradually they sink, beyond any possibility of fulfilling their mission. Now and then one will dig for itself a grave in the desert, bury its mouth in the sand, and be known as a "lost" river.



Meantime the long-repressed soil vents itself in extravagant, contorted growths of sage-brush. Where the sage grows rank and covers the ground like a dwarfed forest the settler chooses his location. But the prospector usually comes before the settler; he takes the greater risks which go with the higher chances. He has found, or fought, his way into the mountains, whence rumors of rich strikes quickly breed the mining fever. Hard upon the news of the first "boom" comes the settler, sure of his market. He ventures into the nearest valley, taps the runaway river, makes a hole in its pocket, and a little of the wrested treasure leaks out and fertilizes his wild acres. The new crops are miracles of abundance: mining-camp markets, while they last, are the romance of farming; very soon the primitive irrigator can afford to enlarge his ditches and improve his "system." New locators crowd into the narrow valley; the ranches lock fences side by side. Small ventures in stock are cast, like bread upon the waters, far forth into the hills, which are the granaries of the arid belt.

The river and its green dependencies strike a new and shriller color-note, which quavers through the dun landscape like the note of a willow-whistle on warm spring days—clear, sweet, but languid with the oppression of the bare, unshaded fields around. It is the human note, familiar in its crudeness, but dearly wel-

come to the traveler after days of nothing but sky and sage-brush, sun and silence.

The new settlement is but an outpost of the frontier: if the mines hold out, if the railroads presently remember that it is there, its young fields need not wither nor its ditches be choked with dust. Twenty years, if it should survive, will have brought it beauty as well as comfort and security. The older ranches will show signs of prosperous tenantage in their tree-defended barns and long lines of ditches, dividing, with a still sheen, the varied greens of the springing crops. Each freshly plowed field that encroaches upon the aboriginal sage-brush is a new stitch taken in the pattern of civilization which runs, a slender, bright border, along the skirt of the desert's dusty garment.

Faces, too, will soften, and forms grow more lovely as the conditions of life improve. The men and women who took the brunt of the siege and capture of those first square miles of desert will carry in their countenances something of the record of that achievement. The second generation may seek to forget that its fathers and mothers "walked in" behind a plains' wagon; but in the third, the story will be proudly revived, with all the honors of tradition; and in the fourth generation from the sage-brush the ancestral irrigator will be no less a personage, in the eyes of his descendants, than the Pilgrim Father, the Dutch Patroon, or the Virginia Cavalier.

* * *



AN AMERICAN AMATEUR ASTRONOMER.¹

FOR years Mr. S. W. Burnham occupied a seat alongside Judge Drummond of the United States Circuit Court in Chicago as stenographer, or shorthand reporter, to the court.

"What!" exclaimed the United States district attorney who practiced daily in Judge Drummond's court, "our Burnham the Chicago astronomer! Why, I have known him for these twelve years past, and knew there was a noted astronomer in the city by the name of Burnham, but never suspected our quiet,

modest friend was the man. Why, I have never heard him utter a word about astronomy."

"Very likely," replied his friend, "and if you had known him for a hundred years it might have been the same; for, except to intimate friends and men of similar tastes, he never alludes to his scientific investigations."

It is of this amateur astronomer, whose name is better known in St. Petersburg, London, Berlin, Paris, and Rome than in the city in which he has spent the best twenty years of his life, that I now wish to write.

Sherburne Wesley Burnham was born about

¹ We make the following extract from the letter of a correspondent at Chicago: "Mr. S. W. Burnham is now chief assistant of Professor Edward S. Holden, Director of the Lick Observatory in California. For several years Mr. Burnham has been perfecting himself in the art of photography with the purpose of applying it to astronomical observations, and in this work he has been very successful. Astronomical

photography of late years has come to be regarded as one of the most interesting departments of the science, and the great equatorial of the Lick Observatory has been fitted up with every needed photographic appliance."

Mr. Burnham has therefore been keeping up his scientific studies since this article was written in 1884.—EDITOR.