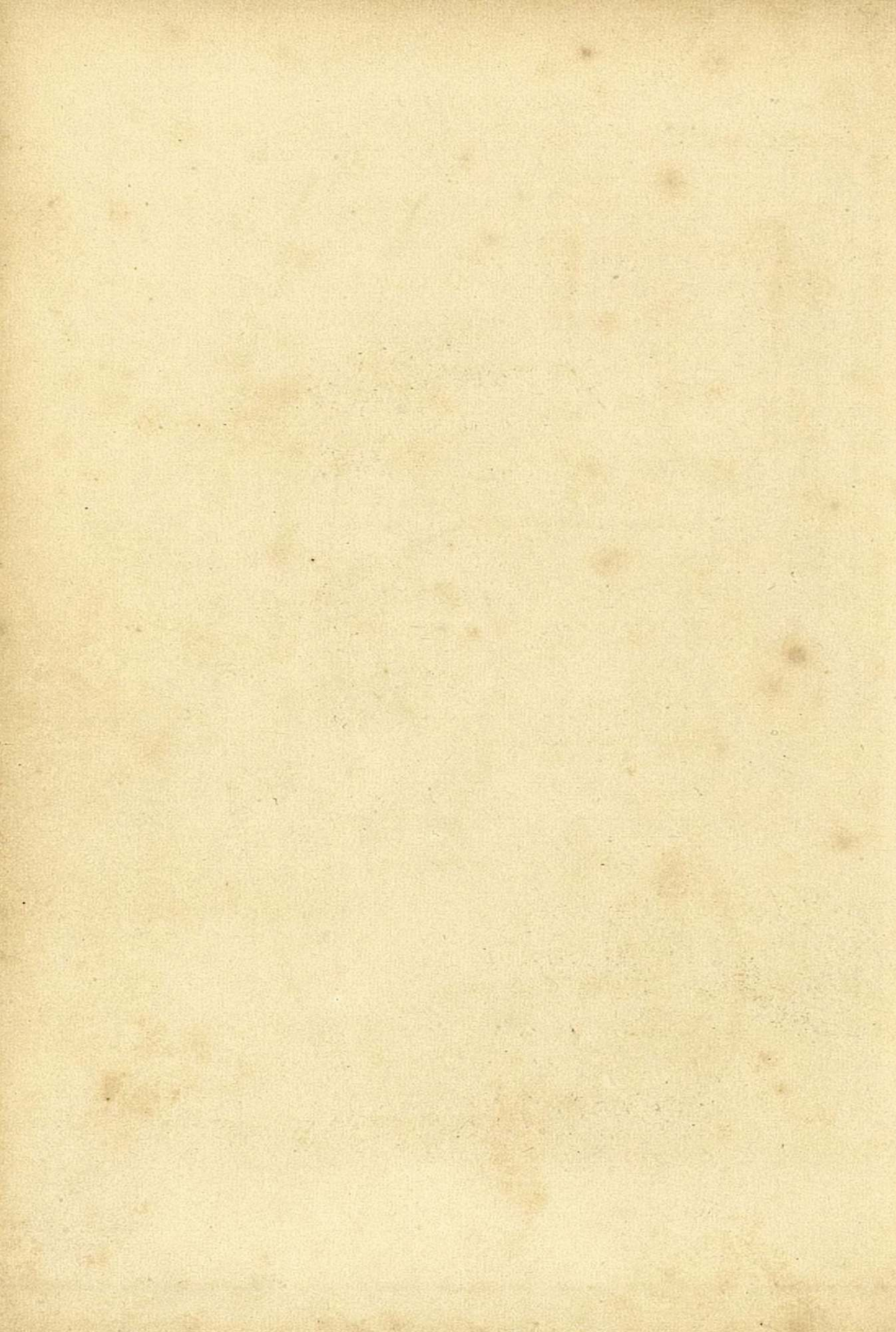
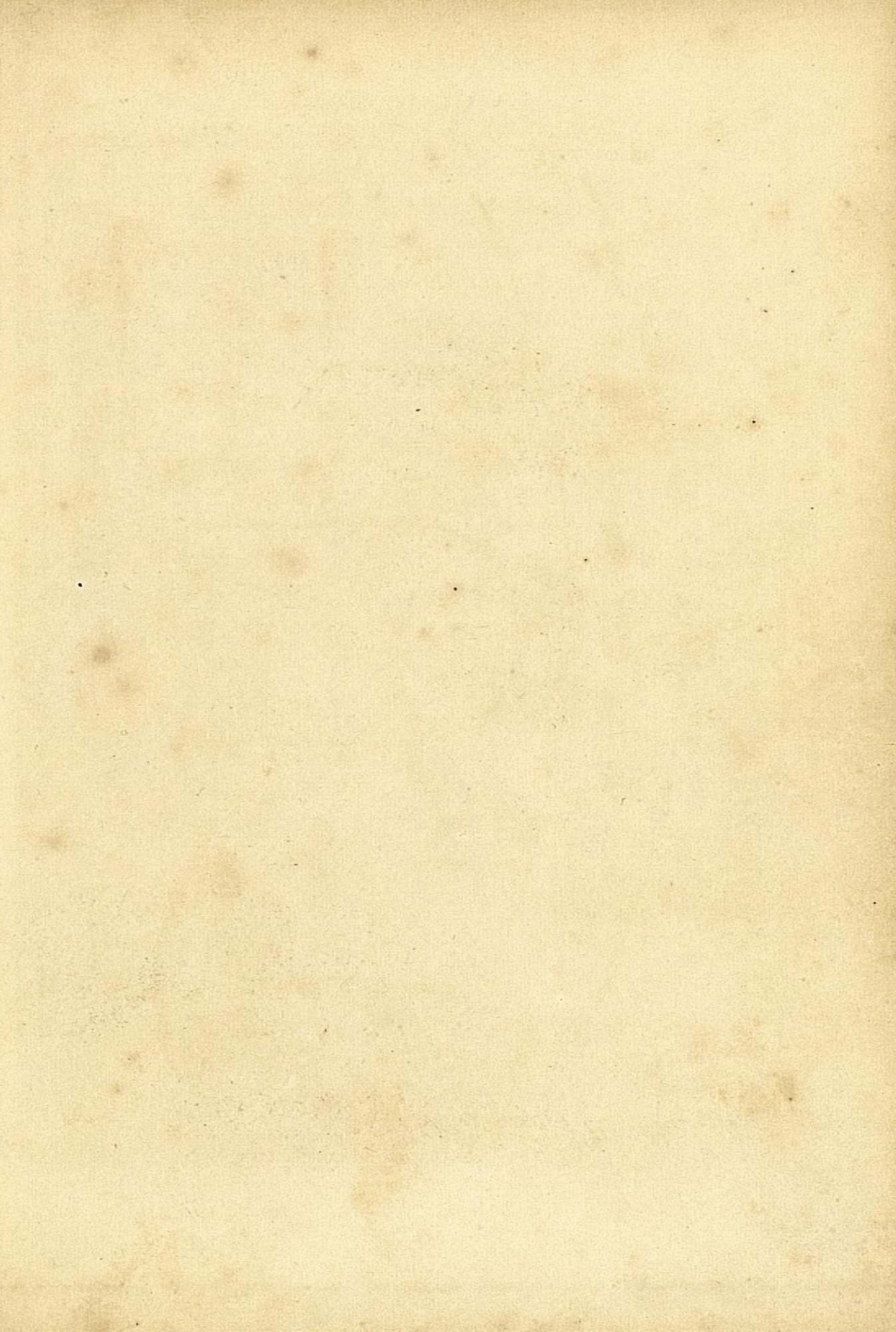




Nancy
Hanks
Lincoln
Public
Library





LINCOLN, CHASE, AND GRANT.

BY NOAH BROOKS,

Author of "Abraham Lincoln: A Biography for Young People," "American Statesmen," etc.

STORMY DAYS AMONG THE LAWMAKERS—LINCOLN AND CHASE, AND THEIR POLITICAL FRIENDS—THE RESIGNATION OF CHASE—ENTER LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT.

STORMY DAYS AMONG THE LAWMAKERS.



HE bill to enlist negroes in the army was opposed with tremendous energy by Peace Democrats, who affected to look on the proposition as an attempt to excite a servile war. This was the view of the case, it will be remembered, that was taken by the Confederate authorities; and Representative Wickliffe, of Kentucky, made himself ridiculous by offering a resolution inquiring as to the truthfulness of the report that fugitive slaves were being mustered into the service of the United States, contrary to law. Wickliffe was speedily silenced when, in due course of time, there came back from the army, through the War Department, the explanation that "colored Americans had been enlisted in the military service in the absence of their fugitive masters, who had fled southward." This ludicrous finale for a time quelled even the querulous and perpetually complaining gentleman from Kentucky. Later on, when it was found that colored substitutes would be accepted in place of drafted white men, there was a great rush on the part of the authorities of several of the Free States to fill up their quotas by enlisting negroes from the Border States and the District of Columbia. The War Department stopped this by compelling all enlisting agents to give bonds that men taken outside of their own State lines should not be used as recruits in the army. The United States Government, so Stanton said, wanted to employ these colored men in its own work, and would not tolerate interference from any of the States. Upon this, Senator Wilson, of Massachusetts, proposed to amend the conscription law by allowing the agents of loyal States to go into all of the seceded States where Union lines had been reestablished, and to enlist men, black or white, for their own State organizations. This was intended to facilitate the enlistment of black soldiers in the South; but the proposition came to Stanton's ears, and he and Wilson had a hot discussion, in the course of which the Secretary told the senator that no agents of Free States had any

right in Southern States raking up able-bodied colored men who would be put in the poorly officered State regiments, instead of being placed in the more thorough and vigorous organizations of colored troops then being undertaken by the Government of the United States. Becoming somewhat excited by this discussion, Secretary Stanton told Senator Wilson that if the Wilson amendment became a law, the War Office would be seeking a secretary on the very next day after. It is needless to add that Wilson's amendment was heard of no more.

The value of negro substitutes for drafted white men was quaintly hit off by "Petroleum V. Nasby," in one of his inimitable papers written from "Confedrit Crossroads." In a previous paper the parson had poured out the vials of his wrath upon the wicked project to use colored men as soldiers in the war; but when he discovered that colored substitutes could be made available to save the precious lives of the unwilling residents of the Border States, he sounded an impassioned cry to "rally" all the colored people that were drifting about the region of his Crossroads. This letter attracted the attention of President Lincoln, who never missed an opportunity to read Nasby's then famous papers. The President, by frequent reading, was able to repeat this particular "rally" from memory, and for a long time he humorously illustrated the inconsistency of the Copperhead position on the question of negro enlistments by reciting the letter with great effect, invariably ending his recitation with a hearty laugh.

In the winter of 1862 the dismemberment of Virginia by the admission of the western counties of the Old Dominion as the new State of West Virginia was the subject of a long and interesting debate. The congressional elections of the previous November had resulted somewhat unfavorably for the administration. Lincoln's emancipation policy, the removal of McClellan, and other important events, as it was alleged, had so aroused the popular indignation that the Republican majority in the next succeeding House of Representatives was somewhat diminished. This gave pause to

some of the more timorous Unionists, who hesitated at taking a step so radical as that proposed in the division of Virginia. Among those who voted against the passage of the West Virginia bill were such Republicans as Roscoe Conkling, of New York; John B. Alley, of Massachusetts; James M. Ashley, of Ohio; and Martin F. Conway, of Kansas. This last-named gentleman, however, was an erratic and radical politician whose objection to the bill was that it provided for gradual, and not immediate, emancipation of the slaves in the proposed new State. Conway subsequently secured notoriety by his preposterous scheme to divide the Northern States into new confederacies. Later on he made an insane speech in the House, in which he attacked the Lincoln administration for its "pro-slavery character," asserting that Lincoln was trying "to build up a pro-slavery party, and had filled the departments and the army with pro-slavery sympathizers with the rebellion." Conway was a small, red-topped, pale-faced man, with an excitable temperament and vehement manners. Once, while he was in the midst of an incendiary harangue, the limit of his time expired, and when he asked permission to go on, he was stopped by Owen Lovejoy with an objection; whereupon Conway, darting his finger at the burly radical from Illinois, screamed, "And you too, Brutus!" This was not the only exciting episode in which Conway was a conspicuous figure. It was charitably believed that his reason had been unsettled by his intense attention to the political issues that were then so prominent.

One of the most notable incidents in Congress in the winter of 1862-63 was the remarkable speech of Vallandigham in which he defined his position and made his reelection to Congress an impossibility so long as a respectable majority of his own party had any influence at the polls. It was an important occasion, and the rumor that he would at that time define his position brought a great concourse to the House; and when he began to speak the members from the opposite side of the chamber clustered around the nearest adjoining seats, and listened with intentness to what he had to say. It was a singular spectacle, this rapt attention by relentless patriots to the studied but vehement address of a man who was soon to be sent across the rebel lines by a Union officer as a traitor to his country. But the eagerness of the Republican listeners to hear Vallandigham's speech was inspired rather by the hope that he would say something that would damage the cause of the Peace Democrats than by their admiration for his oratory. In brief, his was an argument in favor of the right of the revolution. He said that George Washington was a rebel, and that we were all

descended from rebels. He referred very frequently to some form of compromise; and the ghost of "peaceful compromise" was continually hovering in the background while he spoke. He ventured somewhat into the domain of prophecy when he said, "History will record the utter, disastrous, and most bloody failure of the experiment of an attempt to coerce the Southern States." He also said that if the war was prolonged, and the South should establish its independence, "the great Northwest would go with the South, and would not be a mere appanage to the Atlantic States, without a seaboard."

One of the most vigorous and pungent speeches of that session was made in reply to Vallandigham by John A. Bingham, of Ohio. Judge Bingham was one of those curiously constituted men who never excel in a formal speech, and who require provocation, contradiction, and interruption to arouse them to real eloquence. The more frequently he was interfered with and baited in the discussion, the more vigorous was his logic, and the more brilliant and forcible his rhetoric. On this occasion he was a remarkable figure. He was a small, nervous man, with a pale, thin face and long, tawny, fine hair, an excitable manner, and lambent, light blue eyes. Again and again he "brought down the House" with his apt rejoinders to Vallandigham, who lost ground whenever he ventured to interrupt Bingham. Another of the speakers who undertook to reply to Vallandigham was Representative Wright, of Indiana, a War Democrat, an elderly white-haired man, whose commanding figure rose high above the mob of Congressmen clustered around on the desks and chairs nearest to the debaters. Mr. Wright had lost a son in the battle of Fredericksburg, and two more of his sons were then in the fore-front of battle. Eloquently referring to the complaint of the Peace Democrats that the war required sacrifice of life and treasure, he said it was better that we should offer three hundred thousand more of the best men of the nation, and so end the rebellion, than bequeath its horrors to a generation to come, and let it meet the terrors we had not the courage to grapple with and conquer. There were moist eyes in the throng of hearers round this noble Roman father as he quoted the lines:

I should have blushed if Cato's house had stood
secure
And flourished in a civil war.

It would be needless here to refer to Vallandigham's subsequent career. We may recall his incendiary speeches in Ohio later in that year, his arrest by General Burnside, his deportation beyond the rebel lines, and the flames of discord that flared up in the North when

these events took place. Although President Lincoln was greatly surprised and dismayed by Burnside's treatment of Vollandigham, he wrote several documents pertinent thereto which have passed into history as political classics. With a single stroke of his pen he revealed the kernel of the contention when he asked, "Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert?"

When Vollandigham, passing through the Confederacy, had, by a detour seaward, finally returned to the United States by way of Canada, I had occasion to mention his name to Lincoln, remarking that he had been speaking in Ohio. "What!" exclaimed the President, looking at me quizzically. "Has Vollandigham got back?" Somewhat puzzled, I explained that everybody knew that. "Dear me!" said Lincoln, with preternatural solemnity. "I supposed he was in a foreign land. Anyhow, I hope I do not know that he is in the United States; and I shall not, unless he says or does something to draw attention to him." Presently he went to his table, and, drawing out some loose sheets of paper, said that he had there the rough notes of an interview which he had lately had with Fernando Wood. This was in August, 1864. It appeared that Wood had said to the President: "We Peace Democrats are the only Democrats; all others are bastards and impostors; there is no such thing as a War Democrat, for that is a contradiction in terms. We don't expect to elect our candidate for President this fall: the people of the North are not yet ready for peace. But peace must come sooner or later; and when it does, the Democratic party will be the party which will act and assimilate with the dominant party in the South, and so we shall again have our rightful ascendancy. Now, Mr. President, you cannot find fault with that; it is not going to hurt you any."

Lincoln then said that he had told Wood that he was disposed to be generous; and he asked if Vollandigham's alleged return was any part of this program. Wood replied that it was not, and added: "You may not believe me, but I assure you that I never knew or expected that he would return, though I acknowledge that I have had a letter from him since he got back. He has had already more notoriety than he deserves, and I warn you that the true policy is that he be severely let alone. To this the President replied, according to his own account: "I don't believe that Vollandigham has returned; I never can believe it until he forces himself offensively upon the public attention and upon my attention. Then we

shall have to deal with him. So long as he behaves himself decently, he is as effectually in disguise as the man who went to a masquerade party with a clean face."

As we saw afterward, Vollandigham did remain "in disguise" until he was defeated that year by John Brough for the governorship of Ohio by the phenomenal majority of 101,000 votes. Thereafter his disappearance was final.

LINCOLN AND CHASE, AND THEIR POLITICAL FRIENDS.

SECRETARY CHASE was inordinately jealous of any apparent invasion of the appointing power of his office. His warmly supported theory was that each head of an executive department should exercise exclusive control of all the appointments and removals in his branch of the public service. This, of course, would leave the President absolutely shorn of all power in the matter of making appointments, whether important or unimportant. If the Secretary of the Treasury were to be supreme in the choice of an officer to fill the most considerable place in his department, then the Secretary of State should also be the sole authority in respect of selecting foreign ministers to represent our government abroad. Secretary Chase not only held to this view, at least so far as his own department was concerned, but he also resented the interference of congressmen, and more than once brushed aside President, senators, and representatives in his determination to make important appointments without their consent or approval.

A curious illustration of this usage of the Secretary came to my knowledge in March, 1863. There had been a thorough overhauling of the chief federal offices in San Francisco, conducted by a special agent of the Treasury Department—Thomas Brown—who was a confidential friend of Secretary Chase. On his report, it was determined in the interior councils of the Treasury Department to make "a clean sweep." Secretary Chase intimated this determination to the three California congressmen—A. A. Sargent (afterward United States senator, and subsequently minister to Germany), F. F. Low (afterward minister to China), and T. G. Phelps. These gentlemen, having been informed by the Secretary that he intended to make many changes, were invited one evening to his private office in the Treasury building, where they were entertained with a brief summary of Brown's report, after which Secretary Chase blandly informed the expectant congressmen that he had resolved to remove all of the leading officials and to supply their places with new men. He then read a list of the appointments as he

had made them out, and waited with calm dignity to hear if the congressmen had anything to say. But as he had already announced his irrevocable decision in the matter, there was evidently nothing for them to say; and, having expressed themselves as resigned to the Secretary's will, they departed. It was reported that the three astonished Congressmen uttered some strong language as they passed out of the Treasury building. A few days afterward, the California congressmen paid their respects to the President, and departed for New York on their way to San Francisco. There Mr. Phelps at once took a steamer homeward by way of Panama, and Messrs. Sargent and Low lingered for a day or two in the city.

While they were in New York, I was astonished one night by receiving from President Lincoln an urgent summons to come immediately to the White House. Upon arriving there, Mr. Lincoln said that he had just learned that a number of removals and appointments in San Francisco had been determined upon by Secretary Chase without consulting him or the California congressmen; and that the three congressmen had departed from Washington very angry and discomfited. With some asperity of manner, he wanted to know if this was true. I told him that it was true, and I recited the facts as they had come to my knowledge from Messrs. Sargent, Low, and Phelps. The President then angrily asked why I had not told him this before. I replied that it was not my affair; that as long as the congressmen had seen fit to conceal their feelings of disappointment from the President when they bade him good-by, it certainly was not my business to "tell tales out of school." The President expressed his astonishment that he had been kept in the dark about so grave a matter as the emptying and filling of the most important federal offices on the Pacific coast. Then he anxiously asked if there was any way by which the California congressmen could be reached and brought back; and when told that two of them were still in New York, he produced a telegraph blank and insisted that I should at once write a despatch to Messrs. Sargent and Low, and request them to return to Washington and see the President. With that careful attention to the smallest details which always characterized Lincoln, he enjoined upon me that I should send the despatch and collect the charge therefor from him the next time I came to the White House. The despatch was sent, the two congressmen were recalled, and the slate which Secretary Chase had so carefully prepared was eventually broken. Subsequently Mr. Lincoln informed me that Mr. Chase was "exceedingly

hurt" by the President's interference with his plans. A curious outcome of all this business was that Secretary Chase, having been disappointed in his scheme for filling the office of collector of the port of San Francisco, insisted that one of the two congressmen then in Washington should be appointed in place of the person whom he (Chase) had previously selected for the post. The President suggested that all three congressmen should get together in San Francisco, agree upon the list of appointments, and send it to him for ratification and approval. This, however, seemed impracticable; and when Messrs. Sargent and Low finally sailed for California, Mr. Low carried with him his commission as collector of the port.

Victor Smith, formerly a resident of Ohio, and a personal friend of Secretary Chase, was one of the disturbing elements that made the great Secretary's last days in the Treasury Department turbulent and unhappy. Victor Smith had been appointed by the Secretary to the place of collector of customs at Port Townsend, Washington Territory. Smith was a restless visionary, and in these later days would have been called a crank. J. W. Schuckers, who was private secretary to Mr. Chase, and also his biographer, has spoken of Smith 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." While he was collector at Port Townsend, Smith succeeded in inducing the government to move the custom-house from that point to another on Puget Sound, where he had some speculative interests. It was a foolish and harebrained scheme, and created a bitter feeling among business men. His new place was named Port Angelos. There the collector maintained himself for a time in a semi-barbaric proprietorship. It is related of him that he once invited the officers of the revenue cutter *Shubrick* to dine at his house; and the officers, considering that the collector of the port was a high functionary, arrayed themselves in full dress, with swords, gold lace, and other gorgeous insignia of their station, and went ashore in state to wait upon Collector Smith at his mansion, which was then in an unfinished condition. In due course of time the collector, assisted by his wife, brought out two carpenter's saw-horses, on which was placed a board covered with wrapping-paper. The repast, which was as simple as any ever partaken of by the hermits of olden time, was then set forth; and Smith, taking from his pockets three big apples, gave one to each of the three officers,

with a small forked stick, remarking: "You'll have to roast your own apples."

This eccentric functionary once informed me that he had "so intertwined himself in the fibers of the government that his removal from office was an impossibility." Nevertheless, the outcry against Smith was so great that the President told Secretary Chase that the man must go. Every federal officer, and nearly every prominent citizen in the Puget Sound collection district, had written letters or signed memorials protesting against the continuance of Smith in his office, and had demanded his removal and the return of the custom-house to the point from which it had been so needlessly carried away. The Secretary of the Treasury was obdurate; but finally, in May, 1863, the harassed President "took the bull by the horns," and resolved upon Smith's removal. The stream of expostulations, protests, and remonstrances that poured in upon him from the distracted region over which Victor Smith reigned had become intolerable; but, kind and considerate to the last, the President wrote to the Secretary (as we learn from the Nicolay-Hay history of Lincoln) to this effect:

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.

When the Secretary received this note, he made out a commission for Victor Smith's successor, wrote his own resignation as Secretary of the Treasury, and sent both to the President. This was only one of several instances in which Chase manifested his disposition to retire from the public service in case his will was thwarted in any particular; but once more the President succeeded in placating the ruffled Secretary, who still remained at the head of the Treasury Department, notwithstanding the removal of the petty officer from his distant post on Puget Sound.

There is an interesting sequel to this story. One of the most conspicuous opponents of Victor Smith was Dr. A. G. Henry, surveyor-general of Washington Territory, an old friend of the President, whose name has been mentioned in a previous chapter of these reminiscences. He was the bearer of a load of remonstrances that were finally influential in determining the removal of Victor Smith. Dr. Henry and Smith had long been on terms of enmity, and always declined to recognize each other when they passed by. On my return to California after Lincoln's death, in

1865, Dr. Henry was a fellow-passenger on the steamer from New York to Aspinwall. Victor Smith had been in Washington on some one of his many busy errands, and had departed for home on the steamer *Golden Rule*, of the Nicaragua line, and in her had been wrecked on Roncador Reef, since made famous by the catastrophe that deprived us of the historic *Kearsarge*. We found the shipwrecked passengers at Panama waiting for transportation to San Francisco, and most of them embarked with us, Smith among the number. This addition to our passenger-list crowded the ship, and the newer arrivals were distributed among those who had been allotted cabins to themselves. Soon after we left our moorings in Panama Bay, Dr. Henry came to me, in great agitation of mind, with the information that in the new allotment Victor Smith had been given a berth in his (Henry's) room. "I would n't dare to sleep in the same room with that viper," said the doctor, excitedly. "He might get up and kill me in the night. You know the purser; I wish you would go to him and see if you cannot have Smith put in some other man's room. I don't care who else is put into my room; but Smith I will not have." Smiling at the good doctor's vehemence, I started for the purser's office, but was intercepted by Victor Smith, who said: "They have put me in the same state-room with that old devil, Dr. Henry. You know the purser; I wish you would use your influence with him and have me put in some other room. I would n't dare to sleep in the same room with that man." The necessary change was made, and Dr. Henry and Victor Smith were not obliged to recognize each other's existence on that ship at least.

But when they reached San Francisco later in the month (July, 1865), they both, with great reluctance, took passage on the steamer *Brother Jonathan*, bound for Portland, Oregon. There was no alternative except the slow transit by stage from Sacramento northward. The *Brother Jonathan* struck on a reef on this her last ill-fated voyage, and nearly all on board perished, among the lost being General George Wright, who, having survived the perils of war, was then on his way to take command of the Department of the Columbia. The waves also engulfed Dr. Henry and Victor Smith. In the supreme moment, when certain death yawned before these two determined enemies, did they clasp hands and forgive the past? No man knows.

The tragical episode that marked the close of the career of Dr. Henry, Lincoln's good friend, may best be concluded here with a letter from Mrs. Lincoln in which touching reference is made to him and to her husband. I may as well explain that the "claims" referred to in

Mrs. Lincoln's letter were certain shares of "wild-cat" stock, sent to her in her days of prosperity, and which the poor lady thought might be sold for a small sum. This is her letter:

CHICAGO, May 11, 1866.

NOAH BROOKS, ESQ., SAN FRANCISCO.

MY DEAR SIR: A few days since I received a very sad letter from Mrs. Henry, in which she vividly portrays her great desolation and dependence upon others for every earthly comfort. I am induced to enclose you the Nevada claims and also a petroleum claim, hoping that you may be able to secure a purchaser for them, in which case I will most cheerfully give Mrs. Henry some of the proceeds. I am aware that I am taxing your kindness very greatly, yet the remembrance of your great esteem for my beloved husband and Dr. Henry would excuse the intrusion upon you. I wish you were not so far removed from us — *true* friends, in these overwhelming days of affliction, I find to be very rare. I find myself clinging more tenderly to the memory of those who, if *not* so remote, would be more friendly.

I hope you will be able to visit Mrs. Henry the coming summer. I sometimes, in my wildness and grief, am tempted to believe that it is some *terrible, terrible* dream, and that my idolized husband will return to me. Poor Dr. Henry! he who wept so truly and freely with us in our great misfortune, how soon he was called to join the beloved one who had so recently "gone before"! In my own great sorrow, how often I have prayed for death to end my great misery!

My sons are well, and a great comfort to me. . . . Robert and Taddie remember you very kindly. I hope you will write to us more frequently. I am well aware of the deep sympathy you feel for us, and the great affection and confidence my husband cherished for you draws you very near to us. With apologies for troubling you as I am now doing, I remain always sincerely your friend,

MARY LINCOLN.

THE RESIGNATION OF CHASE.

LINCOLN was greatly exasperated by the Victor Smith incident; and when he had finally disposed of the matter, as he thought, he was much depressed by frequent repetitions of similar complications. From him and from one of the senators who waited upon him after Chase's resignation I learned the facts of the last trial of the patience of the long-suffering Lincoln. The crisis which made it impossible for Mr. Chase to stay any longer in the Treasury Department was brought on, as everybody knows, by his determination to have his own way in making several important appointments in the city of New York. But, as we have seen, the trouble began long before, when Secretary Chase grew more and more determined to resist interference with any of the appointments in the Treasury Department. Whether his am-

bition to be President of the United States had anything to do with this hardening of his will in the matter of executive patronage, it is impossible to say; but from the time that his name was brought prominently before the public by Senator Pomeroy, of Kansas, and others, until his final exit from the Treasury Department, Mr. Chase was continually in hot water. His resignation handed in when Victor Smith's removal was determined upon by the President, was made in May, 1863. His final resignation was tendered in June, 1864. It would appear that Mr. Chase believed that his great position in the United States Government was absolutely necessary to the welfare of the republic, and that he could not be permitted to leave it without inviting disaster; and his frequent threats of resignation were intended, apparently, to coerce the President into letting him have his own way in all matters of detail.

When the nomination of David Tod, of Ohio, went to the Senate in place of Salmon P. Chase, resigned, the senators were struck dumb with amazement. In executive session the whole matter was at once referred to the Finance Committee, and in a few minutes Senators Fessenden, Conness, Sherman, Cowan, and Van Winkle were on their way to the White House. They had two questions to ask. One was, Why has Chase resigned, and is the act final? And the other was, Why has the name of David Tod been sent to the Senate? The President received the senators with great affability, and there was a general and free discussion of the situation, Senator Fessenden, chairman of the Finance Committee, being the mouthpiece of the visiting statesmen. The President immediately disposed of the Tod branch of the complication by reading a telegram from Governor Tod declining the nomination. Then he gave the senators a full history of the original formation of the cabinet in 1861, explaining why each man had been chosen, and expressing his great confidence in Secretary Chase's abilities and integrity. Then he followed with a detailed statement of the relations that had existed between himself and the Secretary of the Treasury since the latter had taken office. He told the senators all the incidents concerning the many times that Chase had offered his resignation, and he referred to the ill temper which the Secretary had betrayed on those occasions. Then he took from a pigeonhole all the correspondence between himself and the Secretary, showing numerous instances of the testiness of the Secretary and the much-enduring patience of the President during a period stretching over nearly all the years of the administration down to that day.

Lincoln said that of course Mr. Chase had

a full right to indulge in his ambition to be President, and there was no question as to his claim upon the gratitude of the American people; but indiscreet friends of the Secretary had succeeded in exciting a feeling disagreeable in itself, and embarrassing to the President and to the Secretary. This had gone on, he said, until they disliked to meet each other; and to him (Lincoln) the relation had become unendurable, and he had accepted the resignation of Mr. Chase as a finality. He told the committee that he would not continue to be President with Mr. Chase in the cabinet; that if the Senate should insist upon it, they could have his resignation, and take Mr. Hamlin for President. Of one of the appointments which Secretary Chase had insisted upon President Lincoln spoke with considerable feeling. This appointment, which Chase had adhered to tenaciously, and which Lincoln said was discreditable to the Secretary, was one which the President insisted never would be made with his consent. He told the senators that at a party where Mr. Chase's chosen appointee was present, this person was intoxicated, and kicked his hat in the air in the presence of ladies and gentlemen. Lincoln said he had told Chase that he would take any other nomination which he (Chase) would send him, but this man he could not and would not accept. Chase, notwithstanding Lincoln's statement concerning the man's habits and character, persisted in urging the nomination upon the President. This, Lincoln said, was "the last straw." As we know, Tod's declination of the nomination left the President free to send another name to the Senate, and the Finance Committee of that body was then for the first time enlightened as to the unfortunate relations which had so long existed between the Secretary of the Treasury and the President.

The way was now clear, and the next surprise to which the public was treated was the nomination and immediate confirmation of Senator William Pitt Fessenden as Secretary of the Treasury. It was a picturesque feature of this latter part of the business that Senator Fessenden was in the President's office conferring with him on the situation of affairs while his own nomination as successor to Chase was on its way to the Senate; and when Fessenden learned from the President that that nomination had actually been made, he went in hot haste to the Capitol, only to find that the appointment had been confirmed before he could enter his protest against it.

That evening I was at the White House, and Mr. Lincoln sent for me to come into the library, where I found him lying upon his back on a sofa, with his hands clasped over his chest, and looking weary beyond description. But he was

in a comfortable frame of mind; and, after going over the incidents of this exciting episode, he said cheerfully, "When I finally struck the name of Fessenden as Governor Chase's successor, I felt as if the Lord had n't forsaken me yet."

It is well known that the friends of Secretary Chase, and probably some of Lincoln's, insisted upon fomenting strife between these two illustrious men long after the Secretary had retired to private life, and Lincoln's second nomination and election had eliminated the presidential question, for a time at least, from all other relations which affected the two men. This mischievous influence was at work when, on the death of Roger B. Taney, the great office of chief justice of the United States became vacant, and Chase's name was immediately brought forward by his friends and admirers, who hoped to see him succeed to that post. Senator Sumner and other radical Republicans at once deluged Lincoln with letters and telegrams beseeching him to nominate Chase as chief justice. On the other hand, Lincoln was overwhelmed with protests from his own political and personal friends, who reminded him that Chase had not "behaved well" while Secretary of the Treasury, and had embarrassed the President with his inordinate ambition.

While the matter was pending, I had occasion to call on the President, and the rumors of Chase's appointment naturally came up for discussion. Mr. Lincoln had been, for him, very gay and cheery; but as soon as Chase and the chief-justiceship were mentioned, his visage lengthened, and with great seriousness he pointed to a pile of telegrams and letters on his table, and said: "I have been all day, and yesterday and the day before, besieged by messages from my friends all over the country, as if there were a determination to put up the bars between Governor Chase and myself." Then, after a pause, he added: "But I shall nominate him for chief justice, nevertheless." It was therefore with amusement that I learned from one of Chase's most ardent friends, about an hour later, that "Lincoln was not great enough to nominate Secretary Chase as chief justice"; and with inward satisfaction I bore in silence much contumely and reproach from Chase's fast friends from that time until the country was delighted by the intelligence that Chase's nomination had been sent to the Senate on December 6, 1864, in a message written by the President's own hand.

The political complications which immediately preceded the presidential nominations of 1864 were extremely distressing to Lincoln. Washington was in a ferment, and to some degree, although not to the extent that Wash-

ington politicians believed, the country was responsive to the excitement which prevailed at the national capital. It had become evident that Lincoln's nomination was impending, although the friends of Mr. Chase insisted that his renomination was unlikely, and that his reelection was an absolute impossibility. At this later day, when the political events of 1864 lie behind us like landmarks in a road over which we have securely traveled, it is difficult to understand how any man of even moderate sagacity could have supposed, as not a few did, that Lincoln stood very little chance of renomination and none at all of reelection. It is difficult also to comprehend, even now, the motives that induced so many honest and earnest Republicans at the seat of government to be at great pains, as they were, to defeat what seemed to be the popular will respecting Lincoln. It was urged by the friends of Mr. Chase that no man should be elected to a second term of the presidency; and it was well known that Mr. Chase himself made no secret of his strong belief in the saving grace of the one-term principle. Many people were dissatisfied with the alleged slowness of the Lincoln administration as regarded both political and military operations. On the other hand, many ardent Union men, in zealous advocacy of what they conceived to be the conservative policy of the administration, went quite as far on the other tack as the radicals did in the direction of a more vigorous and aggressive policy on the part of the President and his cabinet. The eddying currents of political opinion surged about the Capitol while Congress was in session; and in both branches of Congress the rival factions skirmished with each other, their real purpose being thinly veiled by a pretense of earnest devotion to the public business.

The Missouri imbroglio was a source of perpetual annoyance to the great body of public men who had no special interest in the unreasonable quarrel that raged in that State. Beginning with the brief and brilliant reign of General Frémont, and extending almost to the close of the war, the Unionist party in Missouri was divided into two hostile camps, radical and conservative. These never became friends and allies as long as the war endured, and political matters were consequently hopelessly mixed in Missouri. The quarrel was at its height during General Schofield's administration of military rule in the State, before the civil authority reasserted itself. Finally, when B. Gratz Brown and John B. Henderson came to the United States Senate as representatives respectively of the radical and the conservative wings of the Union party, there was for a while something like an armed truce. The Blair family, however, with a proclivity to mischief-mak-

ing that was amazing, succeeded in fomenting the Missouri quarrel whenever it showed any indications of simmering down. Frank P. Blair, Jr., took his seat in the House of Representatives with the avowed determination of showing up, as he expressed it, the corruption which existed in the administration of the Treasury Department in Missouri. He represented the so-called conservative wing of his party, and he demanded the appointment of a committee to inquire into and report upon the alleged infraction by treasury agents of the act of congress regulating commercial intercourse with the States declared to be in insurrection. As a counterblast to this, some of the Missouri radicals brought charges against Blair in which it was alleged that he, as a commanding general in the Fifteenth Army Corps near Vicksburg in the summer of 1863, with his officers had been engaged in a large speculation, in the course of which brandy, whisky, beer, wines, cigars, tobacco, and canned fruits had been bought in St. Louis, and smuggled through the military lines for the use of rebel officers on the other side of the military boundaries. The result of this charge against Blair was harmless. It was proved that a small order given by General Blair and his staff, the total cost of which would not have exceeded one hundred and fifty or one hundred and seventy-five dollars, had been fraudulently expanded by the agent to whom it was intrusted, so that it called for a variety of goods amounting to about nine thousand dollars in value. This disgraceful episode was only one of many which marked the long and stormy discussions dragged into the House day after day by the quarrelsome Missouri members; at the same time, Montgomery Blair in Maryland was pursuing Henry Winter Davis, a radical Republican, with the same relentlessness with which his brother Frank kept on the track of the Missouri radicals.

General Schofield, who had been military governor of Missouri during its reconstruction period, was nominated by the President for promotion to the rank of major-general in the volunteer army. As this happened during the height of the Missouri excitement, Gratz Brown in the Senate, and his radical colleagues in the House, fell foul of the nomination with rage and determination. Meanwhile, however, the War Department had attempted to quiet the disturbance by providing for Schofield at another point, and putting Rosecrans in his place. Although the changing of Schofield removed the immediate cause of the bitterness of the radical Missourians, opposition to his confirmation was still kept up, and Washington politics for weeks apparently consisted of nothing but the rumors and reports which circulated about

General Schofield's nomination and his confirmation by the Senate.

The Blair family also came to the front conspicuously in the fall of 1863, in a speech made at Rockville, Maryland, in October, by Montgomery Blair, then Postmaster-General. The speech, which was an elaborate defense of the alleged conservative policy of the President, was also a bitter arraignment of prominent members of the cabinet, senators, and representatives. The speech was subsequently issued in pamphlet form, and created considerable stir in Washington, and among the President's real friends in Maryland. The title-page of the pamphlet edition of this speech gave the speaker considerable fictitious importance as "a member of Lincoln's cabinet," and was ingeniously worded so as to endue the speech with an appearance of having been sanctioned by the President in order to set himself right before the people as against the wicked aspersions of the more radical men in his party. Of course Lincoln eventually heard of this extraordinary oration, and a friend, calling on him one day, found him reading a little slip cut from a newspaper, from which he was endeavoring to get some idea of the then famous Rockville speech. The visitor offered to send the President a copy of the pamphlet as published by Blair; and, at his request, I took it to the President, who was greatly amused, as well as astonished, by the ingeniously worded title-page of that queer document.

Later on in that month, just after the Pennsylvania State elections, William D. Kelley and Colonel John W. Forney called on the President with their congratulations, and Forney very plainly said to the President (Blair being then present) that his conservative friend, Governor Curtin, of Pennsylvania, desired the President to know that if the Rockville speech of Postmaster-General Blair had been made thirty days earlier, it would have lost the Union ticket in Pennsylvania twenty thousand votes. To Blair Forney also expressed his astonishment that he, a cabinet minister, should have had the hardihood to utter such sentiments in public just on the eve of important elections in other States. Blair responded that whatever Forney might think of the matter, he had only spoken his honest sentiments at Rockville. "Then," said the angry Forney, turning upon Blair, "why don't you leave the cabinet, and not load down with your individual and peculiar sentiments the administration to which you belong?" The President sat by, a silent spectator of this singular and unexpected scene.

Colonel Forney gave me an account of this affair, and probably other newspaper corre-

spondents had it from the same source. Among these, Whitelaw Reid published an account of the interview which was widely copied and commented upon. Thereupon the Washington correspondent of the "New York Herald," on the authority of Postmaster-General Blair, denied that Colonel Forney had ever used to him, in the presence of Mr. Lincoln, the language attributed to him in the reports of that interview. I went to the President with the story as it was printed; and, having looked through the clipping, he said that he "guessed it was about correct." The incident is told here as a good example of the difficulty that Lincoln had with his own friends, and of the bitterness that divided some of them from each other. Nobody ever doubted Blair's devotion and loyalty to Lincoln; and certainly Forney never for a moment considered any man fit to take Lincoln's place, and heartily and enthusiastically supported his renomination. Yet these two men, Forney and Blair, could not meet on amicable terms.

In February, 1864, the long-vexed political complication came to a head in the appearance of the famous "secret circular" in which Senator Pomeroy, of Kansas, frankly proposed the nomination of Mr. Chase for the presidency. The circular was marked "strictly private," and it gave to Pomeroy, whose initials were S. C., the nickname of "Secret Circular Pomeroy." At this late day it is hardly worth while to recall anything in that document but its main propositions. These were that the renomination of Lincoln was not only undesirable but impossible; that the honor of the nation and the cause of liberty and union would suffer in consequence of his reelection; that the "one-term principle" was essential to the safety of republican institutions; that Salmon P. Chase had more of the qualities needed in a President at that critical time than any other man; and that the discussion of Chase's availability had surprised his warmest admirers by the development of his strength. It is one of the curiosities of the time that this queer document, which was in the hands of nearly every newspaper man and politician in Washington, did not find its way into the public prints until several days after its private circulation began. Finally, on Washington's Birthday, its appearance in the "National Intelligencer" greatly excited the quidnuncs, although nearly everybody was already familiar with its contents. It was not until March 10, however, that Pomeroy took public notice of the commotion which his fulmination had aroused. He was evidently pleased with his sudden notoriety. But by that time it had become clearly manifest that Mr. Chase could not possibly be nominated. The Unionists of his own State had

declared in favor of Lincoln; and on the day after that declaration was made Pomeroy rose in his place in the Senate and attempted to justify his foolish circular; a letter was printed then from Mr. Chase withdrawing his name from the political canvass. Pomeroy, who was an unctuous and sleek man with a rosy countenance and a suave manner, told the senators that he was the author of the now famous circular, but that some person whom he did not name had appended to it the indorsement "strictly private" in order, as he said, to give it a wider circulation. He exulted in the fact that he was chairman of a respectable association, with widely ramifying branches all over the country, whose object was to secure the election of "an efficient and radical candidate for the presidency in opposition to the time-serving policy of the day." He said that Mr. Chase "had been drafted into the service" of that organization; and that while he (Pomeroy) should not be considered as making war upon the present administration, he must insist that no executive could long sustain itself unless it had strong party affiliations to uphold it in Congress and in the country.

It was inevitable that the Missouri quarrel should be dragged into the discussion. Senator Wilkinson, of Minnesota, who replied to Pomeroy, taunted him with gross inconsistency in putting himself forward as a champion of radicalism, while, at the same time, he was exerting himself in the Senate to secure the confirmation of General Schofield, whose supporters were the conservatives of the party. The incident naturally attracted interested attention in both houses of Congress; and while Wilkinson, who was by no means a keen debater, was tantalizing Pomeroy, members came flocking over from the other end of the Capitol, crowding the senate-chamber to hear with amusement the parent of the now famous circular defend his action while he avowed its paternity. It was a desperate attempt to make the best of a failing cause. But it was of no use. The tide of public opinion had set too strongly in the direction of Lincoln for any such feeble efforts as those of Pomeroy, Edmunds, Winchell, and their comrades to withstand the current any longer. That was a time of dramatic political sensations. The coincident appearance of Chase's letter, taking his name out of the list of possible presidential candidates, and Senator Pomeroy's lame endeavor to give weight and reasonableness to the secret circular, were among the excitements of the day; but, although Mr. Chase's withdrawal, and the ignominious collapse of the scheme in whose interest the circular had been prepared, deprived the radical disorganizers of even the semblance of a leader and a head, it was not until the

Union Republican Convention of 1864 had renominated Lincoln that the restless and factious opposition to his being called to a second term was finally silenced. It is possible that this brief recital of the political events that preceded Lincoln's second election may suggest to politicians of this later day the ineffectiveness of merely factious tactics and schemes.

ENTER LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT.

It is interesting to call to mind some of the forces which made Grant the general-in-chief of the armies of the United States, and some of the incidents that attended the consummation of that historic work. It was by no means a grateful task for the congressmen of that time to lend a hand in creating the grade of lieutenant-general in the army, although there was no question as to the man on whom that distinction should be conferred. I question very much if the bill to revive the grade of lieutenant-general would have gone through Congress then if it had not been for the very general dissatisfaction with General Halleck, who was acting as general-in-chief with headquarters at Washington. This dissatisfaction was constantly increasing, and, although the country at large did not seem to be very keenly alive to Halleck's inadequacy to the situation, Washington, and especially the chambers of Congress, resounded with complaints of his sluggishness, his unwillingness to take responsibilities, and his supposed incapacity to grasp the whole military situation. I doubt if the most outspoken and malignant Copperhead in Congress was so disliked, so railed against, and so reviled by the more radical members as this unfortunate general-in-chief. The belief that some new man, no matter who he might be, could vigorously prosecute the war and bring a speedy peace if he were in Halleck's place, made possible the passage of the bill reviving the rank of lieutenant-general of the army. Oddly enough, men who complained that the President clung tenaciously to General Halleck as his military adviser, never doubted for a moment that Mr. Lincoln was more than willing that the rank should be revived with the distinct understanding that Grant should be the wearer of the title, and by virtue thereof become at once the generalissimo of all the military forces of the United States. That the President did cling to Halleck, in spite of the very general popular disfavor with which the general was regarded, is well known. When I ventured, one day, to say to the President that Halleck was disliked because many people supposed that he was too timid and hesitating in his military conduct, Mr. Lin-

coln's face at once wore a sober, almost severe, expression as he said that he was Halleck's friend because nobody else was. Other men had received from the President a somewhat similar impression; and, whatever may have been thought of the very remote possibility that any other man than General Grant would be called to the head of the armies, congressmen who were clamorous for a more vigorous prosecution of the war were eagerly turning to the "lieutenant-general bill," as it was called, as the readiest way to be rid of General Halleck's alleged slowness.

This fact was brought out in the debate in the House when the measure was under consideration. With that free-and-easy frankness which so distinguished the House from the Senate as it was then constituted, the representatives did not hesitate to fling about a great many personalities while they discussed the expediency of reviving the grade of lieutenant-general. When the bill came up for its final passage on February 1, 1864, E. B. Washburne, who had the measure in charge, distinguished himself by the energy and impatience with which he fairly bulldozed the House into its immediate consideration. He ramped and roared, expostulated and threatened, until he wrought himself into a condition of quivering excitement. Washburne had been from the very first an enthusiastic believer in Grant's great military genius, and this was not only his supreme effort to place on high the object of his love and idolatry, but, as he believed, to save the republic from years of wasteful war. It is entertaining now to recall the attitude of some of the conspicuous congressmen who opposed or supported the bill. Grant, it should be remembered, was at that time by no means the popular favorite that he very soon after became, although his wonderful series of successes in the Southwest had even then made him the cynosure of all eyes.

Garfield, of Ohio, who had fought under Grant, and was now a member of the House Military Committee, opposed the bill on the ground that the rank was not needed, and that the President and the War Department already had the power to detail any major-general to perform the functions with which a lieutenant-general would be intrusted. He said that if the proposed rank was to be conferred as a reward of merit, it would be better to wait until the war was over, and not seize upon immature reputations as worthy of so great a reward. He said that if this rank had been created two years before, probably one of the several generals now shelved or retired would have been honored with it, and the country be thereby now mortified. Garfield was one of the first who frankly said in debate that General Grant would prob-

ably be nominated lieutenant-general if the bill became law; and he added that the country could not spare Grant from the great work he was doing in the West to transform him into "a bureau officer in Washington." But, in view of the political influences that would be at work, he (Garfield) was not so sure that Grant would be the man, after all.

Another member of the Military Committee—General Farnsworth of Illinois—favored the bill because General Grant was "no carpet-knight," but would command the armies in person, "not in a richly furnished Brussels-carpeted chamber in Washington," after the manner of *some* commanders-in-chief. This hit at Halleck was greatly enjoyed by the galleries, and a general laugh rippled over the surface of the House. General Robert C. Schenck, who was chairman of the House Military Committee, supported the bill not because he believed General Grant was the man to fill it, but because he believed in the principle that a military man should be at the head of the army and direct all operations in the field.

Washburne fretted and fumed as sundry members rose with amendments of various kinds; and there was every indication—the previous question not having been seconded—that the whole subject must go over for another day. "Thad" Stevens made a little speech in which he said, as Garfield had, that he did not see the use of the proposed measure, because the President already had power to appoint a general-in-chief. He also objected to the bill because it restricted the President to the choice of a lieutenant-general from a small number of major-generals. "Why not allow military men of less note to have equal footing in the proposed race for the great prize? And why not even choose from citizens, some of whom were worth more than many major-generals, as military men? Saints are not canonized until after death," he said, "and the greatest of reputations is not secure until the possessor has rested from his labors." Stevens said he had been amused to hear some of the members speak as though it was certain that General Grant would be the honored recipient of the prize; but he was not so certain of that. Judging from the tenacity with which the President held on to Halleck, he thought the present general-in-chief might be the lucky man.

When Washburne attempted to close the debate, he said he believed the war would not be ended until Grant was placed in supreme command. In reply to murmurs from the members he shouted: "I can't wait! I want this now. Grant must fight out this war, and he will never leave the field!" Washburne's patience was fairly broken down when Whaley of West Virginia wanted to know if the con-

ferring of this rank upon Grant would make that general ineligible for the presidency. Washburne bounced up, white with rage, and charged that the House was afraid to call for the previous question, as members would have to go upon the record in this matter; and he darkly hinted of another record to be made up thereafter which they could not dodge. To Boutwell of Massachusetts, who offered some opposition to the bill, Washburne retorted that New England was showing her sectional feeling in the matter because Grant was a Western man. Amid great heat and considerable excitement, the bill was finally passed by a vote of eighty-six to forty-one. Among the Republicans who voted against the bill were Ashley of Ohio, Boutwell of Massachusetts, Broomall of Pennsylvania, Henry Winter Davis, Garfield, G. W. Julian of Indiana, William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania, Thaddeus Stevens, and William B. Washburn of Massachusetts. The bill passed the Senate without much debate on February 26, and three days later it was approved by the President.

If there was any doubt as to the popularity of Grant in Washington (and he was disposed to regard that city as a place of snares), the arrival of the newly created lieutenant-general effectually dissipated it. He had been called to the capital, and had arrived there late in the afternoon of March 8, 1864. He quietly went to Willard's Hotel to get his dinner. At that time he was a rather slightly built man, with stooping shoulders, mild blue eyes, and light-brown hair, with a reddish tinge in his bristling mustache. He had a shy but manly bearing, wore a shabby-looking military suit of clothes, and seemed distressed when he was recognized by the mob of diners. He had been discovered there taking his dinner just like ordinary mortals; and it was noised about that the hero of Belmont, Donelson, and Vicksburg was in the room. A slight commotion presently spread from table to table; people got up and craned their necks in an anxious endeavor to see "the coming man." Then some enthusiastic admirer, mounting a chair, called for "three cheers for Lieutenant-General Grant." They were given with a will, amid a pounding on the tables which made everything dance. For a few minutes there was a scene of wild confusion, in the midst of which General Grant, looking very much astonished and perhaps annoyed, rose to his feet, awkwardly rubbed his mustache with his napkin, bowed, and resumed his seat and attempted to finish his dinner. The good sense of the cheering patriots prevailed, and the general was allowed to eat in peace. But as soon as he had finished his repast and was on his way out of the dining-room, he was taken in hand by Ex-Governor More-

head, of Pennsylvania, who acted as master of ceremonies and introduced to the general the mob of admirers who now swooped down upon him. This was his first levee.

That evening, as it chanced, was the occasion of the usual weekly reception at the White House, and thither General Grant went by special invitation. Thither too went throngs of people when it was known that he would be on view with the President. So great was the crowd, and so wild the rush to get near the general, that he was obliged at last to mount a sofa where he could be seen, and where he was secure, at least for a time, from the madness of the multitude. Women were caught up and whirled in the torrent which swept through the great East Room. Ladies suffered dire disaster in the crush and confusion; their laces were torn and crinolines mashed; and people got upon sofas, chairs, and tables to be out of harm's way or to get a better view of the spectacle. It was the only real mob I ever saw in the White House. It was an indescribable scene of curiosity, joy, and pleasure. For once at least the President of the United States was not the chief figure in the picture. The little, scared-looking man who stood on a crimson-covered sofa was the idol of the hour. He remained on view for a short time; then he was quietly smuggled out by friendly hands, and next day he departed from the city, which he then appeared to dread so much, to begin the last and mightiest chapter in his military career.

It is probable that Grant's early dislike and suspicion of Washington and its alleged pernicious political influences were partly due to Sherman's positive belief that the national capital was a hotbed of intrigue and chicanery. I learned as much from the general's own lips long after the war, and after his two terms of the presidency had given him other views of the city and its influence in public affairs. Sherman repeatedly warned Grant against what he considered its baleful moral miasma. During the summer next succeeding his appointment as lieutenant-general, Grant did not come often to Washington, although his headquarters were for most of the time within a day's journey of the capital. Later in that year, armed with a letter of introduction from the President, I met him at City Point, while I was on a visit to the Army of the Potomac.

At that time his headquarters were at City Point. On one side of his wall-tent stood the great commander's narrow bedstead; and a rude pine table covered with maps and papers, two or three camp-chairs, a military chest, and a box or two made up the furniture of the headquarters of Grant. The cares of the day were over when we paid our visit, and the

general began an easy, offhand talk about politics and the then late elections, which he considered as being of immense importance because, as he said, the political legislation of Congress was now so closely allied to the prosecution of the war that every officer watched its course with the deepest anxiety. He spoke pleasantly of McClellan, was sorry for his personal mortification and defeat for the Presidency, and said that he hoped that McClellan would see his way clear to accept the handsome salary that it was reported had been offered him by the Illinois Central Railroad Company. Grant was evidently very well informed as to the antecedents and political record of nearly all of the congressmen, especially those from the West; and he spoke with evident pride of his own congressional district (Washburne's) in Illinois, which had lately given nine thousand majority for the Union ticket. Offering us cigars, he alluded jocularly to his national notoriety for smoking, and said that this had made him somewhat uncomfortable, as he did not want to be regarded as greatly addicted to any one personal habit, and that he had lately limited himself to four cigars a day. One of our party, who did not perhaps know that information as to the numerical force of an army was regarded as "contraband of war," innocently asked General Grant how many men he had in the Army of the Potomac, to which the general frankly responded, "Oh, a great many," an observation which closed inquiry in that direction.

Grant's famous expression, "I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer," was first made public in a little speech extorted from the President a few days after the final battle of the Wilderness. The general, in a letter to General Halleck dated May 11, 1864, had used the now historic phrase; and in the evening of the day on which that letter was received Washington had broken loose with a tremendous demonstration of joy over the recent victories achieved by the Army of the Potomac. There was something like delirium

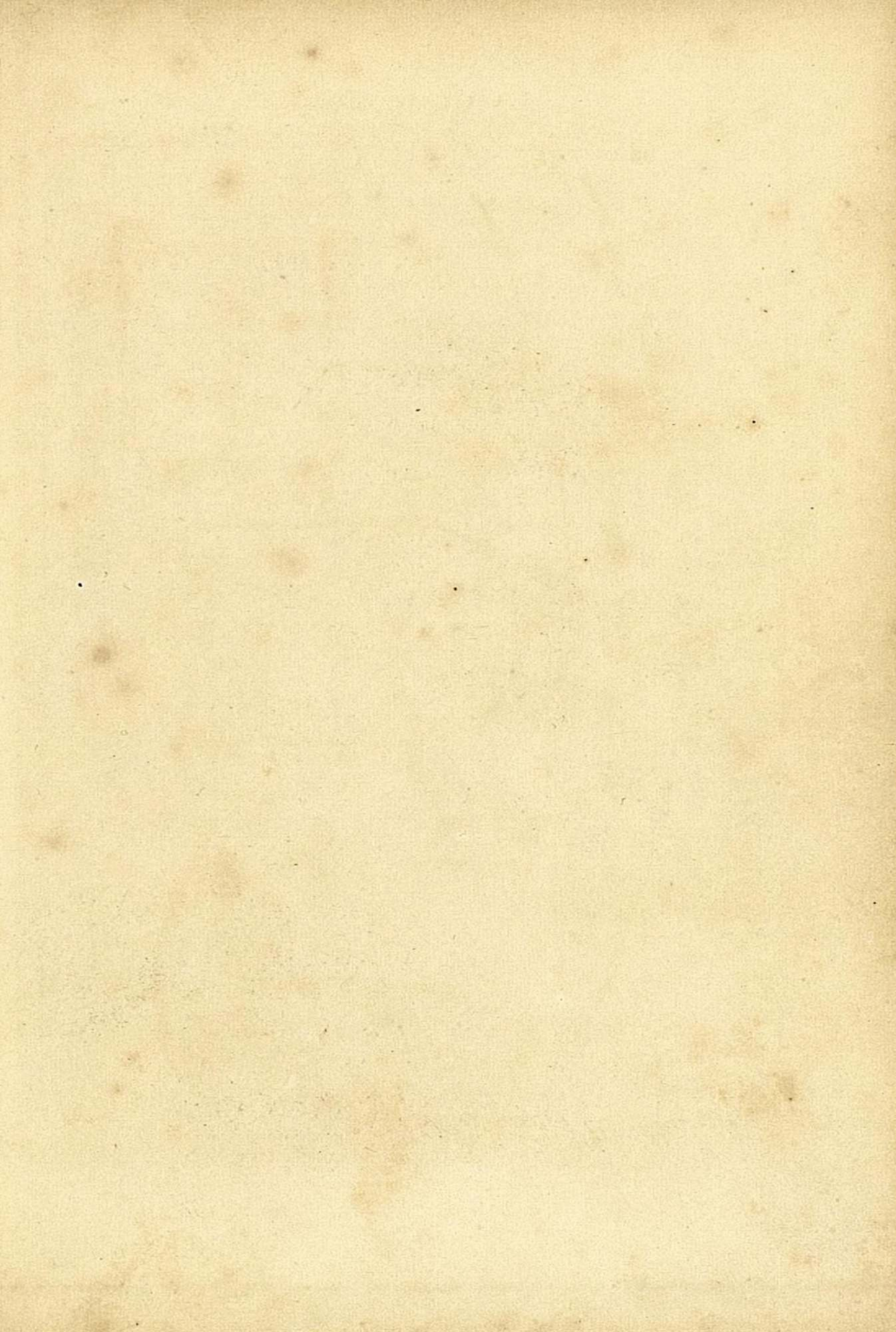
in the air. Everybody seemed to think that the war was coming to an end right away. Congress was in nominal session only, an adjournment being taken every three days, and the city was still filled with congressmen anxious to "be in at the death," as they fondly thought they soon would be.

About nine o'clock on the evening referred to a great crowd of cheering citizens surged around the White House, and the President came to the main door of the mansion, and stood bareheaded on the platform of the portico. He congratulated the people on the brighter prospects of the cause of the Union, and gave them the pith of General Grant's latest letter to Halleck. For a time it appeared as if most people thought that Grant would close the war and enter Richmond before the autumn leaves began to fall. Yet it was a full month after that day—on June 14—that the President, regretfully viewing the unreasonable elation of friends of the Union, said to me: "I wish, when you write or speak to people, you would do all you can to correct the impression that the war in Virginia will end right off and victoriously. To me the most trying thing of all this war is that the people are too sanguine; they expect too much at once. I declare to you, sir, that we are to-day farther ahead than I thought, one year and a half ago, that we should be; and yet there are plenty of people who believe that the war is about to be substantially closed. As God is my judge, I shall be satisfied if we are over with the fight in Virginia within a year. I hope we shall be 'happily disappointed,' as the saying is; but I am afraid not—I am afraid not."

The solemn manner of the President, and the weightiness of his utterance, so impressed me that I drew toward me a sheet of paper and wrote down his words then and there. Then I read to him what I had written, in order that I might be sure that he was correctly reported. He suggested a verbal change, and I carried the paper away with me. At that time the art of interviewing had not been invented.

Noah Brooks.







Nancy
Hanks
Lincoln
Public
Library