

John W. Coe



Definitive biography of a Vice-President

Contains considerable Lincoln material. SEE index

Schafly was Speaker of the House during Lincoln's administration.

Colfax eventually became a lecturer on Lincoln after delivering a lecture at the unveiling of the Lincoln monument in Springfield in 1874.

See pp. 456







*Stephen Coefax*



MISS TRIPPA AND HER MOTHER THE PAINTER'S WIFE





LIFE  
OF  
SCHUYLER COLFAX.

BY  
O. J. HOLLISTER.  
///

"We pass: the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God."  
*In Memoriam.*

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## PREFACE.

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ABOUT sixty years ago a boy was born in the city of New York who at an early age became a resident of Northern Indiana. Without means, without influential friends, with but a common school education, this boy made himself a conspicuous figure in the great formative period of the United States. His career from obscurity to positions of the highest distinction and the widest influence, involving a sketch of the times in which his lot was cast and the events with which his name must forever be associated, is the subject of this memoir. In its preparation the author has had access to the literary effects of the dead statesman, as well as to all ordinary sources of information. He has found the story more fascinating than a romance, and trusts that his countrymen will find equal pleasure and profit in its perusal.



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# SCHUYLER COLFAX.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

1823-1844.

SCHUYLER COLFAX AND SOUTH BEND.—HIS ANCESTRY AND BIRTH.—AT SCHOOL.—MRS. COLFAX BECOMES MRS. MATTHEWS.—YOUNG SCHUYLER'S HOME SURROUNDINGS.—POLITICAL PRECOCITY.—THE FAMILY GO WEST.—NEW CARLISLE AND TERRE COUPEE, IND.—HIS DIARY AND JOURNALS.—A STUDENT-AT-LAW AND A STUDENT-AT-WORK.—NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENT.—THEY REMOVE TO SOUTH BEND —DEPUTY-AUDITOR.—“THE GENTLEMAN FROM JASPER.”—TEE-TOTALER AND TEMPERANCE WORKER.—STATE SENATE REPORTER.—EDITOR INCOG.—DELEGATE TO CONVENTIONS.—IN DEMAND AS A POLITICAL SPEAKER.—“THE POTATO CLUB.”—MARRIES AND BRINGS HOME HIS BRIDE.

FOR many years South Bend has suggested Schuyler Colfax, and Schuyler Colfax has suggested South Bend. A letter addressed simply “Schulyer Colfax,” and mailed at any post-office in the United States, would almost certainly have gone to him direct. More inseparable the man and the place than Washington and Mt. Vernon or Jackson and the Hermitage. These were merely homesteads ; but South Bend, in its relations to Schuyler Colfax, represents substantially a single family, of which he was a member and the consummate flower. It is a beautiful and thriving town on the St. Joseph River in Northern Indiana. Rising in Eastern Michigan, the river roughly describes a crescent, with its horns pointing northward, in its course

of two hundred and fifty miles to Lake Michigan. It is a fine stream, with a rapid current, but no "rapids," winding between wooded banks half a hundred feet below the general level of the country-side. Dams obstruct it at Niles, South Bend, Mishawaka, and above. Below the dam at South Bend, where nut trees, wild fruit trees, shrubs, and vines once grew in dense thicket, there are now a score of mills and factories. In early times small boats ran up the stream one hundred and seventy-five miles, but the river has long since been superseded as a highway by the railroads, two of the trunk-roads passing through the streets, and cross-roads connecting with twenty others. The country is almost level, there is little or no rock in place, forest and fine farms alternate, giving the landscape a park-like appearance.

The town lies on both sides of the river at its great south bend—hence the name—but is mainly on the west side. The mills are on the first "bottom;" five or six blocks on the second answer the present requirements of business; the residences spread out thence a mile or so toward and upon a third terrace. The dwellings are in ample grounds, and are embowered in foliage in the summer. The people are plain and hospitable, simple in their manners and mode of life. The rich have risen to affluence by their own business sagacity, and there is no ostentation. The absence of display and pretence, and the repose in the social life of the place, give it a charm that will be sought in vain in most of our towns of its size and importance. The inhabitants number more thousands now than they did hundreds when the place first became the home of Schuyler Colfax. About half of them live by manufacturing. It is thus a modern town; the relations of labor and capital, transportation, tariff, the assimilation of foreigners, are the studies which it suggests to the thoughtful mind. Not a place for dreamers but for workers, the town and the man were congenial. The house in which he lived the last twenty years of his life is a square frame building of two stories, standing in a roomy lot, lawn set with forest trees in front, garden and fruit trees

in the rear. Mr. Colfax rejected sundry good business offers in the course of his life, because they would take him away from South Bend, whose people he loved, and who returned his affection.

He was born in New York City, at No. 86 North Moore Street. The house, a two-story brick, with roof sloping toward the street and with dormer windows, is still standing, a mile or so north of the Battery, and one number east of Washington Street. It will soon have to give way to business houses.<sup>1</sup> Sixty years ago it was in the residence quarter of the better classes, although it was even then passing into the boarding-house stage, through which the residences of to-day on Manhattan Island are surrendered to business to-morrow. There was but little business above Canal Street at that time. The metropolis had barely a quarter of a million inhabitants. There were no stages on Broadway, and its perennial currents of humanity were just beginning to flow in the vicinity of St. Paul's. Where, now, pulsates the very heart of the business life of the great city, little Schuyler Colfax and his cousins used to watch about the door of Mrs. Stryker's boarding-house, near one o'clock, "for [the image of] St. Paul to come down and get his dinner." The cross-streets below Canal were filling up with the Fifth Avenue people of the day when young Colfax left the city, with his household gods, for the West. There were no *Times*, *Tribune*, *Herald*, or *World*. Horace Greeley was just founding the *New Yorker*.

Schuyler Colfax came of the best class of emigrants to the New World, those who colonized the shores of New York Bay, of the Hudson, and the Connecticut, in the middle of the seventeenth century. He could trace his lineage to Colfax, Van Schuyler, Le Maistre, and Strycker, men of affairs in their own lands, some of them offshoots of noble families, long eminent in the law and in the Church, in the civil and in the military service. Philip Pietersen Van Schuyler evidently crossed the great water in the same spirit as his countrymen who discovered the Hudson River and bought Manhattan Island of the natives

1. It has been taken down and removed since this was written.

for sixty guilders. Our Colonial and Revolutionary history attest his enterprise and ability, and that of his descendants. Glaude Le Maistre, as he wrote it, was an exile from Brittany for conscience' sake. He married Hester Du Bois in Amsterdam, also of a Huguenot family, and they came to America together, settling in Harlem. To this couple all the De La Maters in this country trace their origin. The Strykers are descended from Jan and Jacob Gerriste Strycker, two brothers, who, with Garrit Janse, son of Jan, came to New Amsterdam in 1652, from Holland, where their ancestors are mentioned as men of note in various histories running back to the eleventh century. An able, earnest, manly kind of men, individuality was their marked characteristic, implying the capacity and resolution to think and act independently; and this was the moving cause of their exile.

William Colfax came from England. He was one of the early settlers of Wethersfield, Conn., the records of the village showing the births of four of his children in 1653-59. He was probably the grandfather of John Colfax, of New London, who was in turn the grandfather of William, born July 3d, 1756. William Colfax joined General Washington's army at nineteen years of age; served from Bunker Hill to Yorktown; was often wounded in action, once dangerously; was chosen early into Washington's Life Guard, becoming lieutenant under Major Gibbs, and succeeding him toward the close of the war as Captain-Commandant of the Guard. The Guard was a distinct corps of superior men, attached to the person of the general-in-chief, but never spared in battle.<sup>1</sup> During the war and afterward there was frequent interchange of social courtesies between Washington and General Colfax, the tradition of which, with little souvenirs of both Washington and their distinguished ancestor, the family cherish with affectionate pride.

1. "It consisted of a major's command, one hundred and eighty-five men, and was organized early in 1776, on the march of the army from before Boston to New York. Gibbs, of Rhode Island, was the first commander, then Colfax, who continued in command for the war, and was one of the first officers in the American army. The uniform was blue, with white facings, white under-clothes, and black half-gaiters."—*Custis's "Memoirs of the Life and Character of Washington."*

On the return of peace General William Colfax married Hetty Schuyler, and settled at the Schuyler homestead, in Pompton, a few miles above Paterson, N. J. From this union proceeded Schuyler Colfax, father of the Vice-President, who was born August 3d, 1792.

The Vice-President's grandmother, on the maternal side, was eldest child of Samuel De La Mater, who did business in Canal Street, New York City, and resided in North Moore Street. The late John De La Mater, of New York, and the late Benjamin De La Mater, of Brooklyn, were her brothers. She was born in 1780, and married Peter Stryker, of the Dey Street Strykers. Early left a widow, Mrs. Stryker opened a boarding-house, in order to maintain herself and daughter Hannah. Here it was that Schuyler Colfax, the elder, assisting the daughter in her studies and attending her to school, fell in love with her, and married her April 20th, 1820, while she was still a mere child, just past fifteen.

No one now lives who remembers much of Schuyler Colfax, the father. Eliza, wife of General Colfax's eldest son, George W. Colfax, who died in 1869, at the age of four-score, is said to have never wearied of talking of her brother-in-law, Schuyler Colfax, whom she described as tall, slight, straight, with light hair, fair complexion, blue eyes, dignified and courteous, genial, thoughtful of others, "one could not help loving him."<sup>1</sup> At his death, which occurred October 30th, 1822, he left a widow not yet eighteen, a will in which he speaks of "my daughter Mary and my unborn child," a few letters and copies of letters, and the

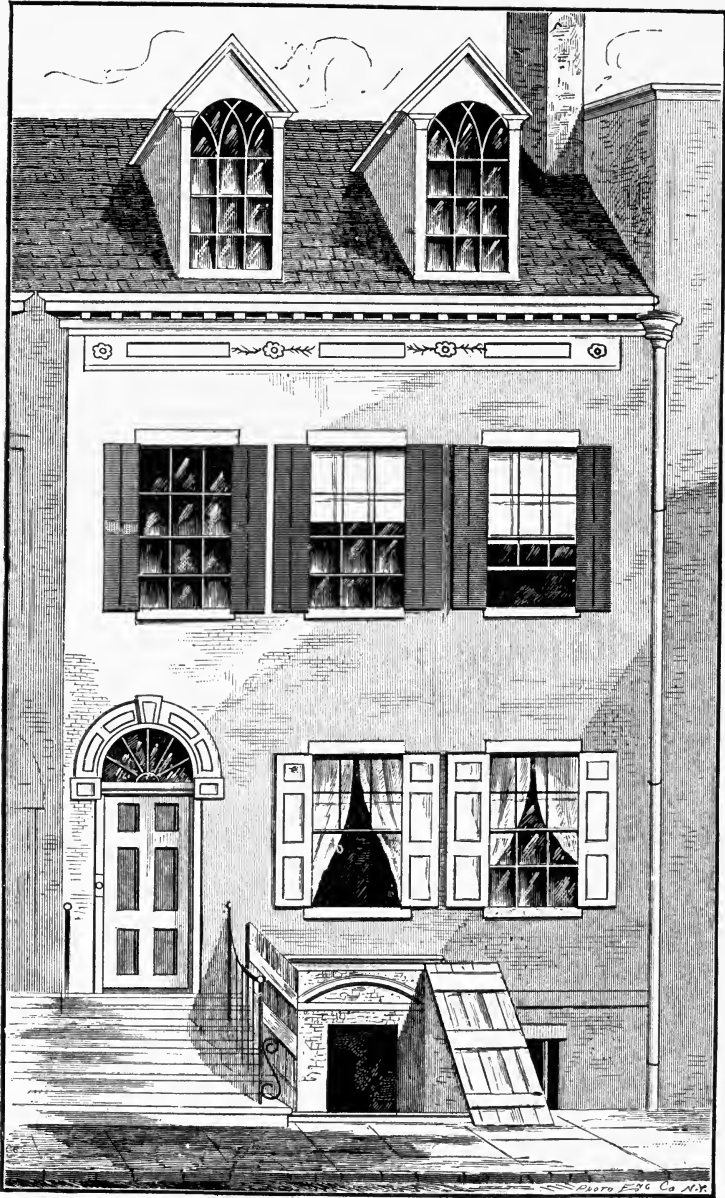
1. In 1860 Mr. Cassady, of Jersey City, writes Mr. Colfax, endeavoring to identify him with his own father, or his Uncle William, as having studied medicine with Dr. Marvin, at Hackensack, in 1810-12. Mr. Colfax enclosed Mr. Cassady's letter to his mother, who replied: "It must have been somewhat amusing to you to be taken for your father, and have some one trying to bring to your mind events that occurred long before you were born. Mr. Cassady may have met your father at Dr. Marvin's, for the doctor and your father were intimate, and the doctor visited us. He is also right in his description of your father—'straight, well-formed, and somewhat freckled'—for he was a singularly handsome man; but he never studied medicine, and at the time Mr. Cassady thinks he did, your father, I think, was overseeing the 'Valley Forge Furnace,' back of Newburgh. If I were going East I would try and see him, because he seems to think my boy Schuyler (though he is not his own father) is about right. People of that opinion ought to be encouraged. Now I think I see you laugh at foolish mother."

diary of a voyage to the Bermudas, undertaken in the hope of arresting the progress of the disease which was swiftly carrying him off. All of the letters were written within eight years of his death; they indicate a man of strong convictions, of a managing turn, just, thoughtful, courteous, fervent, an easy and fluent writer, in the later years religious—in many respects like his son, the Vice-President.

In 1814 he was representing General Colfax's interests in an iron furnace at Monroe, Orange County, N. Y., and was surprised to learn that his father had repaired to the field "in defence of a cause which has hitherto met your [General Colfax's] most decided disapprobation." He disapproved of the conduct of the Federalists in rendering voluntary aid in the prosecution of "this most unrighteous war," deferring, however, to his father's superior discernment, and wishing him "all the felicity that must attend the command of such men as the 'Jersey Blues.'" He desired to take one of the general's farms, which he pointed out had been long abused by the tenant, and then, said he, "I should still have one more wish—namely, to see my dear father returned from camp, 'resign all the employments of public life,' begin the collection of his dues and the settlement of his partnership and other accounts; and in future live in all the happiness of domestic retirement, affording to himself that ease and enjoyment which his age requires, his worth entitles him to, and which his circumstances are abundantly able to authorize."

The furnace was sold at the end of the war, and Mr. Colfax found employment in the Mechanics' Bank, No. 31 Wall Street, New York, where a year's hard work brought him promotion from clerk to book-keeper, and developed symptoms of consumption. Three years later he was writing to his wife, in as light a tone as he could assume, from Saratoga Springs. He got little help from the springs, and the next April he took the sea-voyage spoken of. As the vessel proceeds to Sandy Hook, he writes Mrs. Colfax: "This separation has, indeed, cost me much; but let those who have left a young and beloved wife





NO. 86 NORTH MOORE STREET, NEW YORK.



and such an infant as our dear Mary, particularly under the melancholy circumstances that exist in my case—I say, let them tell how the chill sense of desolation has invaded their hearts—none others know.” His was a pathetic fate. The diary of his voyage is touching, although there is little sentiment in it. Once only he exclaims: “Ah, Tooty! pa’s Tooty, how often I think of you!” He is soon praying that his worst enemy may be preserved from sea-sickness, but consoles himself with the thought that “God may have determined this voyage shall be the means of my restoration to health.” He notes the appearance of the sea, passing vessels, changes in the weather, speed of sailing, incidents on ship-board, non-observance of Sundays—often referring to his little family at home, and closing with a semi-religious soliloquy. His health grows worse instead of better, and his spirits sink. “But for the fresh air I were as well in a prison.” At length they begin to pass the islands, and fifteen days out, anchor in front of Frederickstoedt, go ashore, and he is happy enough on finding two or three New Yorkers. He describes the country, the scenery, the trees—cotton, cocoa, plantain, palm—the people, the streets, the style of the houses, acknowledging the fourth day on shore that his complaint is gaining on him, and that he begins to think of returning with Captain Clark. The next day he is resolved, and prays that he may be spared to die in his own land, if die he must. He finds hardly any virtue in the people but hospitality. After two weeks ashore his brig is ready to sail on her return voyage, and he writes: “I am as much rejoiced as the schoolboy when he hears the master is sick.” The trip is in no way remarkable; but his story of how sea-sickness is followed by home-sickness and that by hemorrhages is pitiful. The hand of Death was on him. With the arrival off Sandy Hook, May 14th, the journal closes.

He was obliged to return to his work. His father besought him to take a long journey in the country on horseback. “My dear son, be persuaded; life is dear to one of your age; fly, then, to the mountains as for your life—the

last resort in your case—and let your next letter give me some comfort in this particular.<sup>1</sup> It was too late. In the latter part of August he went home, and within two months breathed his last in the house where he was born. A few days before he had valued his effects, mainly bills receivable, at about twenty-five hundred dollars, three fourths of which his estate realized, and made his will. His little Mary was meanwhile following her father with swift steps. General Colfax's letters of the next few months to his daughter-in-law are particularly fatherly. Surely the young widow needed sympathy. Among other things the General was very solicitous concerning the babe to be born. "As the month of March is gone," he writes, "may I now anticipate the joy of hearing that you are safe in child-bed, and that the child is a male, to bear the name of his dear deceased parent. This would be a source of real satisfaction and joy, which all our family would participate in; but with this, as with all other dispensations of Providence, we must learn therewith to be content." The event met the General's wishes. The child was born March 23d, 1823. It was a boy; it was christened "Schuyler Colfax," July 27th, by its great-uncle, the Rev. I. Y. Johnson, Pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church, at Schodack-on-the-Hudson. So the General's son was restored to him. Little Mary died in July, and was buried at her father's side in Pompton churchyard.

Mrs. Colfax continued to live with her mother in New York. As soon as her son was old enough he was sent to Forrest and Mulligan's school; afterward to Dr. Griscom's Boys' High School in Crosby Street; and when that was sold to the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, May 1st, 1832, he attended a school opened by Messrs. Robert Carter and Richard H. Smith, corner of Broadway and Grand streets. When about nine years old he was in

1. Same letter: "Oh, my son, how shall I reply to the last sentence of your letter, where you ask 'the intercession of a parent's prayers!' Gloom o'erwhelming me, you shall have all you ask of me—nay, I would give more. If the life of an old afflicted man, approximating seventy, laboring under infirmities the companion of age, would satisfy a just and good God, the commutation should be made on my part, and a life spared so valuable to society, your friends, and, more especially, to your dear little family."

the habit of reciting his lessons for the day, before going to school, to a young lady visiting the family.<sup>1</sup> Pleased with his aptness and manly bearing, she said to him one morning, tapping him on the cheek: "If you keep on in this way, you'll be President some day, sir." "I mean to try for it," he answered firmly. General Colfax watched him with interest, but seems to have had no higher views for him than a clerkship in a store or bank. He asks Mrs. Colfax in a letter of July, 1833, "if it is not most time my son Schuyler was put into a store? George C. Baldwin [a cousin] was younger when he went to live with Mr. Moore, and is now esteemed to be one of the most promising young men in Paterson."<sup>2</sup> Schuyler, with like advantages, would do as well." But his mother kept him in school a year longer.

Among her intimate friends was Colonel Ralph Clark, of Argyle, near Saratoga. In a letter to Miss Evelyn, daughter of Colonel Clark, a little girl of his own age, dated November 16th, 1833, young Schuyler says: "I am getting on with Latin and French, and have just begun to study algebra." And in May, 1834, Mrs. Colfax writes to Miss Evelyn for him: "He wishes to be remembered affectionately to you, and regrets that he will not be able to accept your kind invitation to make you a visit; his time is completely occupied with going to school and his lessons." These two young correspondents, often playmates from the frequent exchange of visits between the families, were nominally betrothed by their parents, and Mrs. Colfax always addressed Evelyn as "daughter."

Meanwhile Mrs. Stryker had removed from No. 214 Broadway to corner of Broadway and Liberty streets, and thence to Brooklyn, where, on the 6th of November, 1834, the Widow Colfax was married to Mr. George W. Matthews. He was a native of Baltimore, and the eldest of a large family of children, whose parents had removed to Ohio, leaving him with his uncle, Mr. Leonard Matthews,

1. Mrs. Glorvina Fort. She died in Philadelphia since this was written.

2. He afterward educated himself, studied for the ministry, is now, and for many years has been, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Troy, N. Y.

who virtually adopted him. His family and connections were of the best people of Baltimore and New Orleans. Young Schuyler was between eleven and twelve years of age when his father was restored to him, as it were, by this second marriage of his mother. Mr. Matthews was but fourteen years the elder. In a few years they had become brothers rather than father and son, and when his stepfather died in 1874, the stepson wrote of him: "He was the best man of all the many I ever knew."

A wholesome atmosphere pervaded his home. Fifty years afterward Mr. Colfax wrote of his mother: "Every year I feel more and more how much I owe to that dearest of all mothers—in temperament, constitution, endurance of fatigue, activity, comparative contentment, habits, but best of all, sympathetic and conscientious feelings. The buffetings of life that have come to me could scarcely have been endured but for what I owe to her." And of the influences that in part moulded him when a boy, he told the following in the Sunday-school of the church of which he was a member in South Bend: "Just fifty years ago this fall, in a large city by the sea-shore, nearly a thousand miles from here, a lady whose husband was dead took her little boy by the hand, and led him to the Sabbath-school. For thirty years afterward he was a scholar or a teacher of the Sabbath-school, and he has never forgotten those instructions of his youth. The lady who took her little boy to that Sabbath-school is now in a happier land than this, but the boy is still living. That lady was my beloved mother, who is with her Father and Saviour in heaven, and that little boy was myself. To-day I come to this school with my little boy, and his mother with us, that we may place his imperfect steps in the same path in which my mother placed my little feet half a century ago. And may God grant that the impressions made upon his young mind here may remain with him through all his life, and bring forth good fruit abundantly in his life, and words, and deeds."

Mrs. Stryker, the third in the family group, is spoken of by her nieces in New York and New Jersey as "a saint

let down from heaven for a little while, and then drawn right up again." Tall, straight, slender, she never weighed a hundred pounds, and although the greater part of her life a hard-working woman, she had always a sweet voice and the springing step of a girl of sixteen. Mentally strong, high-spirited, high-minded, conscientious, and devout, withal softened by unusual trials, her ways impressed the young people about her, and her sayings became family traditions. Her daughter and grandson lived with her till this new marriage; now and henceforth, until she died on Terre Coupee Prairie, in 1857, she lived with her daughter.<sup>1</sup> High views of life, the heritage of good birth, and the essence of good breeding were the only ones presented to young Colfax in his home.

Mr. Matthews engaged in business in New York, and the lad of eleven began life as clerk in his stepfather's store. His studies now were not so much in books as in what was going on around him, and particularly in politics, in regard to which he manifested an interest, a knowledge, and sentiments very extraordinary in one so young. Going out to the Raritan by stage on one occasion, he so nettled his mother's cousin, Dr. Peter Vroom, that the latter replied: "You ought to be in the nursery instead of talking politics!" Years afterward he alluded to this in a characteristic letter to Mrs. Woodhull, of Camden, N. J., to wit: "What a saddening blow has fallen on your yearly diminishing family circle in the death of your brother Peter! I

1. On the 8th of February, 1857, Mrs. Stryker wrote a letter to Mrs. Evelyn Colfax, which closed as follows: "Hope in the Hearer of Prayer. Hope leads us on, nor quits us till we die. I wish I could write more, but I am tired. Tell Schuyler to be careful of his health. He is a precious branch of a vile stock [Congress]. God bless him and spare him to do much good for His glory and for his country. Good-by, dear children. Grandma 'the Great.'" She had just become a great-grandmother.

The next night she died. Colfax's mother wrote him: "She was unconscious from the time she went to sleep, for the cover was on her and tucked around her just as Carrie fixed it the night before, and she never moved a limb or a muscle of her face. The doctor says she never suffered."

Colfax closed his letter in reply: "It is singular that her letter to Evelyn was almost entirely in reference to death. The shadow of the coming stroke seemed to be cast across her mind as she wrote, and the last line was a blessing on the grandson whose footsteps she had so carefully noted from the cradle. Dear old grandma! With her frail body before my mental vision now, I only remember that she had more than her share of sorrow in life, and that she loved us all most dearly."

remember him so well in my boyhood days, when he was a farmer on the Raritan, and you and I used to dig calamus together in the bygone days that are never to return. How, boy that I was, I used to argue politics with him, once in a stage on our road thither, when only ten years old ; how, in spite of it all, the affection on both sides was unbroken as I grew up ; how he crossed two rivers to hear me lecture at Beecher's Church several years ago on 'The Duties of Life,' and told me he would have given five dollars to have had his young boys hear my counsel ; how I met him often after we came to see eye to eye on national matters ; how he called on me several times at Washington when visiting the New Jersey soldiers in the Potomac army—these and many other things have been before my mind to-day."

One of his New Jersey cousins writes :<sup>1</sup> "My first recollection of my dear Cousin Schuyler is when he was about twelve years old, and came with my dear Aunt Hannah to visit us at the old Pompton homestead. We children stood in awe of him when he would leave us at play with the little negroes, and seat himself with my grandfather and other gentlemen, and not only listen to them as they talked politics, but would join in their conversation." Always about the polls election days, on the occasion of one important election he was missed at home till midnight. He had waited at the Third Ward Poll in New York—the decisive poll by the way—to get the result ; had obtained it, and had the satisfaction on his return to Brooklyn of being able to give the information for which everybody was eagerly inquiring. He had an instinct for news, and a newspaper fascinated him. His diary of these times, still extant, indicates a playful, fun-loving disposition ; not greatly inclined to severe application of any kind ; hailing with delight his vacations among his cousins in the country ; not addicted to moralizing, but observant, active, and disposed to arrive in his own way at his own conclusions. He was already a commentator, after the style of the daily editor of to-day, on passing events, comparing

1. Mrs. Mary Baldwin Graves, of Grand Rapids, Mich.



and criticising the news reports and editorials of the journals of the city and the talk of the street and counting-room. Upon what he might or would have been in the peculiar politics of his native city, it would be idle to speculate, for at the age of thirteen he was transplanted into a different and a more congenial field.

In the fall of 1836 the family removed West, travelling *via* the Hudson River and the Erie Canal to Buffalo, and thence by steamer to Detroit. From Detroit they took wagon, emigrant fashion, and were thirteen days reaching New Carlisle, Ind., on the Michigan (State) Road, about equidistant from South Bend, Michigan City, and La Porte, with Terre Coupee Prairie on the one hand and Rolling Prairie on the other. All this country between Lake Erie and Lake Michigan was very attractive to the settler, being neither an interminable forest nor a boundless prairie, but a wooded land, with prairies of perfect finish, and perhaps half as large as a township, scattered about through the woods. In its variety of forest, field, lake, and stream, it was a land pleasing to the eye, lacking nothing of perfection but the diversity that comes of mountains. Terre Coupee Prairie appears now as the bottom of a drained lake or marsh, four or five miles in diameter, with wooded shores; a garden in fertility and tilth; the farm buildings half hidden by trees, with sentinel trees standing in the fields like the live oaks of the Pacific. But in 1836 the prairie was bare of trees or fences; and two years prior to the advent of our city emigrants, Richard R. Carlisle's house and the double log-cabin, bought, together with the town site, of the half-breed Bursaw, were the only buildings on "the Hill," as New Carlisle was called. It was a different world from what it is now. Before they moved West Mr. Matthews had crossed the Grand Prairie of Illinois on horseback, there being no other conveyance, and but four houses in a hundred miles. Four years later Chicago had less than five thousand inhabitants. There were few miles of railroad, no telegraphs, few newspapers, fewer labor-saving machines, postage was twenty-five cents a letter—comparatively speaking, it was

before the Flood. Young Colfax had left the centre of population a thousand miles behind; it overtook him before he died.

The first winter the family built a house and opened a store. In the house they kept a Sunday-school—stepfather, mother, and son all teaching; they soon had the post-office and the court in the store, Mr. Matthews having been elected Justice of the Peace and appointed Postmaster within a year of their arrival. The young man was clerk in the store and post-office, and amused himself by keeping a chronicle of current events, a registry and briefs of his correspondence, and a record of election returns, so far as they fell in his way, from all the States and for all kinds of officers. In August, 1838, he writes Miss Clark at Argyle, N. Y.:

“Since I have been out here I have been clerking in my stepfather’s store, and was for about eighteen months pretty busily engaged; but he not having got any new goods this summer, I have a great deal of leisure time. This is a most beautiful country for the eye to look upon, and very thickly settled, principally by farmers. This county is about twenty miles long and fifteen wide, and gives twelve hundred or fifteen hundred votes, and then the people never turn out generally. Some of the prairies are as much as twenty miles square [square miles he means]. Our town is on a bluff or ridge running from northwest to southeast, a distance of fifty miles or more, about sixty feet higher than the adjoining country, and is in the southwest corner of the prairie. We can see four hundred farms under, of some eighty acres in a field, in a high state of cultivation. The farm-houses are usually in the edges of the prairie or on the State Road. Almost all kinds of berries grow wild here, and crab-apples, plums, and cherries; hazel-nuts will get ripe the first frost. We have locust-trees set round our garden; my mother calls it ‘Locust Place.’ Our melons and roasting ears are all ripe, and we feast on the latter every day. Very few people have orchards, although the country has been settled six or seven years.”

A "commonplace book" shows how he employed part of his leisure. The selections copied into it range through ancient and modern standard literature, history, and poetry. There is also much from contemporary papers and periodicals, politics, statistics, poetry, sentiment and fact all mixed up together. In April, 1839, Mr. Matthews sold the store; there was too little money in the country and too many peddlers, and they had to trust too much. A little later young Colfax writes his cousin, George A. Vroom, of New Jersey: "Mr. Matthews and my mother desire me to study law, and think I will make a lawyer. I am doubtful about it, but to please them will study and do my best." Again, to his friend Wilson, at Rockford, Ill.: "I have taken a notion to study law, and must give up my visit East, and save my money to purchase books." Writing to his Uncle George, in the fall, his mother says: "Schuyler has commenced studying law. He is a tall boy—tall as I am—the same fair-complexioned fellow. He is quite a writer. His articles in the county paper are extremely well thought of by our smartest and most intelligent men. So far he does credit to the good education I tried to give him. You would be delighted to hear him converse, young [not yet seventeen] as he is." In the same letter Mr. Matthews writes: "I can assure you he is a boy that does appreciate kindness, and is possessed of talents that will some day cause his friends to feel justly proud of him. I am determined that, so far as my humble means will avail, he shall not lack encouragement. His inclination, I think, is toward the law, and that is in this country the most lucrative profession."

About this time he began a series of what he entitled "Journal of Events, Thoughts, and Time; Comparisons, Illustrations, and Musings, by Schuyler Colfax;" books six by twelve inches, of brown wrapping-paper, stitched together, written very closely, and running to No. 7, all but one or two of which are extant. They are not consecutive, but apparently dropped and taken up again on the impulse. They treat of the weather, the crops, prices, progress of farming operations, general business, starting

of manufactures ; of politics, religious movements, domestic and personal matters, trips to neighboring towns ; they record stories, and, with slight omissions and changes, would have made excellent bulletins of local and general news, especially the former, for any contemporary newspaper. " I throw these sketches together for reference at some future time, and also to while away a few minutes every day, in the hope that it will improve my manner of expressing myself on paper."

With the proceeds of a pension received by Mrs. Stryker on her deceased husband's account, who had died in the Naval service in 1820, they bought an eighty-acre farm on Terre Coupee and a forty-acre wood lot near by. Young Colfax spent the fall on the farm, harvesting, storing, and threshing the corn, hauling it to market, and getting up the wood. Whereupon he exclaims in his journal : " Behold a student-at-law transformed into a student-at-work !" There were lively times on the Hill that winter. " I attended dancing-school eleven evenings, a New Year's ball, and a cotillon party, and if ever I did enjoy myself it was last winter." They had a debating school, in which he took part a few times, and " I think I did pretty well for a first attempt," he writes. He was selected by the youngsters to outsit a Michigan City lawyer, who had had the audacity to ask one of the Hill girls for her " company." According to the chronicle, he did it. He describes his partners at the dances humorously, and takes off the young Hoosiers—with whom he ranks himself—" as incapable of keeping up a chat with a lady, or of talking anything but politics and business with men." The " frolickers' found a fine field in their daily runs through the sugar-camps in the sap season.

Journal No. 5 opens in July, 1840, runs to the end of the year, and is full of the Log-cabin and Hard Cider campaign ; reports of meetings, synopses of the speeches on both sides, criticisms, incidents, stories, as if written for the newspapers. Describing at length the delegations from different towns, the mottoes, procession, and the speaking at a great Whig " rally" at South Bend, September 10th,

he says : " Dinner was then announced, and the multitude repaired to the table, eight hundred and sixty feet of which was covered with the plain log-cabin fare of the Hoosiers, donated by the farmers of this county. It was eaten, too, in log-cabin style—not a piece of iron or steel on the table. The chickens, beef, pork, and bread were cut up before the guests were called, and every man used his fingers and jack-knife, and instead of the high-priced wines which are said to grace Van Buren's table, the log-cabin boys drank water in tin cups."

In this month of September he was still reading law, not so closely as he could wish, he writes, " for the mania of politics has taken possession of me, and I am whirling about in the vortex of arguing and writing in favor of our hero, and against ' Van, the used-up man,' with pleasurable excitement." He thinks he could win enough on the election to pay his postage bill for ten years if he chose. In reply to some banter about his arrangements with Miss Evelyn Clark, he says : " I have made a vow not to wed a wife until I am elected to Congress ; so you see there is nothing in it, or if there is, it is a good way off." At the same time he writes Colonel Clark : " My mother says she had your consent some time since. Perhaps you want to back out, but I shall not let you. You may have some rich boy or young man in your eye for Evelyn ; but I hold you to your promise, and there you will have to stick." The Clarks urged him to come East and pursue his law studies with " brother" James. He thanked them, but declined ; there was more opportunity in the West ; he would not have to study so long ; and, he added, " I hope one of these days to build up for myself a name and reputation of which my Revolutionary grandsire would have been proud."

In October, 1840, he writes : " I have been cleaning and hauling oats, chopping wood, making out quarterly returns of post-office and post-office bills for delinquents in paying postage, reading politics, speeches, and election returns, packing, directing, and mailing political matter for Michigan, reading literary works, writing letters,

copying poetry for newspaper, reading some law, and riding about the county. A farmer's life is generally bragged upon as the most independent, but in times like these the independence of it is more a shadow than a reality; for after the most rigid economy and constitution-breaking labor the farmer will hardly realize enough to support his family through the winter and pay his previous debts."

He soliloquized as follows on his eighteenth birthday: "Eighteen years ago I was born. Now I cannot turn my face without meeting the glance of friends. And eighteen years more, perhaps, will pass, and what then? I would not leave the happy present, if I could, to look into the future. Why should I? If the mirror should reflect back my image degraded, denounced, and suffering, it would be paralyzing to honest exertion. If it were, on the contrary, to show me honored, wealthy, and contented, it could not make my restless spirit more daring; for let what will betide, there is a never-sleeping something in me that whispers, Go on! go on! And go on I will, perhaps to climb the ladder of fame, perhaps to mount a single step, and then fall back in disgrace forever. Let either be my fate, it has been predestined, and not willingly would I read my fate in advance." He went on, because he was obliged to. He was born with the wound-up spring in him which never let him rest until it was completely unwound.

In 1841 he contemplated a visit to the East, but it depended on his getting a remittance from his little farm in New Jersey. General Colfax, full of years and honors, had died in September, 1838, and been buried with the honors of war on his own estate, his widow following him within a year. A legacy of fifty dollars had fallen to young Colfax from the General and three lots of land—fifty-five acres in all—from his Grandmother Colfax. Correspondence had opened between him and his Uncle George, which continued till after he attained his majority. Early in 1839 he writes that he had expected to visit them all, and to see and embrace his grandfather, but could not. "I hope he received my letter of last fall; I should be grieved if he died, thinking I had forgotten him." He begged for

some of his late grandfather's letters and papers, his journals during the war, and autograph letters of Washington, if any. He would consider the postage cheap, even if it should amount to five dollars.

His uncle proposing to leave some matters of account pertaining to fencing and cropping his land to a third person, he writes : " With your permission, my dear uncle, I would much rather leave it to you." He sold two of his lots to his uncle for five hundred and fifty dollars, agreeing to make a deed to one of them on coming of age. When the day arrived he executed and forwarded the document. It was returned to him, because " not properly executed," his uncle suggesting that if he execute a new deed and pay the postage, it would, perhaps, teach him to be more careful in future. This brought the following explanation : " I hunted all the town over for a copy of the New Jersey statutes in vain. I consulted resident Jersey men, but they could give me no light on the subject. I went through the statutes of nine States, to see what the general rule was, if any. I then examined Halsted's ' New Jersey Supreme Court Decisions,' to see if any cases had been carried up on proof of deeds. I found nothing to the purpose, and I then made out the deed to the best of my ability. You will see, at least, my dear uncle, that I was not careless." It was characteristic of him to exhaust care and patience to do a thing—anything, exactly right ; he could not then bear to be criticised, either for failure in fact or intention. He afterward sold his remaining lot to his uncle for five hundred dollars. The correspondence exhibits him as an affectionate, high-minded boy ; thrifty, and desiring fair treatment, but not greedy ; trusting, believing that his uncle would act honorably with him, because, as he once says, " his name was Colfax, and that was the natural and only thing for a Colfax to do." <sup>1</sup> He

1. Pride of family undoubtedly had a strong influence in moulding his character. Referring to his uncle's remark, " You gave me a chance to sneak out " (of an offer for one of the lots of land), he writes : " I know too well the candor and integrity of the Colfax with whom I was dealing to doubt your word ; I would trust you with all I have without fear, and I know I consider my word as of equal if not superior moral binding force to my bond."

accepted his uncle's offers for the different lots of land in every instance. All their business was settled to their mutual satisfaction, the last letter of the series being written in New York City, in September, 1844, announcing that he would "visit his uncle after attending the great Whig meeting in Boston."

In May, 1841, he writes Miss Clark: "If I should not get a satisfactory return from my farm, I do not consider I would be right to borrow money to travel on, depending, too, upon an uncertainty whether I should repay it or not; but if I am disappointed I shall feel like dying with vexation." The round trip would have cost him eighty dollars. He could have made the money by hiring as clerk at twelve dollars a month, but he says he was too ambitious to abandon his studies for that. To his Uncle George he writes: "To-day, the Congressional election in the State, I have been busy as a bee writing and electioneering, and I am tired out, but I don't care; we gave Henry S. Lane, Whig [who, twenty-seven years afterward, placed Colfax in nomination for the Vice-Presidency], at our poll eighty votes to the Locos' thirty-three for John Boyce." That is the way he prosecuted his studies for the Bar. His last journal ends with an exact programme of his intended visit East, filling two months, in which a habit of the man was forecast. He preserved in scrap-books forty or fifty of his letters to the newspapers, written when he was between sixteen and twenty. They are bright and newsy, mainly devoted to business and politics. Mr. Greeley writes him in 1842: "Your letters are most invaluable, and I thank you for them; I owe you more than good-will."

He received the desired remittance, visited his Eastern friends, arriving in July, and was back at New Carlisle by the 25th of August.<sup>1</sup> "Home again, six and a half days

1. Mr. John C. Matthews writes to Mrs. Hollister, daughter of Mrs. Matthews: "I well remember, in the winter of 1842, when I was living at your house, Schuyler went to New York, and upon his return his mother asked him if he went to see Mr. Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. He replied: 'No, mother; I was afraid if he saw me, a stripling of a boy, it would lower his estimate of me'—then one of his big laughs. Schuyler was a correspondent of the *Tribune*. Greeley had never seen him, but was puffing his articles [letters] almost every week. Your mother took him to task about it; she thought he should have visited Mr. Greeley."



from Albany," he writes his Uncle George. "I had a great desire to visit you again before I returned, but the anxiety of my mother to have me come home prevented me." He went to New Jersey by way of Argyle, and seems to have been charmed by his child fiancée, both just past eighteen, for in subsequent letters to her he subscribes himself, "Your own Schuyler."

On the 26th of August, 1841, they removed to South Bend, Mr. Matthews having been elected Auditor of St. Joseph County by the Whigs, on the first of the same month. The Auditor was county supervisor, and clerk, and executive officer of the county board; he kept the records of the county, attended to its revenues, prepared the tax-lists, settled with the collector, guarded the treasury, superintended the county expenditures, and had the care and management of the various school and trust funds. Capacity, integrity, and physical endurance were required of an officer charged with these responsible and laborious duties. It was an excellent school for the young man, whom Auditor Matthews made his deputy. The Auditor was appointed Master in Chancery by the Judge, and the two offices paid five hundred and fifty dollars a year in emoluments. Mr. Matthews was re-elected in 1845, so that Colfax filled the office of Deputy-Auditor eight years.

"We are all highly pleased with our situation," he writes; "my grandmother especially appreciates very highly the sanctuary privileges from which she has been so long debarred." He was in a frolicsome mood, his first winter in South Bend, and writes with keen enjoyment of the mischief in which he engaged. "I haven't settled down to my law reading, because my mind is so full of other subjects. Perhaps I will be more ambitious after I get over my fit of mischief. The dam which has kept it back has given way, and now it has full vent, and is rushing along at a rapid rate." He concealed his engagement with Miss Clark by acknowledging it, no one believing him. Although not a singer, he joined the Presbyterian singing-school. "In less than a month," he writes, "I think we shall get the boys and girls of this town by the

ears." The sewing societies attached to the churches afforded a fine field for these "frölickers." He concluded after a little that he could not learn to sing, "unless I can get a teacher with more influence over me. I am always half an octave behind or ahead."

Some of his amusements had a serious purpose, and indicate his taste for public affairs. Such were reports of supposed town meetings on subjects of current interest and the holding of a "Pie Poudre Court"—Judge Colfax presiding—an old English court, whose sentences were executed on the spot. In this court his associates were prosecuted in regular form for alleged social offences—a kind of play that demands more wit and invention than most genuine legal proceedings. Of greater consequence, however, was a mock Legislature, which met weekly in the evening, preparing its business between sessions. There was one member for each county in the State. Dr. Leonard B. Rush was Speaker; Colfax was "the gentleman from Jasper," Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and Engrossing Clerk. Topics of current interest were considered and acted upon by this body with all the seriousness and decorum of a real legislative House. The member from Jasper was one of a select committee, to which was referred a bill taxing the professions for the support of education. The committee reported against it; but Colfax, in a minority report, argued its justice and expediency so convincingly that the bill passed. "The farmer pays a heavy sum yearly," said he, "on his real estate and his personal property; while the lawyer and the doctor, authorized by law to collect fees for their services, and in the highway to office and power, pay merely on their books, assessed at about one fourth of their cost. The contrast between the burdens of the two classes is obvious. These gentlemen fill all the departments of government, and lay grievous burdens on the farmer, the mechanic, and the laborer—to pay interest on the State debt, the expenses of the counties, to keep up the roads, build school-houses, and support education—which they themselves hardly turn a finger to help carry."

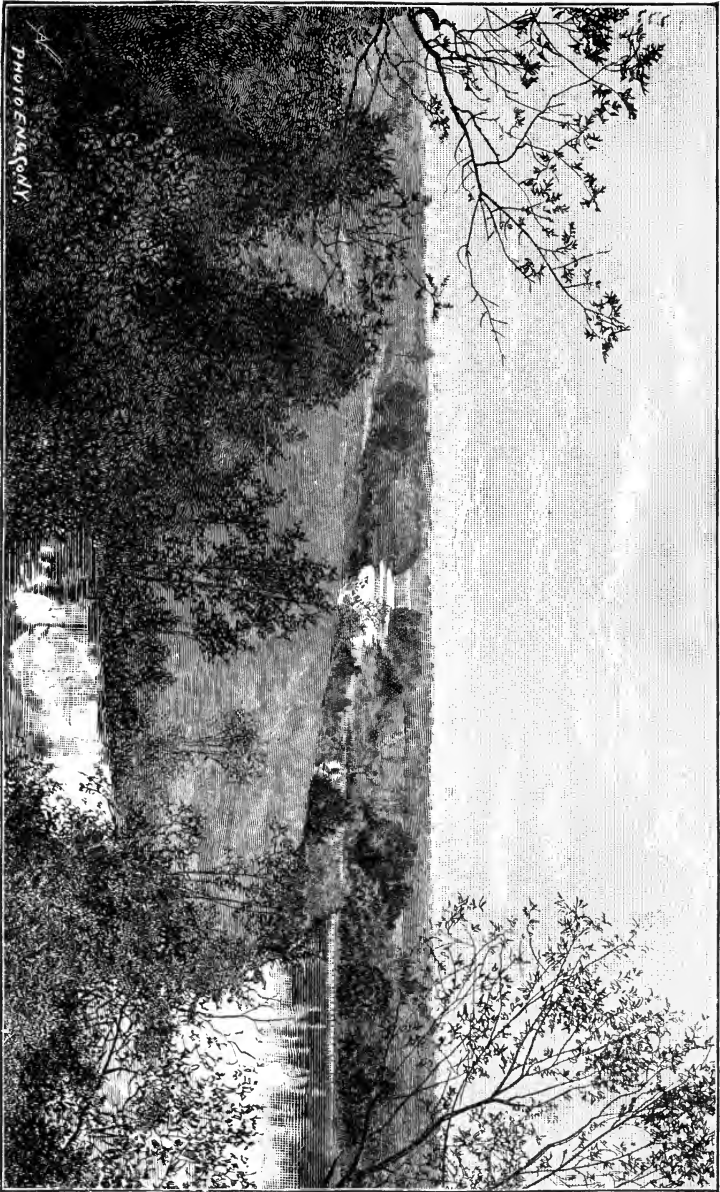


PHOTO EN & GARDY

THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER, INDIANA.



The same principle—namely, equality of burdens—he urged in the debates on the Tax bill during the civil war, in advocating the taxation of bank circulation. In dealing with public affairs, justice was the ideal and fair play the rule of his life. Twenty-seven winters had succeeded this one, when he said in a speech at the capital of his State : “ My character is known to all of you. It has been an open page for the last fourteen years, for whomsoever would to look upon and see for themselves. My principles are the convictions of my life, growing with my growth and strengthening with my strength. I believe in them as I believe in inspiration, and I expect to adhere to them without variableness or the shadow of turning until I see them fixed like the eternal granite in the legislation and policy of my country.” The proposed tax was five dollars a year, to be devoted to sustaining the schools.

He also reported in favor of compulsory education, two years of it to be gratuitous. He said that in certain European countries which had adopted compulsory education “ a beggar is seldom seen ; there are fewer crimes committed ; less poverty and misery exist ; and more real comfort and happiness are enjoyed by the poor man’s family than in countries that have not adopted the system. In New York and the Yankee States one third of the whole population attend the schools, and if we wish to find intelligence and virtue, in no States are they found in more perfection than in these.” He cited statistics showing that one seventh of the adults of Indiana could neither read nor write. Unpleasant statistics, he called them, to the friends of education ; but they proved that something should be done. Already there was a large school fund, but that was not enough. He closed as follows : “ The committee, in concluding their report, feel free to say that they doubt very much the success of their bill during the present session of the Legislature. The spirit of the age, it is true, is progressive, and in almost every other part of the United States east of us education advances hand in hand with material growth. In Indiana, however, the plan of universal education may be considered as a rash experi-

ment and a novel innovation upon the system of children-teaching now in use. The committee have felt that their task was embarrassing ; but having willingly assumed it, they have considered that it was their duty frankly and firmly to perform it. In the accompanying bill, therefore, the Assembly will find our views embodied, and we now leave it to their wisdom to decide upon." The intention of the actors in these proceedings was to familiarize themselves with parliamentary usage. To Colfax it was a valuable experience, as he afterward admitted. "Great interest is felt in our debates," he wrote. The slavery question could not be excluded, and was exhaustively discussed. "An obscure school-teacher, named Joseph Call, who died early," said the late Judge Stanfield, of South Bend, to the author, "made a most remarkable Abolition speech, settling us all."

In February (1842) Colfax writes his Uncle George : "Tell Dick I don't drink any more 'tamarack' or 'Jersey lightning'—nothing worse than cold water." And to Miss Clark : "Since my return West I have taken an inward pledge against drinking any kind of liquor. Thus far I have kept it strictly, and in all my gayety and blithesomeness no temptation shall ever lead me to pollute my lips with the liquid fire." A quarter of a century later Senator Henry Wilson said : "Now [speaking of Congress] let me not slander them ; let me not forget to tell you that the House of Representatives of the United States, for three consecutive terms, has elected a teetotaler as its presiding officer ; and in his habits and in his person Schuyler Colfax refutes the statement that we often hear, that you cannot find a genial good fellow who is a teetotaler." As the winter drew to its close, the "Total Abstinence Society" suddenly increased in number sevenfold. "Two more meetings will sweep the whole town, with the exception of a few opinionated moderate drinkers. I have spoken at every meeting lately, and so has Mr. Matthews, who is—and so am I—the warmest kind of a teetotaler. My mother is also a member. The county society has grown from one hundred, five months

ago, to six hundred now. Is not this cause of joy, and do you wonder that I am enthusiastic in the good work? My remarks in the meetings are, of course, practical, for I have no [drinking] experience to tell."

With a few other youngsters he had pledged himself to abstain from smoking for three months, as a trial of their moral fortitude. "You congratulate me on abandoning smoking," he wrote later; "but the pledge expired last week, and we have all been smoking gloriously ever since. One of the members broke the pledge; we tried and convicted him, and turned him out, and fined him one hundred Spanish cigars, which will last us some time. I don't think it does me much harm, if any, and I guess I won't join another anti-tobacco society soon." A dozen members of the Total Abstinence Society organized a missionary department, of which he was secretary. In one month they established six societies in the back settlements, and procured one hundred and fifty signatures to the total abstinence pledge. His principal office work was from May to August, inclusive, and as the rush ended in 1842, he re-resolved to read law, in deference to the wishes of his family and of many friends at the Bar and elsewhere, and to cease temperance lecturing, as it took too much of his time; but he never ceased working for temperance during his life.

The next winter he writes from Indianapolis. State Senator John D. Defrees, who had long taken a friendly interest in him, had written him in November: "Whether I can get you a situation as Assistant Clerk is uncertain; but I will guarantee you employment to make your board and one hundred dollars; don't fail to come, on any account." He found Defrees's house the storm-centre of Whig politics, and, of course, congenial. Like Gambetta, on first going to Paris, he was intensely interested in the proceedings and debates of the Legislature. He was engaged as Senate Reporter for Defrees's paper, the *Indiana State Journal*, and also as Assistant Enrolling Clerk. At this time his mother wrote to his Uncle George: "He is in his element, but I fear that this winter, with the flattery of those who think

him a talented young Whig, will induce him to give still more attention to politics ; and I should regret to see my son's fine talents all dwindle down into an ambitious politician, when he is by nature, as I think, fitted to make a noble lawyer." To her son the mother wrote : "Your account of the dissipation at the Capital makes me tremble. Remember what you have told me were the sentiments of your friend Walker—never go in the company of one you could not introduce to your mother and sisters ; and to his words I will add, that you could not introduce to your intended wife." All his relatives on his mother's side shared her dislike of politics—a dislike which her son ultimately did much to dissipate. He was highly praised for his work as reporter, and without doubt he deserved it. His pen was a ready one, he was ambitious, and the work was just to his hand. On his return home in March (1843), he wrote his Uncle George :

"The New Jersey Whigs are the salt of the earth—God bless them ! I read the account in your letter of your glorious victory of last October to our Clay Club, and it won for the ' Jersey Blues ' a round of applause. I have had many over-partial friends soliciting me to be a candidate for [State] Representative next year, when I will be just twenty-one, and guaranteeing my election if I consent ; but I have declined, pleading youth, diffidence, and lack of qualifications ; and besides that, I am reading law, and intend to become a lawyer, if I have brains enough. I was at Indianapolis during the last session of the Legislature, as Senate Reporter for the *Indiana State Journal*, whereby I paid all my expenses, became acquainted with many of the leading men of the State, and made many friends. We go here for Clay and Talmadge—the devil take Tyler !"

Expecting to receive a small sum of money (ten dollars) from his Uncle George, he had incurred obligations on the strength of it, and he writes : "I trust now you will relieve me from this unpleasant situation, for it is the first time that I ever owed money that was not paid up just as it was promised. I am still delving into the mysteries of the law, but my head is full of politics also. Through the



solicitation of the leading Whigs of this section, I have been acting as principal editor of our paper, the *South Bend Free Press*, ever since I returned from Indianapolis, and will continue at it until after the election. It is done secretly. The Locos suspect it, and hate me cordially ; but I have a host of Whig friends. I tell you, my dear uncle, without egotism, the name you and I bear is not entirely unknown in Northern Indiana ; and if an honorable ambition will serve, it will yet be known and hated by more Locos even than now. It was rather complimentary to be appointed, as I was at our late Congressional Convention, Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions. I imagined it would please you, and so sent you a paper containing the resolutions which I reported, and which, you will see, are of the most ultra character ; for I am an uncompromising Whig—Whig all over. It was unusual to put a boy of twenty in such a place, or even to send him as delegate to such a convention, and therefore I was the more pleased and proud. I send you to-day's paper, containing my editorials, and I should like to know if they meet your approval."

In December, 1843, he writes again from Indianapolis : "It is considered rather an honorable and trustworthy position [Senate Reporter], and because of the facilities it gives me to obtain a knowledge of the world, of State affairs, and to become acquainted with the leading men of the State, I am here again, as last winter." In February, 1844, he wrote Miss Clark : "I should have been a lawyer long ere this, but my volatile mind, my penchant for politics, and my distaste for legal studies have combined to make me avoid law-books whenever I could find an excuse. I am not lazy, or indolent, either. In the Auditor's office I often write twelve to fifteen hours, without intermission, sometimes, even for meals. In such work I delight, but law-books I dislike, although I shall continue to try to overcome it." Summing himself up, he says : "I have a pretty good though small library ; I own half of a very good house, which the 'Squire' [Mr. Matthews] and I live in, and I have half paid for ; I own a house and lot in New

Carlisle, and I have a little property in New Jersey yet, but not much. You see I am not rich. I tell you my circumstances and my indisposition to study, because I think it would be wrong to conceal it from you. I don't know that I shall ever be more able to support a wife than I am now. Although my frame is light and my constitution weak, my health is as good as it ever was, and I can wear out most men at desk-work."

He had figured prominently for one so young in the State conventions of the winter. Called on for a speech at one of them, he made a "spurt" which was heartily applauded, "but of which I cannot recollect a word that I said." Three fourths of all the Whig voters of the county attended the county convention in March, 1844. "I was Secretary, and am also Corresponding Secretary of the Clay Club. Clay will carry the State gloriously." He attended the great Tippecanoe convention of May 29th, "to help shout for Henry Clay," and had the honor of being called on to address a very large assemblage at Lafayette the evening before. September 1st he started East, calling at "Clark Hall," *en route*, and arriving in New York about the middle of the month. The Presidential canvass was at its height, and he was waited on by a committee, and asked to speak. He declined, because, he says, he was "thinking more of the ides of October [he was to be married October 10th] than of the ides of November." But he addressed the Pompton Plains Clay Club, September 23d, "in the very home of my ancestors, with an aged uncle as president of the club. A large meeting had convened, anxious to hear the Hoosier offshoot of the Colfax family. I spoke an hour, and I guess they were satisfied. Last evening, 26th, the Whigs had a monster meeting in front of National Hall [New York City], twenty thousand people present, and ten stands for speaking—all going full blast. I followed Greeley at one, and as soon as I got through was sent to another, where I tried to get off with fifteen minutes, but was compelled to go on for an hour, although hoarse and tired out." That at his age he should be called on to speak at political meetings wherever

he chanced to be, whether in the capital of his own State, in the city of New York, or elsewhere, shows an admirable facility for political speaking on his part.

The last of his bachelor fun was the organization, in connection with five or six of his old boy friends in New York, of "The Potato Club," for the encouragement of matrimony. "Potato" was the secret sign and watchword; a potato adorned the head of the table at their meetings; and they addressed one another as "Brother Potato Brown" or "Wilson." When one of the Potatoes married, he was to notify the brother Potatoes, who were to meet and dine together, and drink the health of their Benedict Potato, and send him official notice of the proceedings and toasts. The Potato who should be last married was to convene the Potatoes, with their wives and little Potatoes, and at his own expense dine and wine them all. They got a good deal of fun out of it, but whether the constitution was observed to the last particular, the historian cannot say.

On the 10th of October (1844) he and Miss Clark were married, and immediately set out for the West, arriving at Saratoga the same evening. Here he was waited on by the inevitable committee, and invited to address a Clay club. He desired to be excused, since it was his wedding day; but they insisted, and he finally consented. The bride had long been loved by Mrs. Matthews as a daughter, and it was a happy marriage. They first lived in the house jointly owned by Mr. Colfax and Mr. Matthews; at No. 138 Michigan Street, South Bend, now No. 416, North. Within a year or two, however, he built a house at No. 211 West Water Street. The entire place cost the young couple less than six hundred dollars, and their (cash) housekeeping expenses the first year were one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

## CHAPTER II.

EDITOR.

1844-1855.

FOUND THE ST. JOSEPH VALLEY REGISTER.—SECRETARY OF THE CHICAGO HARBOR AND RIVER CONVENTION.—DELEGATE TO THE WHIG NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1848.—THE SLAVERY QUESTION FROM THE TIME OF THE CONFEDERATION.—YOUNGEST GRAND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ODD FELLOWS.—MAKES HIS MARK IN THE STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1850.—JOINT CANVASS WITH DR. FITCH FOR CONGRESS.—CARRIES THE REBEKAH DEGREE IN THE GRAND LODGE OF THE UNITED STATES.—DELEGATE-AT-LARGE TO THE WHIG NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1852.—APPEALS TO THE PEOPLE FROM THE REPEAL OF THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE.—ACTIVE IN FORMING THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.—ELECTED TO CONGRESS OVER DR. EDDY.—DELEGATE TO THE NATIONAL KNOW-NOTHING COUNCIL OF 1855.—BUT NEVER A KNOW-NOTHING.

IN September, 1845, Schuyler Colfax and A. W. West bought the *South Bend Free Press* of W. and J. Millikan, and commenced its publication as the *St. Joseph Valley Register*, Schuyler Colfax editor. He announced that in politics the *Register* would be inflexibly Whig. As to the State debt, it would advocate honesty. It would take moderate ground with respect to slavery, alike opposed to Calhounism and Birneyism. A reasonable amount of space would be devoted to agriculture and education, and the latest news furnished. Many years afterward, in apology for the publication of news of a broad nature from Utah, which it seemed necessary to publish, the editor said: "We try to exclude from the *Register*, so far as we can, the recital of bloody murders, of shameless crimes, of horrid executions, and all else that panders to a vitiated mind." The paper was uniformly courteous and moderate in tone. It excluded religious discussion, while supporting

every good cause. Its editor was regarded as a strong writer and partisan, and was welcomed as an important accession to the editorial fraternity. South Bend had, perhaps, fifteen hundred inhabitants, St. Joseph County ten thousand. The paper quadrupled its subscription list in a few years, and doubled its annual profits. These, however, did not average quite one hundred dollars per month for the first twelve years. The young man computed his possessions when he bought into the paper at sixteen hundred dollars ; but about half of it was invested in an oil-mill with Mr. Matthews, and by reason of the change made in the tariff in 1846, became a total loss. In December the establishment took up its quarters in the second story of Liston's new brick block on Michigan Street, and early in 1846 Colfax bought out his partner. He continued to serve as Deputy-Auditor, and was appointed on the Whig State committee for the county. We hear no more about his studying law.<sup>1</sup> He was never admitted to the Bar. His triumphs were to be won in another field. He had "pettifogged," as he termed it, a few cases while in his teens ; but, as he wrote, "they were mere frolics, undertaken to accommodate a friend or scorch an opponent." In spite of all precautions, he was now launched for a political voyage of forty years.

A religious revival occurred in the town and county in the early months of 1846. All the denominations held "protracted meetings." Under the Rev. John T. Avery's ministration numbers joined the Presbyterian Church. Coming home one evening, Colfax said to his mother : "Where is Evelyn ? Off to that revival meeting again, I suppose." The question and what it implied brought tears into his mother's eyes. He besought her forgiveness, began to attend the meetings himself, and soon afterward, with his wife, united with the church. At a later period he, and Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, and others withdrew from the Presbyterian Church, and founded the First Reformed Church of South Bend.

1. He was elected an honorary member of the St. Joseph Bar Association in 1877, with Morton, Haymond, Pratt, Calkins, McDonald, Noyes, and others.

The editor of the *Register* was a delegate from his county to the Chicago Harbor and River Convention of July, 1847, a gathering of leading Whigs and liberal Democrats, particularly of the West, for the purpose of considering the constitutional power of Congress to appropriate money in aid of internal improvements, and of developing and strengthening popular sentiment in favor of such appropriations. So far as numbers and enthusiasm were concerned, it was an entire success. Nothing like it had then or has since been known in the West. Abraham Lincoln, Edward Bates, Thomas Corwin, Horace Greeley, Robert C. Schenck, David Dudley Field, Erastus Corning, Thomas Butler King, and many other men then or afterward famous, attended, and letters were read from such leaders as Henry Clay, Silas Wright, Washington Hunt, Martin Van Buren, and Lewis Cass, the latter two, however, being decidedly non-committal.

The convention met in the open air, and when permanently organized Edward Bates was Chairman. He attracted no special notice until, in adjourning the session, his closing remarks grew into a magnificent speech, admittedly the best of the entire proceedings. It was so unexpected, and it so enchanted the press reporters, that they neglected to catch the eloquent sentences as they fell from his lips. Colfax wrote his wife :

“I have been unexpectedly elected to the responsible and honorable office of principal Secretary of the convention. I cannot properly leave now till we are about through, as all the responsibility of keeping the proceedings devolves upon me. The town is swarming with people, delegates and strangers, estimated at twelve thousand.” (The population of Chicago did not much exceed this; it was placed at from twelve thousand to sixteen thousand.) “I sleep on the floor at the boarding-house, and the boards are certainly oak, instead of poplar, as they should be, when used for bedsteads.”

The discussion was brilliant and exhaustive. The resolutions, unanimously adopted, affirmed the constitutionality of Congressional aid to internal improvements,

provided these affected two or more States. A resolution favoring George Wilkes's project for a railroad to Oregon was laughed out of the convention, and one declaring the free navigation of the St. Lawrence a matter of great importance was summarily tabled. This assemblage was a great event in its day. The pleasing address and business efficiency of the principal Secretary secured him this prominent position, and he filled it with credit. He heard many of the foremost men of the time in debate on a constitutional question, and he made their personal acquaintance.

The *Register* was enlarged by one fourth as it entered upon its third year. Having gone to the State capital in November as a candidate for Clerk of the House of Representatives, the editor writes his wife : " I am satisfied I shall get more Whig votes than either of my competitors ; but Ward, the old Clerk, last year got elected in a similar state of affairs by the whole body of the Locos going for him on condition that his friends should, as they did, elect a Loco Assistant Clerk. Such a combination this year would, of course, sell me out, for I would scorn, if such a proposition was made to me, to accept it, if it were the best office in the world." And again, a week later : " I am beaten, as I expected I would be, by bargains which I would not descend to, though I have run an honorable poll, and stood at the head of the list on the first ballot." Upon this occasion his friend Stanfield<sup>1</sup> writes him : " Last Saturday evening I visited Mrs. Colfax to sympathize with her in your unsucess (I don't consider it a defeat). I told her I would rather see you right than Clerk, and she would too. She considers it a triumph of honor and integrity over temptation. Schuyler, it is above calculation to have a wife that can appreciate these things." He engaged as reporter for the *Indiana State Journal*, as in former winters, but the small-pox appearing

1. Judge Thomas S. Stanfield, of South Bend, was a few years older than Colfax, a lawyer, a Whig, and afterward a Republican. He represented the district in the Legislature once or twice ; was defeated for Lieutenant-Governor, but served with distinction on the Bench. He was of a generous and gentle nature, beloved by all who knew him. He died in 1885, after a long and remarkably unselfish and useful life.

in the city, the Legislature adjourned *sine die* in a panic. "Esquire Miller is not well," he writes his wife, "and the fatigue of the journey [home] may make him sick. If so, and he is left alone on the road, coming from a city where small-pox is raging, he would probably be left unattended, if not turned out into a hovel to die. I could not leave him in such a situation, and hence this letter."

While he was at Indianapolis the *Tippecanoe Journal*, published at Lafayette, was offered for sale. Lafayette was a larger and more prosperous town than South Bend, and the *Journal* was doing twice the business of the *Register*. Mr. Colfax was urged to purchase the paper, and was tendered any needed assistance. "After looking at the profit and the riches in view," he writes, "there comes up such a feeling of attachment to South Bend, such an unwillingness to remove from the circle of friends and acquaintances around me in St. Joseph County, that I can hardly hope that you will advise me to do it. If you are satisfied with the little more than a living we can make at South Bend, or would prefer that to a larger income purchased by the disruption of family ties, I shall be contented to dismiss the matter from my thoughts." At another time he writes: "Caleb B. Smith wishes Defrees and me to join him and buy the *Cincinnati Gazette*, price sixty thousand dollars, making twenty thousand a year. You know what my answer is."

In May, 1848, Defrees sent him his credentials as delegate to the Whig National Convention. The Whigs, especially in Indiana, were in great perplexity as to whom to nominate. Mr. Defrees writes the young delegate that he favors Judge McLean, believing that Henry Clay cannot be elected, and that General Zachary Taylor ought not to be, because he will not pledge himself to carry out Whig principles if elected. Mr. Godlove S. Orth, of Lafayette, agrees with Defrees as to these candidates; opposes Thomas Corwin because his speech against the Mexican war had impaired his availability; rejects Messrs. Crittenden, Clayton, Badger, and Seward as out of the question, and Judge McLean as too far from the people. He



decides emphatically for General Winfield Scott. Mr. Stanfield writes that he "loves Old Harry, but he cannot be elected. The people don't know McLean. Scott will do, but I have no doubt that 'Old Rough and Ready' [Taylor] is the most available man that can be nominated. I have confidence in your judgment, and I know your notions are right ; so do just what you think best, after reflection upon all the opinions you can pick up from different parts of the Union." Horace Greeley writes him : "Clay is the man who ought to be President. We cannot, with any decency, support Taylor. I would prefer to split and run a Northern man, with the certainty of defeat, rather than support Taylor. If Clay should not be nominated, I should prefer Corwin next, but will probably support McLean, who is capable, moderate, and available. I am afraid, however, that 'Scott will be nominated if Clay is not. I cannot bear the thought of Taylor.'" These and many similar letters to the young delegate indicate the nature and extent of the trust which his associates thus early reposed in his political judgment.

Looking back upon those times, there seems to have been but little heart in their politics. In the early days of the Whig Party there was substance in their contention for a high tariff, for internal improvements by the National Government, for the re-chartering of the United States Bank. In 1840 there was nothing left in Whig politics but the distress of the country at the end of twelve years of Jackson and Van Buren. That was sufficient to place the Whigs in power ; but their President, General William Henry Harrison, dying, and their Vice-President, John Tyler, apostatizing, all Whig measures were successively vetoed, and no more was heard of them until the slaveholders' rebellion necessitated a government at Washington, when they were resuscitated and made the established policy. Horace Greeley was wont to say that the Whig Party was the main obstacle in the way of the triumph of Whig principles. Certainly, they triumphed only after the Whig Party, as a party, was no more. A new issue, or an old issue in a new form, intimately connected with the

organization and development of the nation, and threatening an even more potent influence in moulding its future, was fast taking the place of all other political issues.

Negro slavery was entailed on the New World by Europe. It was a count in Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration of Independence, that King George had prevented the Colonies from inhibiting the importation of negro slaves from Africa. The years of discussion which preceded the War of Independence, as has been said, went to the foundation of the rights of man, and our fathers did not fail to see that their reasoning condemned negro slavery equally with white slavery. It was the merest accident that the evil was not restricted within its existing limits before the Constitution was made and adopted. The Colonies occupied a narrow belt on the Atlantic coast, extending from the Penobscot, in Maine, to the Altamaha, in Georgia. All of them except Massachusetts were slaveholding; yet the climate and productions of the South being the better adapted to slave labor, the mass of the three hundred thousand to five hundred thousand slaves in the entire country was in the South. The war had left the Colonies impoverished and in debt. Part of them had assets in territory extending beyond their actual limits to the Mississippi River, while part had no share in this territory, now deemed, and justly, to have been won by the common effort. This soon became cause of bickering; and the Continental Congress proposed that these Western lands be ceded to the Confederation. Virginia, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts having already acted on this suggestion, and North Carolina and Georgia being expected soon to act, a committee was appointed in 1784, of which Jefferson was chairman, to draft an Ordinance for the government of the territory ceded, *and to be ceded*, the latter comprising the present States of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi.

The Ordinance proposed to forever exclude slavery from all this territory; but it required a majority of the States, seven, to adopt the Ordinance.<sup>1</sup> New Hampshire, Massa-

1. Each State was represented by two delegates, and it required both of the delegates

chusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania, six only, voted Aye. Delaware was absent, and New Jersey had not a quorum present. Both would have voted Aye, had they voted at all ; but it was not to be. Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia voted No, and North Carolina was divided. So the restriction of slavery failed, although of the delegates present sixteen out of twenty-three voted Aye. Three years later a similar Ordinance was unanimously adopted with respect to the territory north of the Ohio River, that south of the Ohio not yet having been ceded. When North Carolina and Georgia ceded their territory, they stipulated that Congress should not abolish or restrict slavery therein.

The same men who thus endeavored to set bounds to slavery under the Confederation formed the Constitution, and purposely avoided mentioning slavery in that instrument. Although cotton was not yet king, slaves were employed in the cultivation of rice and indigo on the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia, and it was regarded as doubtful whether agriculture could be carried on in that region without slaves. The formation of a more perfect union, by the adoption of the Constitution, was an absolute necessity, and it could not be accomplished without concessions to the slave-holding interest. So it was agreed that the importation of slaves should not be stopped for twenty years ; that fugitives from labor should be returned, or, at least, delivered up on requisition of the party claiming the right to their labor ; and that five slaves should count as three free men in the apportionment for representation in the Lower House of Congress. Slavery, it was believed, would not long survive the suppression of the importation of slaves ; and, perhaps, it would not, if circumstances had not combined to make the growth of the cotton plant one of the most important industries of the world.

When the Constitution was adopted, it became the supreme law and bond of union between twelve slave States and one free State—Massachusetts had adopted

to make a quorum or to cast the vote of the State. The vote was not by delegates, but by States.

a Bill of Rights, which her Supreme Court declared abolished slavery—each State having the conceded right to retain or abolish slavery as it pleased. Six of these States soon placed slavery in the way of ultimate extinction ; the others did not. Congress began at once to admit new States : Vermont, territory relinquished by New York and New Hampshire, and Kentucky, segregated from Virginia, and already a slave-holding Territory ; Ohio and Tennessee, the latter ceded by North Carolina, with the continuation of slavery as a condition ; Louisiana, where slavery existed when Louisiana was purchased of the French by President Jefferson, and soon afterward Indiana ; Mississippi, ceded by Georgia, with slavery, and Illinois ; Alabama, ceded by Georgia, with slavery, and Maine, relinquished by Massachusetts : in pairs, and by general consent, their status, respectively, having been fixed by agencies outside of the Constitution, though the first Congress under that instrument ratified the Ordinance of 1787.

In 1818 that part of the Louisiana purchase which is now the State of Missouri applied to Congress for an Enabling Act. Upon this the question of the restriction of slavery came to life again. Missouri was north of the line which the North had understood was to circumscribe the extension of slavery northward. Machinery, applied to the manipulation of cotton, and the boundless field acquired for its culture, had quietly wrought a revolution in the South, which was now prompted by interest to extend slavery, while the North was moved by conviction to restrict it. Daniel Webster said that so far the Republic was not responsible for slavery ; but that it would be if Missouri should be admitted into the Union with slavery. In the struggle that ensued the North sought to provide that no more slaves should be taken into Missouri, and that slave children born there should become free at twenty-five. The South demanded the admission of Missouri as a slave State. The strength of the North was in the House ; of the South in the Senate. After two years of parliamentary conflict, enough Northern votes were secured for the admission of Missouri, with slavery, by a proposition, brought

forward by the Southerners, that in consideration thereof slavery should be forever prohibited north of the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , the southern boundary line of Missouri.

Ten years after this there was no ill-feeling on this question between North and South, and a determined effort was made in a Virginia constitutional convention so to base representation as to place the political power in the hands of those who were favorable to emancipation. The suppression of slave importation in 1807, the growing demand for slaves to work the new industry and the new territory, had made the people of the border slave States slave-breeders, and created the domestic slave trade. A slave baby was now worth a hundred dollars as soon as born, while field hands brought one thousand to two thousand dollars each, according to the price of cotton. But for this unique business, slavery would doubtless have passed away from Virginia and all the border slave States prior to 1830.

Benjamin Lundy began to agitate for the abolition of slavery in 1815, travelling through the States from Ohio to the Gulf, organizing emancipation societies, endeavoring to encourage colonization, and publishing a paper. William Lloyd Garrison took up the work in 1830, founding the *Liberator*, and making war on slavery, neither giving nor asking quarter. Others joined him—Francis P. Jackson, Lewis and Arthur Tappan, Nathaniel P. Rogers, William Goodell, Gerrit Smith, Elijah Parrish Lovejoy, James G. Birney, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker—men of a single purpose and extraordinary force and persistency of character. Public sentiment in the North discountenanced the more extreme Abolitionists, acknowledging and defending the rights of the slave States in that connection, so far as guaranteed by the Constitution. President Jackson called attention to them as “atheists and incendiaries,” and in some of the free States futile attempts were made to suppress discussion; but mob violence suppressed it for a season. Lovejoy’s press was destroyed the fourth time, and he at last shot dead, at Alton, Ill. Garrison was forced to secrete himself, was mobbed in Boston, and narrowly escaped assassination. In the South

the mails were robbed by the postmasters with impunity, and men who uttered Abolition sentiments were expelled or hanged by mobs.

No sooner was the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  established than the Southern leaders began to look with uneasiness on the territory lying north of it and stretching away to the Pacific, forever dedicated to freedom by solemn compact ; and the corresponding belt lying south of it not open to slavery, because owned by Mexico. As if by instinct, a straggling emigration, mainly from the slave States, set out for Texas. This vast region was almost uninhabited, and the emigrants were soon strong enough to wrest it from the feeble power of Mexico, and hold it in a sort of independence, while the slave interest in the United States intrigued and manœuvred for its annexation, which was finally accomplished in 1845. The line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  was applied to the new State, although it barely touched its northern extremity, and the right reserved by Congress of ultimately making, with the consent of Texas, four additional States out of its territory, but with the power to either retain or prohibit slavery in them.

Meanwhile Arkansas and Michigan had been admitted into the Union ; also Iowa and Florida—the latter having been purchased of Spain in 1818 ; and Wisconsin, to match Texas—always in pairs—a free State against a slave State. Thus eight free States had been admitted and nine slave States ; and counting the original States six free and six slave, with Massachusetts free when the Constitution was adopted, there were now thirty States, half of them free, half of them slave, when, over a question of boundary, war was brought on with Mexico to clear the way of the South to the Pacific.

While this war was in progress, a proviso to a resolution was offered in Congress by David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, that slavery, not existing in Mexico, should not be planted in territory that might be acquired from Mexico.<sup>1</sup> This proposition passed the House. The *Register* of February 26th, 1847, commented : “ True to the impulses

1. Timothy Jenkins, of New York, is said to have prepared this proviso.

of freedom, the popular branch of Congress has by this action given embodiment and form to that public opinion of the Northern States which declares, 'Not another inch of slave territory.' It is, indeed, a manly stand. It makes the pulse of those who hope yet to see the day when the chain of human bondage shall be broken beat quicker and more gladly. It sounds in the ears of those who prefer anarchy and dissolution to gradual emancipation, as the knell of 'the peculiar institution.' The Wilmot Proviso was defeated in the Senate by a speech made for that purpose, the session being near its close when the matter came up.

The war with Mexico resulted in the acquisition by the United States of the territory now known as California, Utah, and New Mexico. Rejecting the Wilmot Proviso, the Senate voted into a bill a provision extending the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, which provision failed of adoption in the House. This would have been a sufficiently equitable division, between freedom and slavery, of the land spoil of the war. But freedom claimed it all. The North was unwilling, as in the case of Missouri, to see so much as an inch of free soil surrendered to slavery through the agency of the Republic. In this issue there was heart enough. The editor of the *Register*, July 7th, 1848, declared: "As one Northern Whig, we hold that when new territory comes into the Union, whether slave or free previously, it should come in unstained by slavery; and that the bounds of our present slave territory should never, under any circumstances, be extended a single inch."

The contest was between two differing, if not antagonistic, forms of civilization, yoked together in the course of events, each seeking expansion and dominion. It was roused into dangerous activity whenever, by the application of new States for admission into the Union, or by the necessity of organizing new Territories, the equilibrium between the two sections was threatened. In the nature of things such a contest could be finally settled only by the arbitrament of war. Since it has been so settled, and settled aright, we can perhaps afford to admit that slavery

and its propagandism were the misfortune rather than the crime of the old South. No one can doubt that reversing the conditions of North and South would have been to reverse their respective parts.

Elected one of the secretaries of the National Convention, the young delegate from Indiana supported Scott against Clay, Webster, and Taylor. The convention was a stormy one. A large section of the party favored the Wilmot Proviso. General Taylor was a Southerner and a slaveholder, and while classifying himself as a Whig, he had in numerous letters refused to commit himself to Whig principles. At the same time, he refrained from stating his political opinions, and seemed desirous of running, if at all, as a no-party candidate. A resolution was introduced declaring that any candidate, to entitle himself to the Whig nomination, must have given assurances that he would accept and abide by the nomination; that he would consider himself the candidate of the Whigs, and would use his influence to bring Whig principles into operation. This was ruled out of order by the presiding officer, and an appeal being taken, the appeal was laid on the table, amid the greatest tumult and confusion. A second resolution of the same purport shared the same fate.

After the nomination of Taylor, a resolution was offered engaging the Whig party to abide by the nomination, provided General Taylor would accept it as a Whig nomination, and agree to adhere to fundamental Whig principles—"no extension of slave territory by conquest, protection to American industry, opposition to executive patronage." The end of the resolution was not permitted to be even read. A resolution was then offered declaring the nomination of Taylor and Fillmore to be unanimous. Upon a motion to divide this resolution, the former tumultuous scenes were re-enacted. Mr. Tilden, of Ohio, securing the floor, offered a resolution declaring it the duty of Congress to prohibit the introduction or existence of slavery in the Territories already possessed, or that might be acquired, by the United States. Amid greater and more angry excitement than ever, this resolution was



tabled, and to head off the introduction of further resolutions, the one expressing unanimous concurrence in the nominations was withdrawn, and the convention adjourned without any platform whatever, the Southerners having thus carried their point that General Taylor should be taken entirely on trust.

There was great dissatisfaction ; but the party finally came to support the nomination, or at least the people did so, and General Taylor, being genuinely popular, was elected over both the Democratic and the Free-Soil candidates.<sup>1</sup> Although Colfax stood with the Wilmot Proviso men, and supported Scott for the nomination to the last, he engaged in the canvass with all his energies, writing, speaking, managing, contending against the Democrats on the one hand and against the Abolitionists on the other.

It is a popular notion that the Abolitionists, by their agitation, and more especially by their independent political action, brought about the overthrow of slavery. It was, on the contrary, the extreme partisans of the "peculiar institution" who did this. The Abolitionists gave James G. Birney, of Michigan, nearly 7000 votes for President in 1840, and the Liberty Party gave him for the same office about 65,000 votes in 1844. In 1848 the Abolitionists and Free-Soilers polled for President 300,000 votes, in 1852 157,000 only ; but the mass of these votes were cast by Free-Soilers, and not by Abolitionists, and the majority of the Northern people were Free-Soilers in 1818-20. The abolition of slavery was a purely philanthropic question. In the States where it existed it was protected by the Constitution, and whatever their feelings or opinions, practical men saw no way to its abolition. Its restriction was a very different and a very practical issue.

1. General Lewis Cass was the Democratic candidate and Martin Van Buren the Free-Soil candidate. Horace Greeley writes Mr. Colfax in September : " I am going to vote for Taylor—at least, I think I am—and I am not clear that this is right. If I could make Van Buren President to-morrow I would. I don't like the man, but I *do* like the principles he now embodies—Free Soil and Land Reform. And, very properly, the Free-Soil Party is the only live party around us. It ought to triumph, but God works out His ends by other instruments than majorities ; wherefore it will fail, but fail gloriously. You needn't ask me to do any more than I *am* doing for Taylor. I do all I have stomach for. Let him whose digestion is ranker do more." ✓

It is true, the Northern people were defeated in 1820 by the desertion of a few of their Representatives and by a legislative agreement to forever exclude slavery from all territory north of a certain line, which agreement was afterward repudiated. They were defeated in the annexation of Texas, many considerations combining to render their opposition passive rather than active. In the struggle of 1850 they were, on the whole, successful. When, in 1854, Kansas-Nebraska was thrown open to slavery in defiance of the compact of 1820, as well as in disregard of the general understanding when the Constitution was adopted, the restriction of slavery, not its abolition, was brought prominently forward as the controlling political issue, and a great Free-Soil party was the result.

Still, the Northern people did not become Abolitionists. It required the impending dismemberment of the national domain and the sharing of the national sovereignty with an antagonistic power, brought about by secession and rebellion, to make a bare majority of the Northern people Abolitionists. But for the steady aggressions of the slave power, an Abolitionist would still be detested, South and North, as he was fifty years ago. In the decade preceding 1854 the more determined Free-Soilers were a troublesome element in the politics of close States like Indiana. They usually supported candidates of their own, always thereby throwing their votes away, generally giving them in effect to the party least favorable to their views. The animosity of the two great parties toward each other was mild compared with the feeling they each entertained for the "Free-Dirters," as they called the Free-Soilers.

The resolutions adopted by the Whig Nominating Convention of the Ninth Congressional District, in May, 1849, reported by Mr. Colfax as Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, fix his position, as well as that of the Whig Party. "We re-affirm," they said, "our attachment to the principles of the Wilmot Proviso, as declared by the Whig Convention of two years ago; we renew our pledge to oppose, in all constitutional ways, the extension of the slave territory of the country; we demand for our new territory

the Ordinance of Freedom (1787) ; and we instruct our candidate for Representative to insist on the incorporation of a positive prohibition of slavery in any plan for its government."

Fascinated by the objects and work of the Odd Fellows, on the 29th day of March, 1846, Mr. Colfax had applied and subsequently been admitted a member of South Bend Lodge No. 29. He had passed rapidly through the offices necessary to qualify him for a seat in the Grand Lodge of the State ; had been elected Representative to that body, and in July, 1849, was at Indianapolis in that capacity. He writes Mrs. Colfax : " It may surprise you to learn that I am elected Grand Representative to the Grand Lodge of the United States by the Grand Encampment. It surprised me, for I had not sought it." He must have been greatly pleased, for he says of his brethren : " They are a fine-looking body of men, decidedly more intelligent in the aggregate than any Legislature I have ever seen here." In September he attended the session of the Grand Lodge of the United States, the youngest man ever elected " to that Senate of Odd Fellowship, in which he at once took high rank, becoming the associate and friend of Wildey, Ridgely, Stokes, and other distinguished brothers, who have gained world-wide fame in the Fraternity. For nearly ten years, while he remained a Representative in that dignified body, he wielded a magic and potent influence. With instincts at once humane and just, with a fine presence, a musical voice, and eloquent utterance, he was usually found on the right side in every debate, and generally carried conviction to a large majority of his fellow-members, and made a splendid triumph for the right."<sup>1</sup> It was, however, the next year, in the adjourned session at Cincinnati, that he made his first real appearance, contending, against the decision of the Grand Sire, that receiving credentials not being considered legislative business, does not require the presence of a quorum. A long debate followed his speech, in which he sustained himself

1. Grand Secretary Joseph Kidder, in the Manchester, N. H., *Union*, after Colfax's death.

so well as to win many compliments; the Grand Sire and the Grand Secretary, both disagreeing with him, joining in them. Afterward a Representative, deputed by a number of others, waited on him to ascertain if he would serve as Grand Sire if elected. He replied that he must decline the honor, although he appreciated the compliment, because, among other reasons, not having served as Grand Master of the Order in his State, he was ineligible.

The people of Indiana having voted to revise the Constitution of the State, the Whigs of St. Joseph County nominated the editor of the *Register* as their delegate to the convention called for that purpose. He hesitated, preferring, as he said, that some one of greater experience should be chosen. Judge Sample, ex-Member of Congress, replied that he could not be excused; that he had long worked faithfully in the ranks, and had earned promotion. After he had been nominated by the townships voting separately, he was called up for a speech. He said he did not feel at liberty to refuse a nomination so flatteringly tendered; referred to his paper for his views on revision; said he deprecated change, except where experience had shown it to be necessary, and believed that party considerations should have no place in the business from beginning to end. He afterward issued a circular, reiterating the points in which he thought the organic law of the State should be amended, concluding: "It should be a constitution, not a code; a statement of governing principles, leaving their application to the Legislature." Three negative propositions, he held, should be incorporated—no slavery, no imprisonment for debt, no divorce by the Legislature. Beyond the issue of this circular he refrained from canvassing, a modesty he was obliged to forego in after years. He was elected by an unusual majority.<sup>1</sup>

The convention met in Indianapolis, October 7th, 1850, and was four months doing its work. It was two thirds Democratic, and a kind of mania against the negro pos-

1. Mr. Greeley wrote him: "The election being over, and you delegate-elect to a constitutional convention, I suppose I may be permitted to congratulate your constituents."

sessed the country. The proceedings were stenographically reported for the *Indiana State Journal*, and were published in book-form by the State. According to this official record, and by all contemporary accounts, the member from St. Joseph performed his duties in a very creditable manner. He soon took rank as one of the readiest and most animated debaters in the convention. Every proposition looking toward progress and reform found in him an earnest and able advocate. He had the honor of proposing a middle course with respect to banking, which was adopted by a large majority, after a long and tiresome wrestle with the subject. The State bankers and the free bankers were so evenly divided, that the men opposed to all banking were able to prevent any action. Colfax's device simply combined the best features of both systems.

He struggled hard for homestead exemption, arguing that it would injure no class, but would benefit the creditor, the debtor, and the State. The present law, he said, favored the creditor with the hardest heart, the smallest soul. The debt to the family was higher than any other, and should take precedence. Accidents would happen, prostrating a man, the rich as well as the poor; should the law then step in and finish the process of crushing him, and brand him as a knave in the bargain? It was the first duty of such a body as the convention to shield the poor; they were the most numerous class; our main support in peace or war. Homestead exemption would benefit the State by increasing the number of land-holders and attracting immigration. States should shape their legislation so as to secure to man a sufficient share of air, water, and earth for his existence and support.

He concluded :

“ Mr. President, the time must come, sooner or later, when the home *shall* be secure; when the cabin of the poor man *shall* be really his castle. The time must come when the writ of the sheriff *shall* be powerless at its threshold. Then, indeed, will it be truly a home. Humble though it may be, it may be the place to which its owner has brought his bride from the paternal roof; it may be the birthplace of his children; and in its quiet garden may repose all that remains of some of them who have been too soon transferred to a securer home in another world. Humble

though it may be, the tenderest associations cling around it, and their severance is like snapping the heart-strings of life. That home, to which he looks during his days of toil for rest, whose inmates around the hearthstone so often chase away the cares and sorrows which may cluster about his life, must be, at some time in our legislation, if not now, rendered secure and sacred. And when that is done, and not till then, will Indiana have done her part in hastening the coming of that period when, in the beautiful language of Scripture, every man can sit under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or make him afraid."

Political resolutions having been introduced, reciting that certain misguided persons in this and other free States had expressed their determination to resist the Fugitive Slave Law, Colfax thought they were out of place in the convention. Still, being there, he proceeded to discuss them. "There has been a good deal said and a great deal of indignation levelled at certain Northern agitators, whom the resolutions, as introduced, were specially intended to denounce. But there has been very little said about Southern agitators, whose action imperils the Union, if its continuance is at all in danger. The Union, sir, is in no danger; but if its preservation is threatened, the treason which imperils it is not in this State, or in this part of the Union. The North always submits to, if she does not indorse or approve, the legislation of Congress, even when it is most repulsive to her; and instead of nullifying, the North seeks only to rid herself of the operation of unjust and oppressive laws by constitutional means." He offered, as an amendment, resolutions declaring that all laws of Congress should be obeyed; that the convention disapproves of the treasonable threats made by Texas last year; sternly denounces the action of South Carolina in imprisoning citizens of other States and expelling with obloquy the agent of a sister State, sent to contest the constitutionality of such proceedings in the courts; and condemns the factious course of Southern agitators who, in a Southern convention, within one month, have avowed the most treasonable intentions, openly defying the national authority. These resolutions were tabled by a vote of 87 to 39.

Against the proposal to exclude negroes from the State,

and to inhibit their employment, and their holding of property in the State, he contended with all his power as often as it came up. For thirty-four years, he said, we had lived and prospered under a constitution which declares that all men shall enjoy the right of acquiring and owning property. Now, after this long period, so eventful in human progress, it was proposed to declare, by solemn constitutional provision, that one class of men shall not enjoy that right. He said :

“ We ask here no extension of their privileges, but we ask you to treat them with humanity, and not to crush them as you would vermin out of your sight. But if you will not do this, let no man on this floor speak of the cruelties inflicted on the race in the Southern States, the slave factories of the African coast, or the horrors of ‘ the middle passage.’ Your mouths will be stopped, the utterance of your condemnation checked, for by your own solemn and deliberate acts you declare the negro a brute, by excluding him from the commonest, the poorest, the humblest privileges of human beings—the right to live and to possess the means of living, purchased by the sweat of his toil. Mr. President, do as we may here, our action is not final. Sooner or later this case will receive a fairer hearing and calmer consideration at the bar of public opinion. That judgment we cannot, if we would, escape. What is done here precipitately, under the influence of prejudice, will receive a searching examination there, and there will come a condemnation of this matter as withering as it will be just. Cover it as you may with the plea of expediency, this act will hereafter stand out in its naked deformity, unshielded even by popular prejudice, as an act of inexcusable tyranny, done to a prostrate class. Public opinion, if not ripe now, is ripening for an hour when we shall look back to this act with burning cheeks. Let us not adopt such provisions as we shall burn with shame to see inscribed on the first page of our organic law. Let us do equal and exact justice, regardless of creed, race, or color. If we value liberty, let us not step beyond the Declaration of Independence, and declare its sublime truths a living lie.”

The friends of fair play were voted down in the convention, and by the people of the State ; but in a broader field their cause has been heard and won. The provisions in the constitution of Indiana, classing the negro as a brute, although unchanged, have long been inoperative. On other questions—districting so as to bring the Representative as near the people as possible ; restricting the Legislature in the contraction of debt, and restraining it from repealing

the charters of corporations unless for cause ; exempting the temples of learning and religion from taxation, etc.—the views of the member from St. Joseph were liberal and enlightened. Most of his positions are now accepted as a matter of course ; but they were then far from being so. This was his *début* as a statesman. He was comparatively a beardless boy among men grown gray with years and full of honors, the foremost men of the State. It was ten years before the election of Lincoln. Nearly one third of the convention voted *No* on Jefferson's assertion, that " all men are created equal." The people of the State, by a majority of one hundred thousand, sanctioned the imposition of a fine of five hundred dollars for each offence on any man who should give employment to a negro. In the light of the prodigious advance since made, this young man's every word and vote must stand approved. It was his first and last appearance in State politics. His constituents called him to step up higher, and his destiny led him into the field of national politics.

The discovery of " float-gold " in the river banks and old gravel beds of California drew emigrants thither from all quarters and in great numbers. A free State was provisionally organized, and early in 1850 its Senators and Representatives appeared in Washington, asking its admission into the Union. Congressional action, definitively settling the differences between North and South, respecting the status of the new soil, was thus made imperative. President Taylor sent a special message to Congress on the subject in February. Mr. Clay had already introduced a series of measures designed to adjust these questions in the spirit of compromise. They were defeated, as a whole, but enacted in detail, toward the end of a session extending into September. They involved the admission of California as a free State ; the organization of New Mexico and Utah as Territories, with the right to adopt or reject slavery for themselves ; the payment of ten millions to Texas for the relinquishment of certain territory to New Mexico ; the passage of a stringent fugitive slave law ; and the abolition of the slave-trade in the District of Columbia.



When these propositions were offered, the *Register* said : " Whether the Union is or is not to be wrecked on the rocks around us, honor must be preserved ; and in our judgment these measures are the olive branch to the South, but hyssop to the North." Again, June 6th, 1850 : " There lives no man in this fair land whom we have venerated, esteemed, and loved as we have Henry Clay. To no one would we more willingly surrender opinion where less than principle is at stake. But principle we can surrender to no man, however eminent, however great, however loved ; and fearing as we do that by the compromise of Mr. Clay slavery may be extended into our new Territories, we cannot become a hypocrite by advocating that which our conscience and our convictions condemn." The *Register* supported, however, as the least objectionable of two evils, President Taylor's policy—namely, the admission of California without conditions ; leaving the Territories to themselves ; no ten millions to Texas ; and no fugitive slave law. Upon President Taylor's death the *Register* commented as follows : " At such a crisis it is difficult to acquiesce in the will of Providence, and to realize that the stern old man, who was proving himself such a faithful pilot, has fallen while yet his firm hand was on the helm. Of the future, with all the clouds that lower round us and darken as we gaze, this is not a fitting time to speak. We know that Fillmore will prove no Tyler ; but whether the Disunionists can be held in check as well by a Northern man as by the departed President, none but the Omniscient can tell."

The Whig Convention of the Ninth Congressional District was held May 28th, 1851. The resolutions reaffirmed the positions taken in 1847 and 1849—no extension of slave territory, no interference with slavery in the States, no toleration of disunion sentiments. While not approving all the provisions of the Clay Compromise, they accepted it as a settlement until time and experience should render its modification necessary or desirable. The convention unanimously nominated Schuyler Colfax for Congress. Upon invitation he appeared, and " addressed the convention in

a brief speech, which was received with great satisfaction." He immediately announced in the *Register* that Mr. James Davis would assume his editorial place and responsibility. "The position in which I have been placed," he writes, "was not sought; a few months ago I never dreamed of occupying it." "The nomination was not only unanimous, but hearty," says the report, written by Mr. Davis. "Public opinion throughout the district was concentrated upon Colfax, and no other man was thought of."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Graham N. Fitch, of Logansport, the Democratic candidate, was the sitting member for the district, a man of ability, and afterward United States Senator, having been illegally elected in 1857. In the civil war he became colonel of a regiment which he had raised and which he led to the field.<sup>2</sup> He promptly challenged the Whig candidate to a joint canvass of the sixteen counties comprising the Ninth District. Colfax accepted, and seventy speaking appointments were made, involving a thousand miles of travel. June 26th he wrote his wife from Rensselaer: "We made nearly the whole distance, forty miles, as we had the thirty miles the day previously on the Grand Prairie, without any road to guide us. I never saw such a grand sight. Prairie flowers in profusion, and the whole scene like Lake Erie, except that it was green and not blue. The way we travelled was to take sight from one grove to another, and then wind around sloughs and bogs whenever we struck them. For twenty miles yesterday we did not see a road, but every few miles droves of cattle attended by a herder. The country looks as it did when it first came from the hands of its Creator."

1. Mr. Greeley had written him in April: "You have been once a candidate, and have been gloriously successful every way; it is not best that you be defeated now; and defeated you will be unless your nomination is spontaneous and very hearty. If there is the least demur, you will be beaten. The times are unpropitious; the people are lazy; the Administration excites no enthusiasm; the Whigs are distracted. Don't accept the nomination, if tendered you, if there is to be a single county in which you will be cut or run behind the Whig strength. The times are out of joint; they will not always be so, and you are young yet."

2. He was an excellent officer, and was strongly urged for promotion by Mr. Colfax. President Lincoln, however, refused to promote him, whereupon he resigned his commission, giving as a reason that his pay would not support his family. In later years he was regarded as one of the leaders of his party.

His private letters throw a side light on this somewhat novel canvass. "Judge Biddle advised me to fire small arms at the doctor constantly, which he said always tormented him far worse than to discuss grave principles; and I have done so, to Fitch's great dissatisfaction." Fitch had canvassed the district three or four times before, knew everybody, and prescribed for the sick without charge as he travelled about; and he had the other advantages of age, experience, and prestige. "He is not, however," his opponent writes, "so sanguine as he was when he started. He is nettled, and complains of my always keeping him on the defensive. But he is twice as much of a gentleman as when he left home. He poured down his satire on me for several speeches, and when it was not personal abuse I would look up and smile in his face, and retort cuttingly but good-humoredly. He at first perverted my position and remarks shamefully, and while exposing that, I would take pains to do full justice to all his positions, accept all his explanations of his votes, concede to him what he claimed as his intentions, and then turn his flanks, and on his own showing pour the hot shot into him. This course, with the experience that he cannot browbeat or intimidate me, has taken off much of his bitterness, and we bid fair to have a friendly canvass."

Dr. Fitch undertook to excite prejudice against his young antagonist, because of his opposition in the Constitutional Convention to the proscription of the negroes, although they had agreed that it had no place in their canvass. In his turn Colfax cited this agreement, rehearsed his views on the subject, concluding: "These are my convictions; I cannot sacrifice them, and would not for fifty terms in Congress." A story is told illustrating his readiness. The doctor had closed his speech on one occasion by suggesting that his friend would better have "tarried in Jericho until his beard had grown" before aspiring to a seat in Congress. The young man rose amidst a shout of laughter at his expense, stepped forward, glanced around, and said: "I was not aware, my friends, that brass and beard were the necessary qualifications of a Con-

gressman. If, in your judgment, it is so, I must renounce all hope of your votes, as I confess—what you cannot but see—that my competitor has a superabundance of both.”<sup>1</sup>

He writes his wife, June 21st :

“At Peru I made a capital impression, despite my heart-sickness at the Squire’s removal [from a Special Mail Agency]. Is it not shameful? Here am I risking health, and giving time, effort, and money to revolutionize a Locofoco district, and add one to the supporters of the Administration in Congress, while they strike down one of the best life-long Whigs in the land, wounding me in the tenderest place; my competitor at the same time carrying a commission in his pocket from the same Administration to settle some Indian difficulties, at five dollars a day. That’s backing one’s friends with a vengeance! Fitch would be willing, from the way he talks, after the 3d of July—to which time we have published appointments—to canvass only by county-seats in the north end of the district [St. Joseph County excepted, of course]; but I shall not consent. I begin to think, as my friends do, that there is hope, and shall work faithfully and untiringly, if health is spared.”

Again, from Logansport, June 22d :

“Fitch had the opening and close. He opened in a speech purposely long to weary out and drive off the country people, and spoke two hours and twenty-seven minutes, instead of one hour and fifteen minutes, as our arrangement provides for. He did not receive a single plaudit. I followed him in a speech of one hour and three quarters, and it would have done you good to hear the stamping and shouting. I had the sympathy of almost all, for many of his friends were offended at his purposely long speech. When I closed, and he rose for his fifteen minutes’ close, three fourths of the audience left, galling him to the quick. He turned pale with anger.”

Again, from La Porte, July 27th :

“Fitch opened in a first-rate speech, but was not applauded once. I followed him, and as I spoke I warmed up, and the applause came thicker and faster. His fifteen minutes’ close amounted to nothing, and the Whigs went away rejoicing, enthusiastic, more than satisfied, while the Locos, Fitch included, were mad, and had but little to say. I am satisfied now that my chance is better than Fitch’s, if the railroad vote don’t swamp me. Fitch feels so himself, judging from his looks and actions. He is improving in his speaking, but even his friends acknowledge that we are a well-matched team.”

But all hopeful appearances proved misleading. The removal of Colfax’s stepfather from office, and the appoint-

1. The Rev. A. Y. Moore, “Life of Colfax,” Peterson Bros., 1868.

ment of Dr. Fitch to office, were easily made to count in his own favor by the doctor. To this the young man ascribed his defeat by the narrow majority of two hundred votes. He believed he could have overcome all the other odds against him, but this was too much.

He defined his position at the opening of this canvass in reply to the Abolitionists, whose central committee addressed letters of inquiry to both candidates. He replied in substance that the Constitution authorized the reclamation of fugitive slaves, and that while the law of 1850 was unnecessarily harsh and summary, he could not pledge himself to favor its repeal; its details should be modified in time, but there was no chance of it at present, and he did not favor agitation for the sake of agitation. He was neither willing to interfere with slavery where it existed, nor to see it extended one rood. Congress could not rightfully abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of the people of the district. He ended: "I shall not attempt to succeed in this canvass by a profession of pledges, and would quite as willingly be judged by my life and my opinions, so often and publicly expressed, as by pledges given on the eve of the election."

He was re-elected Grand Representative to the Grand Lodge of the United States in 1851, notwithstanding the rule against electing those who are not in attendance, and in September he writes from Baltimore: "We have been busy beyond all measure this week, working about eleven hours a day, and during every moment of leisure electioneering steadily for my pet measure—the Ladies' Degree. It has been opposed most strenuously; all sorts of objections have been raised; all sorts of speeches against it made; all sorts of attempts to stifle it. You can judge, therefore, of my gratification, when nearly all of its friends had given it up as hopeless, and when its opponents were certain of victory, when I tell you that this moment we have carried it by 47 to 37." It is said that sixty thousand women have since become Daughters of the Degree, its author having himself conferred it on thousands.<sup>1</sup> At

1. "I can never forget that unparalleled meeting of the Degree of Rebekah, in Dash-

the previous session he had offered a resolution that a committee of three be appointed to prepare an appropriate Degree for the wives of Scarlet Degree members, and report the same at the next convocation of the Grand Lodge. Appointed chairman of the committee, his two associates made a majority report against the proposed Ladies' Degree, but the chairman carried it through.

The Whig State Convention of February, 1852, chose him as one of the two delegates at large for the State, to the National Whig Convention of that year, the State Convention instructing for Scott and Crittenden. Upon President Taylor's death, in July, 1850, Vice-President Fillmore had become President, had "Tylerized" his Administration, and was now a candidate for the Presidential nomination. Webster was also a candidate; both of them what were called "doughfaces," Northern men who had gone over to the South on the slavery issue. A platform was adopted by a vote of 227 to about 60, before the balloting began. It was an unqualified indorsement of the compromise of 1850, as a final settlement of the slavery agitation. The Northern Whigs would not have adopted this platform in any of their State conventions, but under the circumstances most of them lacked the courage of their convictions. The subject of this memoir stood with the three-score who voted against the platform, but was nevertheless strongly in favor of having Scott's letter accepting the platform, which had been prepared in advance, read to the convention when Scott should be placed in nomination. He writes to his wife, June 15th, and if it appears egotistical, we must remember that it was to his wife :

"I had a private interview with General Scott to give him some counsel, which he received gladly. He is very affectionate with me. I differ with Seward and the New Yorkers as to the right course to pursue to get him nominated; and as my instincts on politics prove generally right in the end, I fear, as they are his chief advisers, and as he will probably be compelled to follow their counsel, and as Ohio and Pennsylvania agree

away Hall, where, with seven sentinels, and twelve hundred present, four hundred of them ladies, I conferred the Degree on seventy-five wives and widows of my California brethren, at San Francisco, in 1865."—*Letter of Colfax to the New Age, September 4, 1881.*

with them, that he will be beaten. My idea is, that his letter on the compromise, which is prepared and is to be given in accepting the nomination, should be read to the convention before balloting, so as to secure for him the votes of some Southern delegates, who cannot, under their instructions, vote for him without it. I was at Seward's on Sunday, and took dinner with him, talking with him some three hours on these and other matters. He sent for me again last night late, but could not convince me on this point. We, of course, agree on everything else. He is too confident of Scott's success in being nominated."

The event justified the Hoosier politician, for none of the Southern delegates except those from Delaware could be brought to support Scott until the letter had been read, and then their votes nominated him. He wrote again on the 17th :

"We have been at work two days, and have effected nothing—have not even a report on the contested seats. After that is disposed of, we next have to discuss the platform on slavery, which the South are determined to force upon us, being aided in it by the Webster men of New England. And then we have to ballot—no telling how long—for President and Vice. I don't think we shall adjourn before Monday or Tuesday next. I am one of the secretaries, of course, as perhaps you have seen in the papers before this. I don't think Fillmore can be nominated at all ; but his friends are to go over to Webster when they find they can't nominate Fillmore ; and the struggle will probably be in the end a close one between Scott and Webster, with the chances in favor of the general. I have to attend a meeting of the Committee of Three from each Scott State, which meets every evening for consultation and wire-pulling, and must close."

Again on the 19th :

"We have had six ballots for President, closing at 9.30 P.M., last evening ; but it is difficult to tell when we will get through. The vote stood on the various ballots : Scott, 130 to 134 ; Fillmore, 130 to 134 ; Webster, 29. It takes 149 to nominate. You see the Webster men have the balance of power, and they declare that they will stand firm as a rock and never give him up. On the last ballot, two delegates from Illinois, instructed for Scott, voted for Fillmore, causing much excitement. It is said that two others will follow them. Iowa and Wisconsin, decided Scott States, have had all their delegates won over since they came East, and give all their votes but one for Fillmore. Yesterday, before balloting, a combination of the Fillmore and Webster men threw out of their seats seven Scott delegates from New York and Vermont, whose seats were contested, and put seven Fillmore men in their places—a change of fourteen votes against us. You cannot imagine the excitement that exists here. The Taylor convention of 1848 does not approach to it."

Again on the 20th :

“ We have had the hottest kind of weather, perfectly sweltering, laborers dying in all the cities with sunstroke, etc., but no cholera. To crown all, we have had the hottest kind of work in the convention, and at half-past nine last night we adjourned to meet again Monday morning. We have had no less than forty-six ballots for President, and you can judge how pertinaciously the delegates stick to their favorites when I state that there have not been half a dozen changes in all these ballotings. The gain has been, however, on our side, as Scott is three votes higher and Fillmore six votes lower than when the ballots commenced. You can't imagine how tremendous is the pressure of the Administration in its efforts to secure Fillmore's nomination, and how prodigally Webster's friends spend money, give dinners, etc., to gain over delegates. Fillmore's friends have secured two who were instructed for Scott, and voted for him at first. So that, but for that, Scott's gain would have been larger than it is.

“ But the remainder stand firm, and declare that they will do so for a month, if necessary, to secure Scott's nomination. The rumor to-day is that some Southern delegates will come over to us to-morrow, and if so, we shall triumph, as we only lack fifteen votes of enough to nominate him. The prospect is now considered the most favorable for Scott. Yesterday morning it was considered the most favorable for Fillmore ; but we had been playing a deep game to surprise them, and we kept their vote all day under 130, when they had expected to open with 140 and over, and to nominate him on the second or third ballot. So we had all the *éclat* in our favor—a great point. I have scarcely time to write or eat, as we are constantly consulting, electioneering, refuting slanders, etc.”

Driven to it as a last resort, Scott's managers finally caused his letter accepting the platform to be read to the convention. A few Southern delegates thereupon joined the Scott phalanx, and on the fifty-third ballot he received 159 votes, and was nominated, Fillmore retaining 112 and Webster 21.

Mr. Colfax engaged actively in the canvass. He was pleased with Scott's letter of acceptance. The *Register* was reduced in price for the campaign, and it was never more vigorously edited. The country seemed exceedingly enthusiastic. Scott Guards, Scott Clubs, Scott Volunteers, were organized, glee-clubs and military bands attended the speakers. Colfax addressed the clubs at his home and in the vicinity. With hundreds from Northern Indiana, he attended the Lundy's Lane celebration at Niagara Falls—



a gathering of sixty thousand people from twenty-eight States—acting as secretary, and taking his turn in speaking.

Delegate to the Whig Congressional Convention of the Ninth District in August (the new constitution brought the time a year sooner), it was proposed to again nominate him for Congress ; but he declined the honor, and it fell on Judge Horace P. Biddle, of Logansport. In a letter to President Fillmore, written in July, he had said : “ Although urged to make another trial for the district this fall, I shall decline ;” and he gave as his reason that with the coolness if not hostility of the Administration toward him, he could not hope to succeed. His stepfather had been reinstated in the office of Special Mail Agent previous to the nomination of Scott ; and after that again removed. Writing from the East in the fall, he says : “ Everybody—Whig and Democrat—from Maine to Georgia, censures me that I did not run for Congress this year, the news of my declining having gone through the Union by telegraphic dispatch.”

While the Whig canvass was carried on with unusual spirit, the friends of the defeated candidates gave the ticket a lukewarm support ;<sup>1</sup> the loss of the States holding elections in October lowered without extinguishing the hopes of the friends of Scott ; but the elections of November defeated the gallant General. Webster died, Clay had just breathed his last, and thus the Whig Party and its great chiefs were inurned together, as was fitting. The *Register* of November 4th said : “ Defeated by treachery, by calumny, and by a combination of adverse circumstances, we shall uphold and defend Whig principles to the last, believing them to be those upon which a truly American Government should be administered.” The editor was of the opinion that another trial of Democracy would serve, as twice before, to teach the people its insufficiency and errors, and that then, as before, they would call in the Whigs. He was right ; but it was not to be under that name, always associated in his mind with the doctrines and deeds of

1. It is said that Mr. Webster, on his death-bed, advised his friends to vote for Pierce.

those who bore it in the Revolution ; and it was to be under circumstances no less momentous than those by which the mettle of the Revolutionary Whigs was tested.

Near the end of the eighth volume of the *Register*, he placed a power press in his office, the first in the State outside of the capital, and made the *Register* the largest paper in the State. On this he was greeted by the newspaper fraternity, irrespective of politics, cordially and approvingly. "Mr. Colfax is an energetic and enterprising business man," said a Detroit paper, "a clear-headed, able writer, and as sound and true at heart as in the head." "Schuyler Colfax is the ablest and best editor, and one of the most gentlemanly men in Indiana," said the *Indianapolis Sentinel* (Democratic), "and we heartily congratulate him on the prosperity which has resulted from his talents, energy, and courtesy." Generally, the *Register* was credited with being "one of the best papers we know of ; well-conducted, full of interest, an excellent paper—its prosperity is well deserved." A new prospectus contained the following : "Convinced that a railroad to the Pacific has become a necessity, the *Register* will earnestly advocate its immediate construction."

He was besought to run for the State Senate in 1849. He declined, perhaps because he thought the Whigs had no chance to win, as the election proved to be the case. The same year there was an effort to get him on the *Chicago Journal*. Mr. T. Lisle Smith wrote him in October :

"I want to have a good long talk with you, and see whether I cannot arrange with you to occupy the editorial chair of the *Chicago Journal*. It needs a change. In that opinion its best friends concur. No one could better effect the change than yourself. Such was the opinion of the postmaster, R. L. Wilson, prior to his visit to Washington, and such is his opinion now."

He had this under consideration for some months. In June, 1850, Mr. Greeley wrote him :

"You will, of course, decide to go to Chicago, and I would not dissuade you. You will afterward repent it, and I do not wish you to remember that I advised you to go. It will be an unwise step ; but who was ever dissuaded by that consideration ? You have a good position,

not a hard life, a prosperous paper, are surrounded by friends, and may have office in time if you are disposed. If you leave all this, and move to Chicago, you voluntarily plunge into a more arduous position, incur debt, hazard failure, and all for what? You are the first editor where you are; you may not always be first in Chicago. It is not a pleasant nor a brotherly city to live in; your wife will be away from her friends. But what of all this? You will go—so blessings attend you.”

He did not go. In December, 1853, Greeley wrote him :

“By the way, Defrees wants to sell out [his paper, the *Indiana State Journal*]. You know that concern can't help making money, and you want to buy it, unless you mean to live and die in South Bend, which would be best. If you ever mean to be tempted to leave your native heather, I would say, Go to Indianapolis, and go now !”

This might have been a good move for him, but he did not make it. Greeley wrote him a little later : “You are right in not going to Indianapolis; but I wish some gritty chap would buy out Defrees. Couldn't you coax Sam Galloway, of Columbus, to do it? Do let us have some editors in harness by the time we get ready for another fight. ‘Things is working’—I can see that.”

Both political parties attempted to rest on the compromises of 1850, as finally settling the slavery agitation; but it was soon found to be more unsettled than ever. The people of Missouri naturally desired the organization of the country between their State and California, and began to move for it in 1844. They made no headway until 1854, when Mr. Douglas, of Illinois, reported from the Senate Committee on Territories a bill organizing what is now Kansas and Nebraska as Nebraska Territory. Mr. Dixon, of Kentucky, moved an amendment, declaring the line of 36° 30' inapplicable to the proposed new Territory. Mr. Douglas had the bill recommitted, and subsequently reported it to the Senate with amendments, organizing two Territories—Nebraska and Kansas—and declaring the Missouri Compromise superseded by the compromise of 1850 and inoperative.

In the *Register* of February 16th, 1854, the editor reviewed the controversy over African slavery from the first; showed that Missouri was admitted into the Union as a slave State, in consideration that slavery should never

blight another inch of soil north of its southern boundary-line ; exposed the fallacy of the claim that the Missouri Compromise was superseded by the Clay Compromise ; denounced Douglas's theory of "squatter sovereignty" in the Territories ; and closed thus : "Whatever others may do, when Congress, seduced by executive patronage, trammelled by political dictation, forgetful of its plighted faith, passes this bill, we enlist under the banner of repeal. Whether successful or defeated, we will go with the opponents of this bill before the people on an appeal to them from the recreancy of their Representatives."

A county meeting was called, which Congressman Eddy was requested to address. He declined. If Colfax aspired to succeed Eddy he must have been pleased at this ; but he appealed to Eddy in the *Register*, with unusual earnestness, not to cast the vote of the free men of his large and intelligent district against their well-known convictions and wishes for this perfidious act. Having previously passed the Senate, the bill passed the House at midnight of May 22d, 1854. The *Register* was pained to see Dr. Eddy's name recorded in its favor, and thought his friends would find it impossible to return him to Congress after this betrayal of his trust. The editor restated his own position as follows : "Whatever others may do, we shall neither recommend nor practise submission to this gross outrage. We now go back to the policy of our Revolutionary forefathers, of Jefferson and Franklin, to the platform of the united North in 1819, when the Legislature of every Northern State declared that no new State should be admitted with slavery."

St. Joseph County, the Ninth District, the entire North, was soon aflame with indignation. The slave propaganda, unmindful of the rising storm, or defying it, agitated for the reopening of the African slave-trade and the acquisition of Cuba. The Administration devoted itself to enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law, which made the claimant judge and jury, and commanded all men to be his executioners. Under cover of the summary processes of this law, many free negroes were carried into bondage.

The border people of Missouri began to organize to occupy Kansas, and the Northern people to form Emigrant Aid Societies for the same purpose. The Missourians moved in far enough to hold a meeting, *resolve* "that slavery already exists in Kansas," warn the Abolitionists to keep their distance, and set prices on the heads of the agents of the Emigrant Aid Societies.

During these months the *Register* sturdily advocated the abandonment of party lines and "a union of free men for the sake of freedom." Commenting on one of these articles, *Chapman's Chanticleer*, edited by Jacob P. Chapman, a veteran Democrat, demanded "a mass convention of all opponents of the Nebraska iniquity." He named July 13th, because it was the anniversary of the passage of the Ordinance of 1787, as an auspicious day for such a meeting, and the capital of the State as the best place.<sup>1</sup> His motion was universally seconded by the anti-Nebraska press, and ten thousand citizens responded to the call, H. L. Ellsworth heading a delegation of five hundred Democrats from Tippecanoe County alone. The Capitol Park Grounds were rather ungraciously opened by the State officials for the use of the gathering. At a preliminary meeting, held on the 12th, Jacob P. Chapman, Schuyler Colfax, Henry S. Lane, S. S. Harding, John W. Wright, and R. A. Riley were the speakers. Thomas Smith presided over the mass convention next day; the Rev. (afterward Bishop) Ames opened the proceedings with prayer. The regular speakers were Henry S. Lane, H. L. Ellsworth, J. A. Hendricks, David Kilgore, G. B. Jocelyn, and ex-Governor Bell, of Ohio. J. A. Hendricks reported the platform, which

"*Resolved*, That we are opposed to the extension of slavery, and that we deprecate and repudiate the principles and platform adopted by the

1. It was policy for the Whigs to get the anti-Nebraska Democrats to take the lead. Defrees writes Colfax, June 16th: "I have been prevailing on others to make the move for a State Convention, preferring that it should come from Democrats, if possible. Had the *Journal* been first to move, it would have been set down as a Whig movement. On next Monday will be published a call, signed by many Democrats in different portions of the State, for a meeting of all opposed to the platform of the Democratic State Convention. Efforts must be made to prevent its becoming a failure. Come down, with as many Democrats as you can bring."

self-styled Democratic Convention of last May, held in this city to sustain the Nebraska swindle.

“*Resolved*, That we will waive all party predilections, and in concert, by all lawful means, seek to place every branch of the Federal Government in the hands of men who will assert the rights of freedom, and restore the Missouri Compromise, and refuse, under all circumstances, to tolerate the extension of slavery.

“*Resolved*, That we regard intemperance as a great political, moral, and social evil, and a legitimate subject for legislation ; and that we favor the passage of a judicious, constitutional, and effective prohibitory law, with such penalties attached as will effectually suppress the traffic in intoxicating liquors.”

A mixed State ticket was agreed upon. The name Republican was not adopted. The Democrats dubbed the new party “The Abolition Free-Soil Maine-Law Native-American Anti-Catholic Anti-Nebraska Party of Indiana.” These strange political and moral elements, brought together on this occasion by a common patriotic—nay, more than patriotic—by a humane impulse, carried their State ticket by a majority of twelve thousand, elected the Legislature, sent Schuyler Colfax and eight other straight Republicans to Congress ; and the party thus organized has elected its candidates for Presidential Electors six times out of the eight Presidential elections that have since occurred.

The Michigan State Convention, “under the oaks” at Jackson, which, as a State movement, first formed and christened the “REPUBLICAN PARTY,” preceded this Indiana People’s Convention by just one week. The same day a fusion convention was held at Columbus, O., whose (Republican) ticket carried the State by seventy thousand majority. Similar proceedings were had in New York, in Massachusetts, and other States. Within a year fifteen States were carried by the new party, eleven Republican Senators elected, and one hundred and twenty out of one hundred and forty-two Northern members of Congress opposed to the slavery-extension policy of the Administration.

The example of the State (Indiana) was followed in the counties and Congressional districts. The calls for con-

ventions were to all who condemned the Nebraska iniquity. Bolting from Democratic conventions became common. Sitting Democratic members of Congress who had voted for the Nebraska fraud betrayed a disinclination to run again. Many Democratic papers declared for the "People's ticket." Whigs and Free-Soilers, who together constituted the new party, welcomed accessions from the Democracy, and gave Democrats the majority of the nominations.

This process of readjustment having gone on since February, "the free men of the Ninth District opposed to the extension of slavery, and in favor of the restoration of the Proviso of Freedom," met in mass convention at Bradford, August 2d, and nominated Schuyler Colfax for Congress by acclamation.<sup>1</sup> He was "introduced, accepted the nomination, and addressed the convention with clearness, force, and eloquence, in opposition to the late repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and upon kindred subjects." Months earlier the flood-gates of abuse had been raised for his benefit. Called a "Robespierre," and charged with the utterance of incendiary and treasonable sentiments, he said in substance: "I hold it to be the duty of free men to elect a House of Representatives which will restore the Missouri Compromise as a 'proviso' to the first appropriation bill, and keep it there, whatever the consequences. If that be treason, make the most of it."

Dr. Eddy was indisposed to make the race against him<sup>2</sup>—

1. Mr. Greeley had written him in March: "Things look so well, that I would strongly advise you to run for Congress this fall if the nomination comes to you without asking. I suppose the chances are two to one that you would lose; but that would be a real gain, because you would extend your acquaintance and increase your circulation. I have little faith in the principle of the North, but some in its pride. To be overreached in a bargain is not pleasant to Yankees, and I shouldn't wonder if they were to kick."

Again in June: "I think you ought to run for Congress, if that seems to be the general desire; for if you don't run in, the labor of the canvass will be repaid to you by the increased zeal and obligation of your friends, and if you do run in, as you don't want to be re-elected, you can pursue a straightforward, fearless, faithful course, and make more friends for all time to come. I thought it would be a nuisance and a sacrifice for me to go to Congress; but I was mistaken; it did me lasting good; and I shall always be thankful for the succession of seeming casualties that sent me there. No man would care to pass his life under the fire of a battery, but one experience of the kind would be valuable; and I never was brought so palpably and tryingly into collision with the embodied scoundrellism of the nation as while in Congress. A nomination isn't worth fishing for, but if tendered, you ought not to decline it."

2. On his way home from Washington, after a long musing pause, Dr. Eddy is said

he had sustained the Nebraska outrage against argument and appeal, and the obvious fact that a majority of his constituents were opposed to it with all their hearts—but he could not get out of it ; appointments for fifty joint discussions were arranged and published, and the canvass began. Carrying no dead weight and a good “ stumper,” it was easy for the editor to out-do the doctor. Eddy could not, of course, take the extreme Southern position—that slavery existed in the Territories already and always by virtue of the Constitution. He was restricted to “ squatter sovereignty” —the right of the Territories to settle it for themselves. In their first encounter, the editor asked the doctor whether he would vote for the admission of Utah with polygamy, were Utah to apply for admission. The logic of Dr. Eddy’s premises compelled him to reply that he would. “ Well,” said his antagonist, “ I would not ; and if the good people of this district expect any such vote of me, they should not send me to Congress.”

In the nature of things Congress must control the Territories, acquired as they are by the States in common, of whom Congress is the agent. It always had done so, even the Congress of the Confederation. And while no one denies the rightfulness of “ popular sovereignty” in the abstract, it cannot be allowed to a Territory without limitation, because the action of a Territory affects the community of States, of which it is destined to become a member, and, therefore, the Constitution limits it. The “ popular sovereignty” of the Territories was nothing but a convenience for men who “ didn’t care whether slavery was voted up or down,” while men who did care set the stage for a storm that swept away the wrong forever.

Dr. Eddy performed his task to the end, and was patient and courteous, considering that his opponent had the popular side of the argument and won all the applause. He

to have broken out to a friend : “ Well, I am going home, and a pretty fix I am in ! They compelled me to vote for the Nebraska Bill, then the Democratic Convention placed me on a whisky platform ; they have nominated the most popular Whig in my district as my opponent ; the President has vetoed the River and Harbor Bill, which lays me out cold in the Lake part of my district ; and by — ! they have egged the Administration in the person of the President, and I am held accountable for it all.”



was beaten by 1766 in a total poll of 18,212. Two years before he had been elected over Judge Biddle by 1108—an extraordinary change, even for this year of change. In many respects the canvass was the duplicate of that of 1851, the candidates riding together a thousand miles, eating and often sleeping together, but crushing each other as utterly as they could in their joint debates. Nowadays, robust assertion, a little ridicule, and a few stories suffice an ordinary stump speaker; the real discussion is carried on by the press. Thirty years ago candidates discussed politics, and in each other's presence, and one could not talk *at* the people, he had to talk *with* them. Positions had to be taken, and not only taken, but held. Audiences may not have been as cultivated as those of Pericles, but they were intelligent and honest. The issues touched their personal interests at vital points; they had their ideas about these issues, and they had their votes. "Stumping" was a trial of throats and of physical endurance as well as of wits; long roads had to be travelled, and long speeches to be made. Facts, figures, argument, rhetoric, satire, pathos, humor, invective, appeal—all came in play, and character had its usual weight. It was a school of candor and courtesy as well as of eloquence. Sincerity, fervor of sentiment, geniality, power of clear statement, and exhaustless command of facts, constituted Colfax's strength on the stump.

"You cannot imagine the excitement of our election here," he writes Mrs. Colfax from South Bend; "it exceeded any Presidential contest. The polls were fairly blocked up outside with a dense mass of people all day, all talking and working—three fourths of them for me. God never gave better friends to any man than I have here, and they labored for me, too, as they had never done before. My majority in this township, about tied politically, is 167; and in the county, 616. I can scarcely believe it yet. As the returns came pouring in from the various townships that night my friends were beside themselves. I could not pass ten steps on the street without a great crowd forming a circle around me and hurraing, and so

it was kept up till midnight. I am prouder of this Waterloo victory in the county where I have lived so many years than I am of my election, which is now only a question of majority."

Dr. Eddy raised a regiment when the war came, and rendered gallant service at the front. Brought out of the bloody fields near Corinth with three bullets in him, he asked the surgeon in attendance what his chances were. The surgeon replied they were few, and that if he had any messages for home he might well give them. "Doctor," said he, "if I die, tell them all I died loving my friends and my country." He recovered, and after the war was elected Secretary of State for Indiana by his party. He was a gentleman and a man of ability.

Mr. Colfax spent the next winter at the State capital, in attendance on the Legislative session, where he exerted himself to get the fusion elements of the new party working together harmoniously. The following June found him at the Know-Nothing National Council in Philadelphia, as a delegate from Indiana. Reorganized in 1852, and as a secret fraternity, Know-Nothingism spread all over the States in 1854, through the dissatisfaction in both the old parties at the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. In the fall of that year, at the suggestion of Kenneth Rayner, an eloquent Whig of North Carolina, a Third Degree was adopted by the Order, based simply on the idea of uncompromising devotion to the Union. "In six months," says Henry Wilson, "a million and a half of men had taken the degree, and it continued to be administered till the final dissolution of the organization."<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1855, under the lead of Henry A. Wise, the Democrats won a signal victory over the Order in Virginia, its anti-slavery tendency in the previous election making this easy. The leaders of the Order South, and an influential part of them North, were determined to correct this tendency at this national council. It was an important occasion; the eyes of the country were fixed on the proceedings. Henry Wilson, as the Northern anti-slavery

1. Henry Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power."

leader, was coarsely denounced by the Southern delegates as an Abolitionist and disorganizer. General Wilson replied with spirit that he had been pledged to liberty for twenty years, and should never turn back. The past belongs to slavery, to you, he said ; the future to freedom, to us. " We shall prohibit slavery in the Territories, and abolish it in the District of Columbia. We shall repeal the Fugitive Slave Law, and Kansas shall never come into the Union as a slave State." The discussion lasted five days, and when majority and minority resolutions were reported, an attempt was made to force the adoption of the former without discussion. This was resisted, and debate on the resolutions, bright and bitter, ran on for three days. The entire argument, ended ten years afterward by the fall of Richmond, was gone over.

Mr. Colfax had been selected without his knowledge or consent as a delegate to this council, and he writes his wife that he believes he should have followed his first inclination to decline the appointment. He fears there is little hope that the order will come up to his platform—anti-slavery and the admission of Protestant foreigners—" and in that case I might better for my own sake in the future be away than here." But his determination is fixed to do what is right, even if it destroys his political prospects. " An approving conscience is better than office, and I care too little for the latter to sacrifice my convictions to obtain it." Later : " Warm feelings exist all round, North as well as South, with little hope of harmony. I am inflexibly in the position I told you I should occupy, and they have heard from me already, and will more yet. A great banquet is to be given to the delegates this afternoon. I have been selected to respond to ' the Press,' but it is to be a ' Union-saving ' affair, and I shall not go."

When the council rejected the minority resolutions, and adopted a position of neutrality as to slavery, the delegates of thirteen States, among them those of Indiana, withdrew, and issued addresses to the country, taking unequivocal ground for the restoration of the Missouri Compromise ; for the protection of the free State settlers in Kansas and

Nebraska ; for religious freedom ; for a free Bible, free schools, and free labor ; against the admission of any more slave States ; and against the deportation of convicts and paupers to this country by foreign nations. This action was regarded as an important addition to the foundations of the new party of freedom. It was the first national convention in which there was distinctively a North.

After his return home Colfax found that the bold and manly action of the seceding delegates had broken his fall, so to speak. He wrote his wife : " I am satisfied I did more good for freedom than I ever did before in my whole life, and I am quite indifferent as to what the result may be to me personally." This open connection with the Know-Nothings led men to suppose that he must have been an affiliated member of the Order ; but, as he maintained all his life, he was not. " You did not seek nor solicit an initiation," E. W. Jackson, of Concord, N. H., writes him, July 3d, 1855 ; " but as I was authorized to do, I proffered to give you the ' work,' and on your pledge of secrecy did so." The *Register* of June 21st, 1855, concurs in many of the Know-Nothing doctrines, as it says it always had ; but it disapproves of secret political organizations, and of making a man's birthplace the test of his Americanism. " He knew all about Know-Nothingism, but, like thousands of others, never entered a lodge. This whole region was overrun with it in 1854. There was very little secrecy about it. What was necessary was communicated in the woods, or in any quiet place. Without it the new party could not have carried that election over the Democrats as it did." <sup>1</sup>

The Grand Encampment of the Odd Fellows unanimously elected him Grand Representative in 1855 for the fourth time. His alternate, who had attended the session of 1854 in his stead, he being on the stump, desired the honor, but could not get a member to nominate him against Colfax. This mark of confidence from men of all politics, many of whom aspired to the office themselves, affected

1. Mr. James M. Matthews, of Sedan, Kan., formerly of Buchanan, Mich.

him so that, upon being called on for a speech, he could only briefly express his thanks. His life was full of such tributes to his trustworthiness and capacity. Men were generally indisposed to contend for any office that he would accept. At the session of the Grand Lodge of the United States in September, he discovered, as he writes Mrs. Colfax, "that the fact of my running for Congress last fall is what caused my defeat for Grand Sire, then; if I had been here instead of on the stump, I should have been elected easily." He was taken to task by the Southern brethren, who were much exercised over the awakening of the Northern people; but he defended his position and principles calmly and resolutely, and the session proved a very pleasant one. The next year he resigned the office of Grand Representative, because of the pressure of public duties. "The Order never had a more earnest member. He lived its principles first, and then taught them on every occasion. His addresses on the subject were innumerable. He saw the Order grow in our State during his connection with it from twenty-nine lodges, with fifteen hundred members, to six hundred lodges, with twenty-six thousand members. Among the brethren his name ranks with the founders and pioneers of the Fraternity of friendship, love, and truth, now numbering more than half a million."<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1855 a fire destroyed the *Register* presses and most of the office, the avails, in part, of ten years' labor. The loss was about three thousand dollars. It was insured for fourteen hundred dollars. With the insurance new material was bought, and the editor "started with fresh vigor to build up in time a still better establishment."<sup>2</sup> He engaged Mr. Alfred Wheeler to take his editorial chair during the sessions of Congress. "My profit last year," he writes Wheeler, "less twelve and a half per cent for bad debts, was fourteen hundred dollars. This year type-setting is higher—twenty-two cents. I made it so voluntarily. Tight times cut down the ad-

1. Mr. John W. McQuiddy, of Indianapolis, Ind.

2. On this occasion he entered the burning building and rescued his files, at serious risk of his life.

vertising, but it will not be under one thousand dollars, even with my enlarged paper." Mr. Wheeler thought he ought to have nine dollars a week for his whole time in the office ; Mr. Colfax agreed to that, and of his own motion added ten per cent of the net proceeds of the business.

Before leaving home for Washington, he addressed the patrons of his paper in a card, thanking them for their support, in spite of the calumnies heaped upon him, and expressing his regret at parting with them. He felt that in the new field he was about to enter he had much to learn, but he had learned already that principle was a safe guide over the stormiest sea ; he regarded fidelity as of higher value than talents, in public as in private life, and he hoped to illustrate it in the record he should make. In the *Register* of November 15th, 1855, he stated his political creed in seven propositions, which readily resolve themselves into "freedom national, slavery sectional." "He will be one of the youngest men in the House," writes an admirer in the *Register* after his departure ; "but in knowledge of political questions and skill in political management, together with sleepless vigilance and unflagging industry, he will be one of its most able and efficient members. Whoever may prove weak and false in the great struggle of the coming session, Schuyler Colfax will not be found wanting."

## CHAPTER III.

### THIRTY-FOURTH CONGRESS.

1855-1857.

AFFAIRS IN KANSAS.—TWO MONTHS' BALLOTING FOR SPEAKER.—SAVES THE BATTLE AT CRITICAL MOMENTS.—APPOINTED ON THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE.—WHAT THE HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOUND IN KANSAS.—GIVES NOTICE OF PROVISIO TO THE ARMY BILL.—GREAT SPEECH AGAINST THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE BOGUS LAWS.—A MILLION COPIES CIRCULATED.—IN THE EARLY CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICAN CAUCUSES.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH PUBLIC MEETINGS.—SUMNER ASSAULTED.—ARMY BILL LOST BETWEEN THE TWO HOUSES.—EXTRA SESSION, THE HOUSE BEATEN.—RECEPTION AT HOME.—CANVASS FOR RE-ELECTION, ELECTION DAY AT SOUTH BEND.—SHORT SESSION, THE HOUSE AND THE ADMINISTRATION.—FREE SUGAR.—A CONGRESSIONAL PANIC.

IN December, 1855, Mr. Colfax took his seat in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-fourth Congress, a body in some respects not unlike the Hampden Parliament, which began the rescue of English liberty from the grasp of kingly prerogative. Betrayed by the Senate and the President, this House was the first rallying-point of the Northern people. Here they were to begin to make head for freedom, to lay their approaches for the capture of the other branches of the Federal Government, which, however, they were to win only through the madness of the slave power. Few young men ever entered the House better fitted to play an important part. His personal endowments and bearing made him a general favorite. A born politician, he was even more a philanthropist. His love of country was intense, his love of mankind a living force, moving him to incessant activity for the common weal. All good causes had appealed to him for advocacy since before his majority, and never in vain. Always on

the wing, he knew everybody who was worth knowing. Accomplished at all points, a good parliamentarian, a sagacious political manager, active, vigilant, at his best in a crisis, true to his friends and to his convictions, unassuming, careless of display or of personal advantage, his methods winning rather than compelling, but none the less effective on that account—every impulse of his nature, strengthened by his training, was enlisted in the great struggle for freedom now opening. His advent in the House, with that of several other young men of kindred sentiments and equal enthusiasm, marked an era like “the coming” of Clay in 1811, but an era of far grander issues and proportions.

The struggle of 1854, for the restoration of the slavery restriction of 1820, was now become a struggle of personal forces, of the respective colonizing powers of North and South. In the spring of 1855 Governor A. H. Reeder, having taken a census and districted the Territory, the Missourians of the neighboring border invaded Kansas and elected a Legislature, which met later and adopted the slave code of Missouri for Kansas, with such additions and modifications as the stress of their self-appointed task seemed to them to require. This Legislature provided for the election of a delegate to Congress, and in the fall the Missourians again invaded Kansas and elected Mr. John W. Whitfield to that office. A few of the pro-slavery settlers joined in these proceedings, but none of the free-State settlers. This fall, 1855, the latter took a part in organizing the Territory, by forming and adopting a State constitution, and electing Governor Reeder to Congress, he having been superseded by Wilson Shannon, of Ohio, because he could not go the necessary lengths in outrage. Governor Shannon declared publicly on his way out that he was in favor of establishing slavery in Kansas.

From this attitude and action of the Free-Soilers, the Missourians saw that they must redouble their efforts or lose their prey. “Kansas must be slave or Missouri free,” said their leader, Senator Atchison, then acting Vice-President, and the watchword passed along the Missouri



border, "Hang the leaders, and give their besotted followers a stated time to leave." Violence began by shooting down in cold blood the free-State settlers, shielding the murderers, and arresting the friends of the slain for burying them. The sheriffs and local administrative officers were not elected, but appointed by the usurping Legislature. The United States Marshal and all other Federal officers were in the plot. The holding of meetings to denounce these proceedings, and the liberation of innocent men illegally held in custody, were made the pretext by Governor Shannon for calling out the militia. The Territory was soon full of predatory bands from Missouri. The settlers standing together in self-defence, the Governor called on the President for troops to sustain his authority. Such was the state of affairs in Kansas when Congress met.

A bare majority of the House were opponents of the ruling policy ; but they had been elected as Republicans, as anti-Nebraska Democrats, as Know-Nothings : the former two on the paramount issue, the latter without reference to it, but in extremity sharing the views of their respective sections. The opposition had as yet held no National Convention, there was no organization, no recognized authority. At informal conferences it was decided not to have a caucus, for fear it might do more harm than good. Assembled December 3d, Mr. John W. Forney, of Pennsylvania, Clerk of the preceding House, called the roll, a quorum responded, and a two months' balloting for Speaker began, the Administration Democrats voting for Mr. W. A. Richardson, of Illinois ; Republicans, after the twenty-fifth ballot, for Mr. N. P. Banks, of Massachusetts ; and the Know-Nothings for Mr. H. M. Fuller, of Pennsylvania, with scattering votes for several others. They were new men in Washington, for the most part, impressed with the dignity of their office, animated by an earnest purpose. Without a Speaker or rules, presided over by a secondary officer of a former House, fresh from a hot fight on the stump, they met daily, chatted together, took their seats at the proper time, and balloted without a breach of decorum. The balloting was varied by discursive debate,

under the practice, by common consent, of members explaining their votes as their names were called.

“No one except those engaged in that struggle,” writes Colfax years afterward,<sup>1</sup> “realized its lights and shadows, its hours of depression and its hours of hope, the gloom of its almost failure and the exhilaration of its final triumph. Surrounded by a hostile population at the Capital, which did not hesitate at open denunciation wherever you met them, the Congressional galleries crowded with those who glared inimically at the friends of freedom, as the contest went on day after day, and week after week, and, finally, month after month, the department officers and clerks scarcely concealing their hostility, as members transacted with them the business of their constituents, and without pay, for no dollar of Congressional salary can be drawn except on the signature of the Speaker, the friends of freedom voted, from December to February, that one name, whose owner, Banks, finally, and for the first time, organized the committees of the House in favor of human rights and in opposition to the demands of American slavery.”

He tells how “about a dozen Representatives from different parts of the Union, without any special appointment or commission, except their love for the cause, met privately at each other’s rooms every other night, to compare notes as to the varying aspects of the canvass; to detect as quickly as possible any danger of a break in the column of one hundred and seven, which had been concentrated on Banks (for a break would surely have ended in defeat), and to devise means to preserve that united action so necessary to success. The one hundred and seven were of all shades of opinion. Often some member, wearied with the length of the struggle, or not heartily in accord with it, would declare impulsively that at the next session he would break and vote for some one else. But the next day he would show to his associates telegrams from his leading friends at home, adjuring him to ‘stick to Banks,’ and so the threatened danger was averted. Not

1. *The New York Independent*, article on Anson Burlingame.

once only, but a score of times, was this timely appeal made by this laborious committee through the telegraph to distant constituencies, who watched from afar this great contest with deep solicitude." But he ascribes their final success to Mr. Greeley's editorials in the *New York Tribune* more than to any other single agency. Denouncing desertion and applauding backbone, these articles rang out through the country like a trumpet-blast, morning after morning, consolidating public opinion behind every Banks member, till those who had been doubtful and wavering at the outset became as firm and unyielding as the boldest. "God bless all you good fellows at Washington!" Mr. Sam Bowles, of the Springfield, Mass., *Republican*, writes Colfax, December 26th. "You are making a great fight, and one of more importance and of vaster consequence than most people imagine. It is settling the next Presidential election and the new order of things, politically, for the next generation. Don't be in a hurry—there's time enough for it all."

About the 20th of December a spicy debate occurred. The South put up speaker after speaker to warn the North that if the Missouri prohibition was restored it would lead to the dissolution of the Union. Positions were defined on both sides and on all hands. Question and cross-question flew forth and back, and retort and repartee. A day or two afterward, Mr. Stanton, of Ohio, moved the adoption of the plurality rule—that the candidate receiving the highest vote, even if less than a majority, be Speaker. The motion failed, 107 to 114.

On the 25th, the House having adopted a resolution for a continuous session until a Speaker should be elected, Mr. Lewis D. Campbell, of Ohio, thinking there must be a presiding officer of higher rank than the Clerk, if they would have order in night sessions, without consultation with the Republicans, who had supported him for the Speakership up to the twenty-sixth ballot, offered a resolution "that Mr. Orr, of South Carolina, be requested to preside over the House till a Speaker should be elected." A motion to table this resolution failed by twenty major-

ity, and it seemed as if Orr would in a few moments be seated in the Speaker's chair." "I determined to take ground against it," Colfax writes his wife, "by introducing an amendment—namely, that each of the three parties should select a temporary chairman, who should preside alternately, to put Orr's friends in an anti-magnanimous position if they rejected it, and also to give us time to arrange for the defeat of Campbell's resolution, which would have ended us if it had passed." His amendment led to debate, a recess was taken, reflection showed the folly and danger of Campbell's resolution, and the next day it was withdrawn.

The rule for continuous night sessions was rescinded, but one night session was tried as an experiment. "Richardson said to me," writes Colfax: "'There will be no Banks men in the morning;' and A. H. Stephens, who sits right behind me, said: 'You can't hold together through a night session.' We went in, and came out fresh, sober, wide-awake, ready to go on twenty-four hours longer.<sup>1</sup> The Democrats came out dispirited, backing down one by one from the caucus resolution not to adjourn till an election; and after we heard the last one drop we took a good laugh at them and adjourned. They have nearly made up their minds that they will have to take Banks—bitter as the pill is—and when they give up all hope, the plurality rule will pass."

In the night session Mr. Campbell's proposition was renewed by Mr. Sneed, of Tennessee. It waked up the sleepy members on all sides, and a motion to lay it on the table failed by only one majority. When he was called to vote Colfax briefly addressed the House, rebuking the inconsistency of the Richardson and Fuller men and the "scattering," who coalesced on every question except balloting for Speaker, and urging the responsibility of those who aided in putting a temporary Speaker in the Chair, who, once there, would never be displaced. On a

1. Mr. Greeley, who was present, wrote: "The sound portion of Indiana was never more earnest than last night, and Colfax was just ready to begin a fresh day's work by a solemn compact never to adjourn without a Speaker, when the other side carried the adjournment."

call for the previous question the proposition failed by fourteen majority. "I would sit here voting for months," he writes home, "before I would, by voting for this proposition, consent to a temporary or permanent surrender, and would not be deterred from duty by sneers from any quarter, injudicious friend or open foe."

By the middle of January it was thought safe to hold an anti-Nebraska caucus, and all who were not sick or paired attended, ninety of them. Mr. Banks desired them to disregard any implied obligation to vote for him. A long debate ended in a resolution to "stick to Banks," and to propose and support the plurality rule. Speaking on the 19th, in support of the plurality rule, Colfax showed from the record that the Democrats favored it in 1849. "Nine distinct propositions were made during that contest to elect a Speaker by a plurality vote, and in every instance but one by Democrats. Yet that party now votes solidly against it."<sup>1</sup>

The catechising of candidates called forth the noble sentiment from Banks that "the Constitution of the United States is an instrument, not of immediate, but of ultimate and universal liberty." It drew from Richardson the declaration that he considered the Wilmot Proviso constitutional, although inexpedient. As a result, he soon found it best to withdraw, and Mr. Orr was substituted by the Democratic caucus. Mr. Fuller also withdrew, so as to be in the fashion, but his adherents continued to support him. All kinds of propositions were made—that the Speaker's power be shared in proportion to the votes of the three parties; that the candidates all be withdrawn; that A, B, or C be declared Speaker; everything but balloting failed.

But upon a motion to declare Mr. Aiken, of South Carolina, Speaker, Mr. Orr withdrew in his favor, and the Southern Know-Nothings, having driven the Democratic

1. "Mr. Colfax made several good points, which worried the other side badly. A good many members tried to get out of the hobble in which he had placed them, but their only real point was that in 1849 they expected to elect a Democrat, whereas now they had no doubt the plurality rule would elect an awful 'Black Republican.'"—*Washington Correspondence New York Tribune*.

platform, with its caucus nominee, from the floor, voted for him. He received 103 votes to 110 against him. Obviously the end was near. As soon as the Journal was read the next morning, February 2d, the plurality rule was adopted, 115 to 104. The one hundred and thirty-fourth and decisive ballot for Speaker was taken, the Southern members believing that their man would win, the Northern members knowing that theirs would. When the roll-call was over Banks had 103, and members began to change off from Fuller to Aiken. His tally ran up, 94—95—96—97—98—99—100—and there it stood. After a little "filibustering" the result of the ballot was confirmed by a vote of 155 to 40. Mr. Aiken acknowledged his defeat. Mr. Banks was conducted by him to the chair, and the first Republican victory on a national field was scored.

Out of the dreary waste of these proceedings an incident rises like a green island out of the sea. A gentleman having introduced some "Buncombe" resolutions, and consumed considerable time in getting them read for "the information of the House," Mr. Colfax raised a laugh that settled them by offering as a substitute the following :

"*Resolved*, That this House earnestly disapproves of any attempt, open or covert, to annex the island of Cuba to this Republic ; and that it would heartily approve of the annexation of that part of Oregon which was surrendered to Great Britain by the Administration of James K. Polk." During this long, wearying contest for the Speakership Mr. Colfax never missed a vote, and he was so fortunate as to render signal service at critical moments.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Whitfield had taken his seat in the House on the certificate of the Governor of Kansas, and Mr. Reeder was present as a contestant. Mr. Colfax was placed on the Committee on Elections, which, after a laborious examination of the case, reported in favor of sending a special committee out to investigate on the spot the anarchy in

1. "A very large majority of the Republicans in Congress, and the entire Republican press, although not impugning Campbell's motives, have severely censured him for introducing such a resolution [to seat Mr. Orr as temporary Speaker] ; at the same time they give Mr. Colfax credit for preventing its adoption, and unqualifiedly indorse his course."—*South Bend Register*, Jan. 10, 1856.

Kansas. Mr. W. A. Howard, of Michigan, Mr. John Sherman, of Ohio, and Mr. M. Oliver, of Missouri, were appointed and sent on that duty. Here began the distinguished public service of Senator John Sherman, which is not yet ended. No man has been more useful these thirty years past, whether in the House, in the Senate, or in the Cabinet.

The House Committee found a desultory civil war in progress in Kansas. The foreign militia had been reinforced in the spring by a regiment of wild young men from the far South, under Colonel Buford. Lawrence, free-State headquarters, had been partly destroyed in May by a posse of eight hundred, under Atchison and others, on the pretext of serving writs. Henry Clay Pate had sacked a little free-State settlement called Palmyra, and been beaten and captured, with his booty, by John Brown at Black Jack. Osawatomie had been burned by General Whitfield. Murders, robberies, and lesser outrages were of almost daily occurrence at Leavenworth and elsewhere. A reign of terror existed. Governor Reeder, addressing a great meeting in Chicago, at which sixteen thousand dollars were raised for the relief of the harassed Kansas men, said : " Murder and rapine stalk abroad through that land." Connection with the free-State Government organized at Topeka was held by the President, the Governor, and the courts to be treasonable, and those guilty of it were harassed by writs, arrests, fines, imprisonments. The free-State Legislature assembled at Topeka, but was dispersed by the troops, under Colonel Edwin V. Sumner, on the order of the President. Emigrants going to Kansas were robbed in Missouri, and turned back. A large body, convoyed through Iowa by James H. Lane, were met on the border of the Territory by the soldiers and disarmed.

The House Committee watched these proceedings, and took testimony a few weeks, returned, and reported that no elections yet held in Kansas were valid ; that all of them were the work of invading mobs ; that the so-called laws were of no validity, and were being made the pretext for untold outrages ; that neither of the contesting dele-

gates was entitled to a seat in the House, and that the free-State constitution, framed at Topeka, represented the will of a majority of the settlers. The House voted that neither contestant was entitled to a seat as Delegate.

The question of immediate consequence was whether these "bogus laws," as they were called, should be enforced, and by the army. Upon this question Mr. Colfax delivered a set speech, June 21st, the House being in Committee of the Whole on the Army Appropriation Bill. He gave notice that at the proper time he should move a proviso to the Army Bill, providing that until the so-called laws of Kansas shall have been approved by the Senate and House, "no part of the military force of the United States shall be used in aid of their enforcement, nor shall any citizen of Kansas be required to act as part of a posse to aid in their enforcement." The laws embodied all the brutality possible to slavery. The orator read them, clause by clause, commenting calmly on their rapacity and cruelty. With an eye to stage effect, as he cited the clause imposing imprisonment at hard labor with ball and chain upon any one who should say "that persons have not the right to hold slaves in this Territory," he lifted from his desk an iron ball of the statutory dimension, six inches through and weighing thirty pounds, apologizing for not also exhibiting the prescribed six-foot chain along with it. Alexander H. Stephens, sitting near, asked to "heft" it, and would then have returned it; but the speaker allowed him to dandle it, while in a few sentences he showed that Washington, Jefferson, Webster, and Clay, if alive and in Kansas, would now be serving in the chain-gang of the border men.

The speech had a prodigious effect. There may have been contemporaneous speeches displaying more culture and eloquence, but none that with such keen insight seized and presented the precise means afforded by the facts to strike and affect the minds and hearts of the mass of men and women. It had a great run in the Republican press. Forty days after its delivery half a million copies had been circulated, and the Republican Committee could not meet



the demands for more as fast as they came in. Undoubtedly more than a million copies of the speech were distributed as a campaign document, and our population was then less than thirty millions. "It not only spreads before us the laws of the Missouri-Kansas Legislature in all their deformity," said the *Vermont Republican*, "it shows the corruption of the bogus Legislature and of the officers and judges. Nothing that has been published exhibits so vividly within the same space the infamous conduct of the Administration and the wrongs and outrages practised on the free-State settlers in Kansas." This was the unanimous verdict of the Republican press. Senator Charles Sumner writes him: "Your speech deserves more credit than I can give." Mr. Charles A. Dana, then assistant-editor of the *New York Tribune*, addresses him: "Immortal Colfax! The next time you make a great speech let me suggest that it will be a good thing to send us a copy beforehand, so that we can print it entire, if we want to, instead of making out the best we can from a poor telegraphic summary, and then, three or four days after, hunting after the full report through files of useless papers, all in vain. Here am I now to-night sending all over town to try and borrow the *Globe*, which should have come this morning, but has not yet reached us. If I were a profane man, this is an occasion when I would swear, and you are the man I should swear at. Great meeting to-night at the Tabernacle." This letter indicates that the orator esteemed his work more lightly than anybody else. Mr. Greeley writes him: "We have printed your speech in pamphlet, as you doubtless know; and an earnest friend says he considers it the best electioneering document we ever had. He has made two converts with it already, and has supplied himself with copies wherewith to make more."

Several of the Administration editors in his district began to see that their shots were falling short. Dr. O. Everts, of the *La Porte Times*, advised his co-laborers to take a new tack, unless they desired still further to promote this young man's successes. "He is the best specimen of his party which the State has sent up to Washington,

and the prominent position he has so early taken shows conclusively that he ranks among the big guns of the House. The Democrats of the Ninth District have got him to beat, and we are confident they will succeed better by giving him his full deserts as a man—an able editor, an interesting orator, an indefatigable correspondent, a busy, active, energetic legislator, who, whether right or wrong, is always at his post and true to his instincts—than by attempting to crush him out by epithets of derision or contempt.”

He kept up a regular correspondence with his paper. “The course I have marked out for myself in my letters, is to speak freely of the votes of men and their positions, to commend highly those who do right, but in condemnation to avoid any remarks to which exceptions could be taken as personal or abusive.”<sup>1</sup> He writes in January: “It looks to me very much like defeat next fall, for it will be a miracle if the North is united, as she must be to win.” In March: “The opinion here is that Fillmore will decline after the Republicans nominate, but he may conclude to run, as Van Buren did in 1848, to beat his old friends. I pray that the Pierce movement may gather strength, as Buchanan is the strongest man they could run. On our side the Fremont feeling is gaining strength rapidly. He is strong in New England and New York, and would carry California, which no one else can. He is sound on the Kansas question—very sound. McLean, I think, will be his principal competitor. I don’t like his [McLean’s] pro-slavery decisions, and he has been a candidate for twenty years. But the people at home must make the candidates, and I will cheerfully labor for whomsoever they prefer. On the whisky question, under the Supreme Court decision,<sup>2</sup> until we can reform the judges, we cannot get an efficient law; and if we cannot, need we

1. From his private letters it appears that he had eight thousand persons on his list of correspondents, and “it costs eighty dollars to supply them with one speech each.” May 1st he had spent two hundred dollars in this way. He paid twenty-two dollars a week for board and rooms for himself and Mrs. Colfax; at the hotels he says it would cost them thirty-five dollars.

2. The State Supreme Court had overturned both the old local option anti-liquor law and the new prohibitory law passed since the adoption of the revised constitution.

provoke prejudice against us without being able to effect any good? I would not 'take back' my principles, but now it appears that all we can do is to labor for freedom, and that that, therefore, should be the overshadowing issue." In May: "Fremont, if cordially united upon by the opposition, will sweep the country, I think, unless the Democrats nominate Buchanan, who will give us a hard race." He suggests that the *Register* come out for Fremont, in order to head off McLean, whom he does not want at all. In August: "Please get out your hand-bills for the South Bend appointments, without any attempt to parade me as extra-faithful, or anything of that sort in them."

The Know-Nothings met in February, and adopted a platform virtually sanctioning the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, neutral as to Kansas, fifty Northern delegates thereupon withdrawing from the council. The next day they nominated Millard Fillmore for President and Andrew J. Donelson for Vice-President; and the remnant of the Whigs afterward adopting this ticket, Northern defeat in the Presidential election was as good as assured. The same week, in February, the Republicans held a convention at Pittsburg, appointed a National Executive Committee, and called a National Convention to meet at Philadelphia, June 17th. Mr. Colfax was accused of having been at the Know-Nothing Council, but denied it, and declared that he repudiated its ticket and platform. "If I had felt justified in leaving Washington to attend any political meeting whatever," he writes, "I should have been at the great Republican assemblage at Pittsburg, with those who are resolved to unite, irrespective of former affiliations, to restore the Government to the policy of the fathers of the country and to preserve the Territories for the same perpetual freedom to which the New World was consecrated in the morning of our national existence. *That* is the great, the overshadowing, the paramount issue of the day, which cannot be postponed or evaded; which must be settled now, and rightly, unless we are willing that slavery shall possess, directly or indirectly, the whole

land, and wield with iron hand the whole power of the Government." Of the action of the Know-Nothing Council, he said: "The Fillmore ticket may draw off enough votes to defeat the Republican ticket; I will not deny the probability that it will; but whether the Republican ticket shall be successful or defeated this year, the duty to support it, to proclaim and defend its principles, to arouse the conscience of the nation, is none the less incumbent."

In these days the masses of the future Republican Party were gathering, assimilating, learning to touch elbows. Coming together from all the old parties, they were unused to one another and to the new conditions. Proceedings in the House and popular movements acted and reacted upon each other, while the arrogance of the slave power, displayed especially in Kansas, kept the elements at welding heat, and plied the compelling hammer. At one of the frequent caucuses of the anti-Nebraska leaders of the House and Senate, held March 11th, Colfax urged the full declaration by Republicans of their position and intentions in the coming struggle. For himself, he was for a firm stand against the aggressions of slavery; he was for freedom in the Territories and for the vindication of the outraged settlers in Kansas. He denounced the President for not protecting them from the invasions of armed mobs, from political lynchings and murder, and for hastening to demand obedience, under threat of military force, when Kansas, by these means, had been prostrated, and when laws that would disgrace the most absolute despotism had been imposed upon her. At such a moment, he contended, there should be a hearty union of all opposed to these infamous proceedings and to the desecration, by the curse of slavery, of soil once dedicated to freedom. "Recognize freedom in the Territories as the great issue in the campaign, as it most assuredly is." "And let the committee, in calling a National Convention," he said on another occasion, "take the responsibility of invoking the people to act in their primary capacity; not Republicans alone, but all, of whatever party in the past, making the call so

broad that no one who resists the aggressions of slavery can have any excuse on account of party names for holding aloof." The call, when it came, was for a "People's Union Convention," embodying the same ideas, and conceived in almost the identical language of the call for the Indiana State "People's Convention" of sixteen months previous, which was inspired, in part, by Colfax himself.

Invited to address a meeting at Newark, N. J., April 5th, he wrote a letter, the burden of which was that "the South demands concession of the right to fill all the Territories with human merchandise, under the threat of dissolving the Union—this is the issue to be met." A little later, April 22d, a great meeting was held in New York to hear the report of the New York and New Jersey delegations returned from Pittsburg, and to take measures looking to the organization of the Republican as a national party. Asked to be one of the speakers at this meeting, he felt obliged to decline, but wrote in part as follows :

"Politicians in the Senate may clamor in regard to 'the equality of the States,' which no man denies; but the people will regard it as a higher and nobler principle that we vindicate in our policy the equality of the American freeman; and that we demand, as one of the needful rules and regulations for the territory of the United States, which Congress is expressly authorized by the Constitution to enact, that the Territories shall be organized as in 1789; that all our citizens, from whatever clime they come, or whatever may be their pecuniary condition, shall have equal rights in their settlement; and that no institution shall prevail in them which shall degrade American labor and press down the mechanic, the day-laborer, the road-builder, or the worker in the fields toward the social condition of the Southern slave. In a word, that it shall be the first duty of the Government to see to it that, wherever it has constitutional authority, labor, the primal element of American prosperity, shall be honored, elevated, and protected."

In Indiana the county conventions began to meet. Mr. Colfax was absent for the first time in fifteen years, but not forgotten. Those in his district thanked him by resolution for his zealous and well-directed service. The State Convention in May was attended by ten thousand delegates, as in 1854. They adopted a "ringing" Republican platform, nominated a State ticket, headed by Mr.

Oliver P. Morton, selected delegates to the National Convention and candidates for Presidential Electors.

In Washington Preston H. Brooks, of South Carolina, assaulted Senator Sumner for words spoken in debate, beating him with a walking-stick about the head while he was seated at his desk in the Senate chamber, and seriously injuring him. Among many others, Anson Burlingame denounced the assault and the assailant, and Mr. Brooks challenged him. Mr. Burlingame accepted the challenge, choosing rifles as the weapons and Canada as the place of combat. Thereupon Mr. Sumner writes Colfax: "Every step he takes must be a failure. Even success will be failure. I love Burlingame, and enjoy his eloquence, but I deplore his present position." Brooks, however, justified Burlingame's action by declining the duel. It was too far to go, and through an enemy's country, he said. He was suddenly become discreet. Burlingame was a dead shot with a rifle. It was safer to decline the duel. The House voted to expel Brooks. He contemptuously exhibited a copy of his resignation, forwarded to the Governor of his State ten days before.

Within a year afterward he suddenly died of acute inflammation of the throat. Writing to Mr. Matthews, Mr. Colfax says:

"Brooks has gone, as you say, to another kingdom. I will not quarrel with the dispensations of Providence, for He doeth all things right; but I cannot but remember that Brooks acknowledged his intention of killing Sumner, if he resisted successfully, and that the Lord took him out of this world by the same process that the law stops the life of a murderer. No one here doubts that he bitterly regretted the attack, and was breaking down under it. He and I had been very friendly before it, and this session (February, 1857) we met a dozen times or more, brushing by each other as we passed. He looked me in the eye every time, but I had resolved never to speak to him, and I did not. His death absolutely shocked his colleagues; and when Savage made the infamous remarks at his funeral (at which Grow and I rose instantly and left the House, accompanied by nearly all the Republicans), Orr and McQueen, of the South Carolina delegation, made it a personal matter with him that he should strike it out of the official report in the *Globe*."

Mr. Keitt was censured by the House for his connection with the assault, and he resigned. In Washington, as in Kansas, the spirit was the same.

Early in June the Democratic National Convention met in Cincinnati, declared in their platform that neither Congress nor a Territory had power to exclude slavery from a Territory, and passing over both Pierce and Douglas, nominated Mr. James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, for President. The Republicans met a week later in Philadelphia, and in their platform declared that it was the right and duty of Congress to preserve the Territories free from polygamy and slavery, demanded the admission into the Union of free Kansas, and favored internal improvements, including a Pacific Railroad. They denounced slavery extension, the fraudulent government and reign of terror in Kansas, and the Ostend Manifesto, and they nominated John C. Fremont for President.

A concurrent resolution, fixing the day and hour of the adjournment of Congress, having been adopted, the House, insisting on the Colfax Proviso to the Army Bill, offered in a modified form by Sherman, and the Senate rejecting it, the session ended, with no money for the army. The President convened Congress in extra session on the 21st of August. Colfax's private letters give an inside view of the struggle that ensued. August 21st, he writes: "We have had a great day. The Administration and all the people here supposed we would back down, of course, at the first vote. But we faced the music, and we beat them by seven majority, voting the twelve millions, but with the proviso that the army should not be used to enforce the Border Ruffian Code." Next day: "We stood fire again to-day, and astounded the Senate by voting to adhere, which means in English, never to give up our point." On the 27th: "The conference committees failed to agree for the fourth time to-night. All of our men except Campbell and one or two shaky ones stand fire like veterans. The Senate are astounded and indignant, but dare not as yet adjourn *sine die*, and go to the country on the issue between them and the House. We shall probably be beaten two or three votes in the end, if they can telegraph in all their absentees, as we have lost one by death, and they have, with the Fillmoreites, and have had all the session a bare majority

over us. My appointments are all broken up, but I would not leave my seat if my re-election depended on it. It is the first time in the history of the country that the Representatives of the people dared to stand out against a President and Senate, and I shall stand by to the end. In the opening of my Kansas speech, in June, I was the first to propose such a stand on the Army Bill, and will be the last to desert it." As he anticipated, the House was beaten at last, 101 to 98, the Army Bill passed without the proviso, and the second session adjourned.<sup>1</sup>

They had passed a bill increasing the pay of Congressmen from eight dollars a day while in session to three thousand dollars a year, and made it apply to themselves. Colfax in vain endeavored to have the bill changed so as to reduce instead of increase the pay of Congressmen, and in vain he voted against the bill at every stage of its progress.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to a rumor that he had declined a renomination, he had written home, June 5th :

"The fact is, I have written to no one asking him to go for my nomination, and don't intend to. I was nominated originally without any electioneering on my part, and if nominated again, it will be done without any effort on my part to influence delegates in my favor. I shall

1. July 10th Mr. Greeley wrote him : "Hell ! Schuyler, adjourn at the earliest moment, that's all I have to say. You cannot make it a day too soon. If the appropriation bills should fail, why should we cry ? I believe we shall yet be sold out on some amendment to the appropriation bills. Be sure to have all sorts of amendments to amendments in readiness to be offered when such iniquities come in. I fear you will kill us yet, right there in Washington—in the House."

And August 27th : "Are you all mad at Washington, or am I a natural fool ? It does seem to me that you are persisting in a course where you *cannot* gain anything, and are daily exposed to ruin. Banks made a great mistake in not letting the Army Bill slip through on the 18th. Now you will lose precious time, and come to that same result, or you will get entangled in some horrible ruinous compromise and destroyed. I pray you to hold a consultation and contrive to get adjourned at the earliest moment and with the least possible damage."

Mr. Sumner writes, August 20th : "Stand firm. Do. Save the proviso to the Army Bill. Save Kansas. Save us all !"

2. On the adjournment of the regular session, the venerable Joshua R. Giddings wrote him as follows : "In a few hours we shall separate for the vacation, and perhaps forever. As we part, I may be permitted to thank you for the interest you have manifested in the cause of liberty. Your speeches and bearing have cheered the hearts of many lovers of freedom. I have witnessed them with emotions of pleasure, which I trust will be increased should we meet again. Interesting events have transpired in rapid succession since we met here in December, and the records of our body will bear testimony to the fidelity with which each member has discharged his duty."



not be at the convention, for here is my post of duty till Congress adjourns, as I have refused even to pair off, except on one or two local bills, or to be absent from my seat a single hour while in session. But whether I am nominated or some one else, which must be just as the convention chooses, I shall, as soon as Congress adjourns, take the stump and canvass the district for the cause of freedom, no matter who may be nominated."

The Republican District Convention met July 23d, at Plymouth, and nominated him for the Thirty-fifth Congress by acclamation. A letter from him, which might fairly be called burning, was then read. "For, gentlemen," says the writer, "the question of this canvass is not so much whether black men shall be slaves as whether white men shall be free." And then he denounces the assaults on the friends and champions of freedom in Kansas and in Washington with all the indignation which he was capable of expressing.

On his way home he was urged to speak in Cleveland, but declined. He writes Mrs. Colfax, who was at a water-cure, September 4th :

"I reached home last evening, and found hundreds of people at the depot, who had been waiting nearly two hours (train behind time) to welcome me home. They had a platform, and before the cars started Judge Turner was making a welcoming speech, the people in the train, who began to see through it by the flags and music, waving their handkerchiefs and joining in the shouts. It quite overcame me, and I could scarcely find words to respond. Then they marched, ladies and all, to my residence, nearly a mile, you know, three to four hundred of them, when I again thanked them. At the depot there were over five hundred, and many had gone away, tired of waiting. At Mishawaka a large crowd had assembled, with many of whom I shook hands while the train stopped. I open the canvass to-morrow."<sup>1</sup>

Again to his wife, September 7th :

"I never knew what friendship was before ; it gushes and overflows upon me from every side. Old men shake hands and shed tears ; the ladies insist on shaking hands all round ; and our young voters are full of the most earnest enthusiasm. I cannot describe to you what overwhelming tokens of the confidence and approval of my constituents have

1. Mr. Defrees writes him from Indianapolis : "It did me good to see how our old South Benders received you on your return ; it is a glorious town, full of glorious people."

been showered upon me the past two or three days. It has been almost impossible for me to get about the streets ; and the day I spoke here, Friday, I had to stand an hour in front of my house, bowing thanks to the long procession of wagons and carriages, with hundreds of flags, and people shouting and waving handkerchiefs, as they passed our house. Then the Mishawaka Light Guards came, all in uniform, and escorted me to the Court House to speak. There, inside, were nearly a thousand ladies ; and outside, with the most pitiless rain of the season pouring on them, were three thousand people, who stood there while I spoke to them three and a half hours from the window of the second story of the Court House, the audience even larger at the close than at the commencement. But with all their extraordinary manifestations of regard, I do not consider my election certain. I would get three thousand majority of the native and Americanized population ; but the three or four thousand foreign vote in the district appear solid against us as yet. On Monday we commence the joint canvass, and close at New Carlisle the Thursday before the election."

September 10th : " I have made my fifth speech to-day in the open air to a large crowd, as usual. Travelled forty-eight miles on Monday, and made a three hours' speech. At Rochester they had but two days' notice, yet the county was out *en masse*, many coming eighteen miles. They raised a pole one hundred and seventy feet high. I commenced speaking at three, and held the crowd till half-past six, after sunset. The Republicans are full of excitement, industrious, and enthusiastic ; but our enemies work hard—desperately indeed, and spend money profusely. Throat still holds out well." Next day : " In the northern part of Cass County, in the woods, miles from the nearest village, three to four thousand present, procession and banners, bands and glee clubs, ladies innumerable, spoke three hours and a half in the open air, throat giving out ; but the crowds can't get into the houses, and must do the best I can." At Francesville, on the 17th : " I shook hands with twenty-one men who voted against me in 1854, and are for me now ; throat broken down twice, but cold-water bandages used every night brings it out again."

He is now in the prime of his young manhood ; the experiences of age have not begun to chill the enthusiasms of youth. He is among his neighbors and friends, whom he loves, and in whose houses he is already beginning to be

held as an elder son. He is indignant at the attempted rape of a virgin world by the black forces of slavery. Every energy of his warm heart and keen intellect is enlisted in the cause of which he is an apostle. Years of training have made him perfect master of his resources. The people are in full sympathy with him, and roused as never before nor since. No conditions can be imagined more stimulating to a noble ambition. The path of duty is pre-eminently the way to glory. He speaks with the rush of a spring torrent ; women weep as they listen, and men rend the air with shouts.

At Logansport, the home of his opponent, Judge Stuart, the judge opened the discussion, speaking seventy-five minutes, with no response except "That was right!" when he attacked the young man's votes in Congress. The latter followed in a speech of ninety minutes. The applause was a steady roar. Women and many men wept. "John D. Defrees said he couldn't keep his eyes dry." Having fifteen minutes to close, Stuart spoke seven minutes, and asked: "Will you vote for a man who thus speaks and votes?" And the tremendous "Yes" which came back so discouraged him that he ceased, stepped down, and walked off almost alone. "It took me a long while to get back to the hotel," writes Colfax to his wife. "Every one seemed anxious to shake hands and give me a 'God bless you.'" The street echoed and re-echoed with 'cheers for Colfax,' and he was called out in the evening by a serenade. Judge Stuart's friends had expected, from his judicial reputation, that he would overmatch Colfax on the stump. "Stuart has improved decidedly during the joint canvass," his opponent writes; "but the tide is all with us in the western counties." Messrs. Caleb B. Smith, John F. Miller, W. G. George, A. Anderson, G. C. Merrifield, John D. Defrees, T. F. Bringham, and Horace P. Eddy supported Colfax, while Dr. Eddy and others assisted Stuart. "We have a sixty-mile drive to-morrow across the Kankakee." In the outskirts of Rensselaer the cavassers were met by sixty-eight uniformed mounted cople, and escorted into town. A Republican procession

at Bourbon, dispersing and off guard, was attacked by railroad hands, and a man or two left for dead. "I feel sometimes very weary with the constant excitement through which I have to pass, and the people were never so warm before. But my throat, under the wet-bandage treatment, improves, speaking in the open air; yesterday it was clear as a bell, better than before I started." He spoke five hours on the day preceding the election.

On election-day, at South Bend, the entire population were in the streets. "Never did a man have such friends before. Think of Mr. Chapin working at the polls and attending night meetings! And of the Rev. Mr. Ames traveling one hundred and seventy miles to vote for me, and returning the same day; and of the Methodist Conference breaking up their session at Crawfordsville in hot haste, so that members might get back in time to vote. I have seen scores of old farmers who say they would rather have lost their farms than to have had me beaten. Dr. Wright got me into a quarrel at the polls about Know-Nothingism, but three hundred friends gathered in an instant, and would have settled him if he had touched me. They imported fifteen hundred to two thousand votes into the swamp-land-ditches and along the railroads, and but for great gains in the native vote I should have been defeated.<sup>1</sup> We could not touch the foreign vote, but all others that could be were secured." The charge of Know-Nothingism was urged against him with great persistence; other charges were that he was an Abolitionist, a Disunionist, a Prohibitionist. In spite of all, he ran ahead of the State ticket in every county, and did better, proportionately, than any other Congressional candidate in the State. His majority was 1036 in a poll of 24,816. Such were a return home, a canvass, and an election in the days of 1856.

The next day after the election found him at Chicago following Banks in an hour's speech at a great Fremont meeting. Both he and Banks feared the game was up,

1. "In 1852, with 1851 taxable polls in St. Joseph County, the votes were 2006; in 1854, with 2051 taxable polls, there were 2354 votes; now, with 2426 taxable polls, the vote was 3253."—*South Bend Register*, Oct. 23, 1856.

through the divisions and subserviency of the North. He spent a week with the State Central Committee at Indianapolis, endeavoring to make another rally for the Presidential election in November. "But there is no hope of carrying Indiana," he writes. "We have been beaten by fraudulent voting all over the State, and if we could prevent that the Fillmore men would knife us effectually, I fear. Our friends are disheartened, and I share it myself, though I say nothing."

Colonel Fremont wrote him that the Republicans had carried Pennsylvania on Congressmen, by later advices, and thought there was still hope. He canvassed the "Pocket," South-western Indiana, speaking at Sullivan, Princeton, Vincennes, to crowded and enthusiastic houses, returning in time to make a few more speeches at and near home. But it availed not. "It is a dark and rainy day, which I trust may not be a presage of the election to-morrow; but I am oppressed with fears and doubts, and the dark shadow of a coming defeat seems to loom up before me." Fremont was beaten, and now, if not then, we can bear it stoically. The fruit was not yet ripe for plucking.

November 11th he addressed Mrs. Colfax from the *New York Tribune* office: "This afternoon I went to Colonel Fremont's; saw Jessie, who bears the result with fortitude. The Colonel was out. Took dinner with Mr. Greeley, and am going to-night to hear the Governor-elect, John A. King, and George W. Curtis, the Howadji, make Fremont speeches. Everybody is for running Fremont again." Mr. Greeley added a postscript: "Mr. Colfax tells me you lack faith, and are downcast at the result of our election. I think we have no reason to be discouraged. We have made a great beginning, and I trust we have helped Kansas by putting all the States west of yours under the government of our friends. I am tired and sore, and a little inclined to rest and quiet, but Kansas will be free."

Mr. Greeley gave him a letter to Edmund Quincy, of Boston. "The bearer is my friend, Schuyler Colfax, who is as worthy a gentleman as a member of Congress well

can be—ex-members will just do if they improve their opportunities—[Greeley was an ex-member]. As our Indianaized New Yorker and incipient Abolitionist, I trust you may find him worth knowing if not studying." November 12th: "I spent night before last, or rather the evening, at Colonel Fremont's. He bears the defeat magnificently; no complaint or murmur, or even regret falls from his lips. He will be out with a letter in which he will allude to the falsehoods against him, and will say, among other things, that he is a Protestant, and not a Catholic. The Republicans here are full of grit—no give-up—fuller of elasticity and zeal than any defeated party I ever saw. They are keeping up the clubs, still working, and organizing for 1860, all for Fremont, but many in favor of another Vice-President—some Southern man, Cassius M. Clay, John F. Botts, or Kenneth Rayner."

In Boston he visited Mr. Burlingame, who was ill from overwork in the canvass; met Speaker Banks, Governor Gardner, Mr. Livermore (Burlingame's father-in-law), Josiah Quincy, Sr., Josiah Quincy, Jr., Theodore Parker, Henry W. Longfellow; missed Senator Sumner, both at Boston and Cambridge; and then he went to Springfield to see his friend Bowles and Congressman Chaffee. "Kindness has met me here on every side," he writes. "The Republicans wished to give me a supper, and had arranged with Burlingame for it, but I declined—rightly, I think." November 29th he arrived in Washington, and writes: "Burlingame has just reached the city this evening, though in miserable health. He was determined, if possible, to be in his seat Monday." Writing to the committee of invitation of the Burlingame banquet, he compared the recent Republican defeat to the action of Bunker Hill, where those who finally retreated won the victory. "Gathering fresh inspiration from their example, the friends of freedom, now as then, have resolved to turn a canvass into a campaign, and will labor on and ever until, by the recognition of the doctrine of the fathers, that slavery is sectional, freedom national, we indeed proclaim to the world as the American motto, that eloquent senti-

ment emblazoned on your Faneuil Hall, 'Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.' "

The stand taken by the House in the last session had paralyzed the Administration. Mr. John Sherman said afterward that the report of the House Kansas Committee caused the removal not only of Governor Shannon, but of President Pierce. When the Presidential election was drawing near Shannon was superseded by Mr. John W. Geary, of Pennsylvania, with instructions to pacify Kansas, and reports were sent East that he had pacified Kansas. While the partisans of slavery killed, burned, plundered, and harried, the partisans of freedom kept going in, settled, fenced, planted, builded. It had become manifest that the latter would, if pressed too far, meet their enemies with their own weapons. The marauding war of Missouri on Kansas languished when there were blows to take as well as give. Many of the participants, like the successive Governors, grew ashamed of the brutality of their dragging work, joined the other side, and settled down to the cultivation of corn. It became clear that neither Kansas nor the country would permit the army to be used to enforce the "bogus laws" without armed resistance. Had the attempt been persisted in, as in the earlier part of the year (1856), James Buchanan could not have been elected President. There was a material back-down on the part of the Administration. The Democrats elected their Presidential ticket only by repudiating, so far as they could, the bad work in Kansas and by the decoy of Mr. Fillmore's third-party candidacy.

When the short session convened in December, 1856, assurances were given that the usurping Legislature, on advice from Washington, would repeal the "bogus laws," and co-operate with Governor Geary in providing for the fair election of a convention, the next season, to form a State constitution. The bare majority of the opposition at the previous session, which after the election of Speaker always disappeared in emergencies, was now further reduced by Administration gains in filling vacancies. The Administration won its first victory by seating Whitfield.

as Delegate from Kansas. Nevertheless, the House passed a bill for the relief of Kansas—repealing the “bogus laws” and providing for the election of a new Legislature—which was tabled in the Senate. Important measures of the session were an Enabling Act for Minnesota, an act enlarging the free list and reducing the tariff, an act to aid in laying a telegraph cable across the Atlantic, and acts providing for an overland telegraph and a wagon and mail road to the Pacific.

In connection with the tariff bill, Colfax interested himself in getting sugar placed on the free list with the poor man's other luxuries, tea and coffee, contending in a set speech, February 5th, 1857, that the existing *ad valorem* duty of thirty per cent was as impotent to sustain unprofitable sugar works as it was needless for revenue, the Treasury being full to overflowing, and sugar-planting, after sixty years of high protection, in a moribund condition. These positions he supported with an abundance of statistical facts, showing his mastery of the subject. Unable to carry this, he urged the substitution of a specific duty of one and a half cents on brown and of two cents on loaf sugar per pound, for the absurd *ad valorem* duty, which, rising with the price of sugar, increased the more the less it was needed, and *vice versa*. The Legislature of his State supported him by memorializing Congress on the subject. No doubt, opportunity serving, nine out of ten of the voters of the entire country would have sustained him; but his proposition was rejected. All other interests affected by the bill had their agents on hand to look out for them, while free sugar, being everybody's, was really nobody's business. It had to stand on its own merits, sustained by such members only as felt it to be a duty; and they had to meet, as was to be expected, the united opposition of the Louisiana delegation. Since that day the country must have paid in bounty to the sugar-planters of Louisiana five times as much as the entire interest is worth, and free sugar is still in the future. Colfax was an advocate of protection, as long as he lived, but of protection judiciously applied. At that time he believed that free



sugar would strengthen the new party of freedom, and he could not appreciate the consistency of Protectionists who opposed free sugar while favoring free salt and free wool. Taken vigorously to task by Mr. Greeley in the *Tribune* for alleged recreancy to protection, he defended his position with equal vigor in the columns of that paper.<sup>1</sup>

Certain so-called "corruption cases," affecting several members of Congress and some press reporters, threw the country and Congress into a panic in the course of this session. Mr. J. W. Simonton having charged corruption in connection with the passage of certain bills in his letters to the *New York Times*, and Mr. Paine, of North Carolina, having stated that a fellow-member had offered him fifteen hundred dollars for his vote in a given case, a special committee was appointed to investigate the subject. Simonton proved a contumacious witness, and it was proposed to commit him to custody pending a hearing at the Bar of the House. Colfax thereupon contended for his right to be heard at once on being taken into custody, and this course was adopted. After listening to his reason for not answering—that it would be a breach of confidence—the House ordered him to be kept in close custody by

1. Mr. Greeley writes him, on Christmas day, 1856: "I have just been talking to you about sugar (in the *Tribune*), with tears in my eyes, almost. You seem to me (in the milder sense) a very *unprincipled* politician. I don't know whether this sugar move isn't worse than your vote to extend the right of suffrage to aliens or your Know-Nothing obligation to deprive adopted citizens of the substantial benefits of citizenship. [The reader knows that he never took that obligation.] I think I shall have to get Fremont to come out a red-mouthed Catholic, to qualify him for your ardent support in 1860. Convey my most devout wishes for all good fortune to Mrs. Colfax, who isn't a politician, except reasonably, and who shall have my vote for member of Congress, if she wants it, when Women's Rights are acknowledged. I wish the present Congress could be sent home, and the members' wives left to legislate in their stead. Do you think *they* would have passed that scandalous Compensation Bill? No, sir; not by a heap! Remember me to two or three of the best folks in Washington; try to get that Compensation Bill amended to some purpose; and don't forget that the egg-nog (is there another g?) that they dispense about these days in Washington is a very slippery drink in icy weather, and not precisely accordant with the principles of the Sons of Temperance."

Again, on the 28th: "I am sorry the hardness of your heart and blindness of your understanding didn't permit you to see the perverseness of your course with regard to sugar; but I won't argue the case over again. 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets,' etc. Let sorghum get half the start that wool has to-day, and I'll vote with you to take the duty off of sugar, as I would now vote to take it off of wool, not shufflingly, as Lew Campbell's bill does, but manfully and wholly. As to your Know-Nothingism and the opposite, we'll agree to let one of them balance the other, and hold you just about right on five years' probation, with safeguards against frauds."

the Sergeant-at-Arms, if he persisted in his contumacy till the close of the session. Colfax voted for this order, on the ground that after what he had said, tainting the whole House, Simonton should, in justice to the innocent, give the name of the accused.

The House imprisoned Simonton, and the investigating committee at once reported a bill, breaking down all the protection which the common law throws around a witness, and clothing a committee of Congress with Star Chamber powers in such cases. With eleven others, Colfax voted against this bill, believing it to be his duty not to give "the vote of our district for such hasty and extraordinary legislation." The Senate quickly and almost unanimously passed the bill, few members of either House actually approving it, still fewer voting against it, for fear of misconstruction.

The investigating committee proceeded with its work, finally reporting a resolution to expel four members of the House and exclude two reporters from the floor. A long and heated debate occurred near the end of the session, Colfax unflinchingly maintaining that these men, as all others, should have fair treatment. He would certainly vote to expel for bribery, he said, but not on impeached, and surely not on secret, *ex-parte*, mutilated, and partly suppressed testimony. Two members resigned, no one was expelled, and the reporters were excluded from the floor. Of the many men who in this instance displayed the merely animal instincts which most men do in a panic, Colfax was not one.

The burden of the argument for the act was that it was necessary to ferret out corruption among Congressmen. Yet the first case in which its functions were invoked was the investigation of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, a political case; and the contumacious witness defeated its purpose by submitting to imprisonment until the session had expired. The Thirty-seventh Congress repealed the prominent features of the law, as thieves were enriching themselves under it, and avoiding prosecution by going before investigating committees and testifying to their own guilt.

Years afterward Colfax wrote in the *New York Independent* that he and Burlingame had agreed together that, despite the threats of political ostracism, they would vote against the bill, if not amended, even though it should consign them to private life.

“ For that vote, in his ensuing Congressional canvass, the writer was most bitterly arraigned and denounced, on the stump, in the press, and in all possible ways. Thousands of circulars, charging him with shielding Congressional corruption, were scattered broadcast, as well as carried by colporteurs into nearly every house in his district. But he cheerfully accepted the issue, and in a hundred public speeches proclaimed and justified this vote, for which he was so severely condemned by his opponents. The result was that his majority was nearly double that which he had received at his previous election, five to seven hundred ahead of the State ticket in his district, proving, if proof were needed, that it is better for men in public life to seek to be right than to be popular.”

All the endeavors of the Western members to call up the River and Harbor bills, inclusive of the bill which Mr. Colfax had introduced to continue the improvement of the one Lake port of Indiana, at Michigan City, were defeated by “ filibustering ;” and as they could not command a vote to suspend the rules, the bills failed. On the last day of the session Mr. Colfax procured the passage of a resolution increasing the pay of the hard-working Journal Clerk of the House to the same amount paid the Chief Clerk under the Secretary of the Senate.

Some time during this session his wife’s sister, Mrs. McClaughry, wrote Mrs. Colfax :

“ William Hunt, one of our neighbors, who recently emigrated to Lee County, Ill., says ‘ Colfax ’ is one of their watchwords, and the people worship him there. If ever you have experienced sensations of pride and happiness so intense as to bring tears into your eyes and it was impossible to repress them, you can judge with what feelings I have watched Schuyler Colfax’s course in Congress, and heard encomiums passed upon him by those whose opinions I have always deemed worthy of honor. And when Mr. Briggs took me by the hand and said to me, ‘ A nobler man and one more worthy of honor than Schuyler Colfax never lived,’ I was foolish enough to cry about it.”

Such was the commentary of one of his fair countrywomen on his services in his first Congress.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THIRTY-FIFTH CONGRESS.

1857-1859.

COLFAX AND WHEELER.—EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON CURRENT EVENTS.—THE FREE-STATE PARTY IN KANSAS CARRY THE LEGISLATURE.—THE LECOMPTON CONSTITUTION.—CONGRESS ORGANIZED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.—ON THE INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.—ATTITUDE AND RECORD.—ATTEMPT TO ADMIT KANSAS UNDER AN ALIEN CONSTITUTION.—DEFECTION OF DOUGLAS.—CONFIDENTIAL CONFERENCES WITH DOUGLAS.—DOUGLAS AND BUCHANAN DIFFER BUT SLIGHTLY.—COLFAX SPEAKS AGAINST THE LECOMPTON INIQUITY.—RENOMINATED, HIS OPPONENT AVOIDS A JOINT CANVASS.—“A PROUD PERSONAL TRIUMPH.”—VOTES FOR THE ADMISSION OF OREGON.—TENDENCY OF THE TIMES, EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.—AGAINST LAND-GRABBING, ESPECIALLY TO EXTEND SLAVERY.—THE SLAVE POWER CRUMBLES IN THIS CONGRESS.

UPON the adjournment, *sine die*, of the Thirty-fourth Congress, Mr. Colfax resumed his editorial duties, announcing that he had associated Mr. Alfred Wheeler with him, in both the editing and publishing of the *Register*. The paper would be found in its humble sphere, he said, faithful to the rights of freedom, although Presidents and Senates, Courts and Cabinets, should combine to crush them out. For eleven years, less occasional absences, he had conducted the paper alone, a work as pleasant to him as he trusted the result of it had been to his patrons. Each twelvemonth had seen the circle of its readers enlarge, and now, as for some years past, the *Register* had more subscribers than any weekly paper in the State outside of the capital. During the whole of that long term it had never failed, not even when the office was burned, to appear on the day of publication; and the new firm, Colfax & Wheeler, would endeavor to maintain the same regular-

ity. In the following October they moved the paper into a new brick block on Michigan Street, which Colfax had built, long thereafter called "The Register Building." This arrangement left him more at liberty to answer calls for orations and addresses, which came from far and near. After making three thousand miles in ten days on this duty, he says: "Were home, as we intended, in time to vote, and ready to leave again on another telegraphic call, though we should like more than eight minutes to get ready in, which is all we had on our last trip to New York."

President Pierce's officers in Kansas had been mostly got rid of during the past winter by removal or resignation. On the meeting of the short session of the last Congress, he had nominated a successor to Judge "Jeffries" Lecompte, but the Senate hung up, and finally refused to confirm the nomination. The fraudulent Legislature had held a session, and behaved worse than ever, approving the acts of Judge Lecompte, providing for a constitutional convention to perpetuate its *régime*, and passing over the Governor's veto a bill making resistance to the slave code rebellion, punishable by death.

Simultaneously with Mr. Buchanan's inauguration, the Dred Scott decision was promulgated, declaring the slave a chattel, and slavery existent everywhere, by virtue of the Constitution. On this the editor of the *Register* comments:

"By evident concert with Buchanan—for he refers to it in his inaugural—the five members of the Supreme Bench, who represent but seven millions out of the twenty-one millions of the white people of our land, pronounce a decision striking down the dearest rights of the remaining fourteen millions; proclaiming that slavery has rights paramount to all others, exceeding what Calhoun and his nullifying associates ever claimed for it; and annihilating, at one blow, ordinances, compromises, and the most time-honored principles of our country's fathers."

Meanwhile the troubles long brewing in Utah, growing out of the Mormon scheme to found a State within the existing State, had culminated in the flight of the Federal judges and other officers from Utah Territory. The *Register* remarks upon this:

"The black spot which once a single man's hand could have covered

and perhaps erased has now grown to monstrous proportions ; and the long years it has been allowed to increase, under the protection of squatter sovereignty and Presidential indifference, are, we fear, to be atoned for in the conflict which seems impending and inevitable between the bandit rulers of Utah and the Government of the United States."

When President Pierce retired Governor Geary resigned, and stole out of Kansas, as if in fear of his life. He had been thwarted at every point by the pro-slavery party, and, in violation of pledges, abandoned by the President. Ex-Secretary Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, was appointed, not as an ordinary routine Governor, but as a High Commissioner, to restore order and peace. He remained in the East till the Missourians had secured their convention to form a constitution. They did this with an unscrupulousness, perhaps due to the force of habit ; certainly it was needless, since they knew that the free-State men would take no part in it, as they did not. The new Secretary of the Territory, Frederick P. Stanton, of Tennessee, as well as Governor Walker, when he arrived out, made some vain flourishes in public speeches and interviews, and upon the refusal of the people of Lawrence to pay taxes for the support of the harrying militia, the Governor encamped near the town with six hundred United States dragoons, to overawe them. The town paid no attention to him, and Providence kindly released him from his ridiculous plight by making business for the dragoons in Utah.

The free-State men were now strong enough to command a hearing. Governor Walker assured them that if they would take part in the election of the Territorial Legislature in the autumn, they should do it, so far as he could control it, under the Organic Act, and not under the "bogus laws," and should have a fair show. Their friends in the States, inclusive of Mr. Colfax, advised them to act on this assurance. They accordingly took part in that election, and carried it, in spite of the disfranchisement of half of the counties and an apportionment openly made against them as villainously as it could be. They would still have been beaten, however, if Governor Walker and Secretary

Stanton—a majority of the canvassing board—had not thrown out three thousand fraudulent votes. The *Register* awarded these officers due credit for this, and noted with regret the rumblings of the coming censure of the President. Governor Walker left the Territory at once, and finding later that fair play was no part of the President's policy in Kansas, resigned. For calling the Legislature together in extra session to provide for a fair vote on the (Lecompton) constitution, and to avert civil war, Secretary Stanton, now Acting-Governor, was superseded.

The Pro-Slavery Convention had met at Lecompton in September, formed a constitution, and provided for its submission to the people in December, but in such a form that it could not be rejected. The voter could vote *for it with slavery*, or *for it without slavery*, but in no way could he vote *against it*. The free-State party accordingly held aloof from this farce, and the Missourian interlopers adopted their constitution. But for its shameful support by the President, the free-State men would not have permitted this election. The Legislature, now in free-State hands, also submitted the Lecompton Constitution to the people. In January, 1858, the people defeated it by ten thousand majority.

In September previous citizens of Connecticut addressed a private memorial to the President, remonstrating against the use of the army to enforce invalid laws in Kansas. For his own purposes, and not, perhaps, in the best of taste, the President replied publicly, affirming the doctrine of the Dred Scott decision—that slavery already existed in Kansas, by virtue of the Constitution. "If so," reasoned the *Register*, "it exists in all the States; for wherever the National and State constitutions conflict, the former is paramount. If slavery is a kind of 'property,' so specially recognized by the Constitution that the united voice of a Territory and of Congress, conjoined or separately, cannot prohibit its entrance therein, then there is no power in Kansas, as a State, or in Indiana or Michigan to bar its entrance into them."

The Thirty-fifth Congress convened December 7th, 1857.

On the first ballot for Speaker, James L. Orr, of South Carolina, Administration Democrat, received 128 votes against 84 for Galusha A. Grow, of Pennsylvania, and 13 scattering. A week afterward the committees were announced. Mr. Colfax was assigned to the Committee on Indian Affairs. From Seward, Chase, and Hale, the Republican (Free-Soil) Senators of 1850, the Republican Senators had increased to twenty, for the most part able and true men. On no important committee, and chairman of none, Mr. Colfax was not a very prominent figure in the Thirty-fifth Congress; but he was always in his place, vigilant, firm, courteous, mingling in the debates in Committee of the Whole and in the House on the appropriation bills in the interest of economy; not partisan, but watchful of the increase of executive patronage; making frequent motions looking to reform, and suggestions facilitating the transaction of business. In following him through the record, one gets the impression that, considering his years, position, and surroundings, he could not have borne himself better.

He opposed the issue of Treasury notes without corresponding levies to meet them. Pay as you go, and collect as you pay, he held to be a sounder policy. The grandson of a Revolutionary officer, he could not understand why the Government tolerated the treasonable antics of the Mormon "Prophet;" and strongly supported, if he did not carry through, a resolution offered by Mr. Warren, of Arkansas, inquiring into the Utah war and considering the propriety of excluding from the floor of the House the Delegate from Utah. When Commodore Paulding, taking the President at his word, captured and brought home the pirate, William Walker, and it was proposed to modify or repeal the neutrality laws, so as to encourage piracy for the advantage of slavery, he contended that they ought to be made more rigorous and effective. When it was proposed to pension the survivors of the War of 1812, he successfully opposed the sending of the proposition to that "Tomb of the Capulets," the Committee of the Whole, believing the national honor to be concerned in



smoothing the passage of these veterans to the grave by, at least, the small pittance involved. He urged the reduction of the appropriation for the army in the Deficiency Bill, saying: "When we vote what we are asked to vote, we are held up before the country as extravagant; and when we vote to reduce the estimates, because that is the only way to infuse economy into the public service, we are denounced for stopping the wheels of government." He moved a proviso to the clause providing for the expenses of Utah, "repealing all laws of said Territory authorizing or tolerating polygamy, or the collection of tithes for the benefit or maintenance of any religious organization." When the bill appropriating four millions for the collection of the revenue was under consideration, he moved to reduce it to three millions, demonstrating very clearly and compactly—the total revenue being but forty millions—the extravagance of paying ten per cent for its collection, which, he pointed out, was an increase for this purpose of one hundred per cent since 1850. He offered an amendment to the Post Office Bill, largely reducing the appropriation, and abolishing the franking privilege to meet a part of the reduction. Since nothing could be got for the improvement of rivers and harbors, he urged the discontinuance of the improvement of the grounds south of the White House.

On the other hand, he contended for the increase of the appropriation for the procuring of cuttings and seeds, and supported the creation of a new bureau in the Post Office Department on account of the great increase of business, saying that no one could be more jealous of the increase of executive patronage or of superfluous office-holders, or more anxious to reduce the cost of administration, especially in these times of bankruptcy, when we were running on shin-plasters, but that he felt it equally a duty, whenever a clear case of necessity could be shown, to establish a new post-office or post route, a new bureau for a department, or a proper officer for one already existing. In all of his work one is struck with the fulness of his preparation, with the facts and figures he crowded into small

space upon which to base his arguments, with the reasonableness of his action, whether he opposed, supported, or proposed.

His ideal may doubtless be seen in the eulogies he pronounced upon Senator James Bell, of New Hampshire, and Senator Josiah J. Evans, of South Carolina, who died during this session. Opposed in politics as he and the South Carolinian Senator were, a genuine friendship existed between them. Speaking to the usual resolutions of condolence, at the request of the South Carolina delegation, he said :

“ Seeking rather those things in which we agreed than those on which we were born to differ, I learned to know and value him. Rarely have I known one so full of all those kindly sentiments which win the affectionate regard of his associates, and bind them to him with almost the love of women. Rarely has it been my good fortune to enjoy the confidence of one whose friendship was so full of heart, whose heart was so free from guile, whose mind was so devoid of bitterness and prejudice, whose bearing was so manly and yet so gentle, and who in the very fulness of years retained the cheerful tone and the genial spirits of youth. He seemed to me like one of the Patriarchs, cast in the olden mould ; like one who, in the days of the Revolution, would have been ranked a worthy associate of those noble yet unassuming men who exhibited their heroism without boasting, and were willing to give their lives for their country without a sigh.”

Of Senator Bell he said :

“ Always kind and considerate in the expression of his opinions, always charitable in his judgments, always tolerant in his discussions, he participated in the scenes of a stormy session without sharing in its acerbities ; he moved in a heated atmosphere without inflaming his own judgment ; he adhered faithfully to his own opinions without denunciation of his opponents ; and while others, on all sides, warmed as the sharp rivalry of contending sentiments progressed, he remained calm and serene. His popularity was of that kind which Mansfield said was alone valuable—which ran after, instead of being run after by its recipient. He was always a friend to the poor, their frequent counsellor, their voluntary and unpaid attorney, their generous contributor. He had no enemies, for he trespassed on no man's rights and warred with no man's preferences ; but performing his own duties in private life, and bearing his own testimony in public life, as he felt that his conscience and his judgment required him to do, he left all others equally free to be guided by the same monitors. Indeed, his character seems to have been formed

in exquisite union with that model laid down by the Apostle James—' first pure, then peaceable ; gentle and easy to be entreated ; full of mercy and good fruits ; without partiality and without hypocrisy.' "

The great political struggle of the session was, on the part of the Administration, to force Kansas into the Union under a constitution which she had repudiated ; on the part of the Republicans and of Senator Douglas and his followers to defeat this. Early in the session Douglas declared, in a long and earnest speech, that no appeal should shake his purpose to oppose this scheme to defraud the people of Kansas of their just power to ratify or reject the constitution under which they were to live, and that even if it divided the party, he should not falter. Naturally, Republicans sympathized with him in this stand, and for a time earnest efforts were made to bring him to the Republican position, and with strong hopes of success. He had the largest personal following of any man in the country, and, in view of the hundreds of prominent Democrats who had become Republicans, the undertaking seemed less vain than it proved.

A week after Senator Douglas's speech, of which Mr. Greeley said, " a million copies should be distributed among Democrats by Republicans," Messrs. Colfax and Burlingame had an interview with him, from a memorandum of which, made by Mr. Colfax, the following is taken :

" Douglas declared his determination to follow the principles laid down in his recent speech in the Senate, no matter where they led him ; was convinced that Jeff Davis and others of the Southrons were really for Disunion, and wished an opportunity to break up the Union ; that they hoped and worked to unite the South ; that their efforts must be resisted ; that their course in the end might compel the formation of a great constitutional Union party. He confessed he had not expected to see such opposition to the simple demand for justice he had made for the people of Kansas, but should maintain his position inflexibly, making all else subservient to it, even if it drove him to private life. . . . He said our true policy was to put the Disunionists in such a position that when the breach was made, as it would be, they would be in the position of insurgents, not we, as they desired should be the case ; so that, they being the rebels, the army and the power of the nation would be against them. Colfax said he confessed to having had the strongest prejudice against Douglas, politically, and he had had no confidence that Douglas would

take his present position ; but that he, like Douglas, made this the paramount question, dwarfing all other issues ; that Douglas had the opportunity to place himself in the most commanding position of any statesman in the nation ; that he could be the 'Silas Wright' of his party, and could conquer the prejudices of his enemies. But he believed that Douglas would be forced out of his party if he persisted in his present course. He [Colfax] made no committals respecting the Presidency or future affiliations, except that he was with those who were for justice to the people of Kansas ; and that, though he was no believer in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, he was for compelling the party which passed the Nebraska Bill to stand up to its principles of popular sovereignty, when they inured, as now, if fairly carried out, for freedom."

Other Republican leaders—Messrs. Banks, Grow, Henry Winter Davis, Henry Wilson—were invited to join in these friendly approaches to Douglas, and they did so ; and Colfax at once took Greeley and the editors of the *Chicago Press & Tribune*, Mr. Joseph Medill and Dr. Ray, into his confidence. His letters on the subject were probably destroyed as soon as read, because of their confidential nature ; but many of their letters to him are extant, and they throw a vivid light on some aspects of those times. Mr. Medill was a Lincoln man, but he admitted the advantage of bringing Douglas, if possible, to the Republican position, or even to real "squatter sovereignty." In that case he saw not how the Northern people could be prevented from accepting him as their leader. Dr. Ray had no confidence in Douglas. "I think I see his tracks all over our State ; they point only in one direction ; not a single toe is turned toward the Republican camp. Watch him, use him, but do not trust him—not an inch." Mr. Greeley's idea was to sustain him in the Democratic Party rather than to detach him from it ; and after he had elected him Senator over Lincoln (in 1858), and was heartily anathematized for it by the Illinois Republicans, he was still of the same opinion—that it was due to Douglas, and was not only right, but good policy. He writes Colfax, May 25th :

"Of course Douglas goes back. I have for some time seen that—the question is as to his *staying* back. First, will he ? Second, can he ? He

has got to take a far-back seat in the kingdom if he does. But no matter what he does. Let us have the satisfaction of knowing that *we* have treated him and his friends justly, fairly, honorably. There will be more years after 1858."

Mr. Colfax writes Mr. Matthews in January, 1858 :

"It looks as though the Democratic Party was going to be hopelessly divided and blown to atoms. I shall be surprised if Douglas is not at open and bitter war with the Administration before the session is over. The split *may* be healed, but I don't see how, for the Administration has already commenced war on him, and he has a perfect appetite for fighting those who fight him."

For a time Douglas must have expected a permanent rupture between himself and the Administration, although he always claimed that a Democrat could oppose the Lecompton outrage without in the least impairing his standing in the Democratic Party.

February 21st Colfax writes his mother and Mr. Matthews :

"I wrote you once before about Douglas ; and I do not wonder that it surprised you that we had confidential interviews together, considering our former bitter antagonism. He is progressing very rapidly in the right direction, and I think by the fall, if he goes on as well hereafter as he has up to this time, will do to be baptized. We have had a number of talks together, and the other day, while he was drawing up his report, he sent word to Grow and me that he wanted to have a private talk with us that evening after nine P.M., when we would not be disturbed by callers. We were there two hours and a half, and he would scarcely let us go, we had so much to talk about. We talked over the whole future that lies before us politically, and he did not attempt to deny that he did not expect to act with his old party in that future, but with us. It will surprise you still more when I tell you that he is for my re-election ! He had told General Wilson so previously, but he told me directly, and said he had sent word out to the district that his friends must not attempt to nominate an anti-Lecompton Democrat for Congress, like Eddy or Walker, but to let Fitch put a Lecompton man on the track, and then bury him under an unparalleled majority. This was certainly liberal, considering that he asks no pledges that he shall be re-elected or supported in Illinois. He says if the people don't want him, or if his name proves a barrier to the union of the anti-Lecomptonites, he is willing to retire to private life ; but he wants to make this fight against the Lecompton villainy and the men who indorse it one that shall live in history. I only give these things to you to show the strange evolutions of politics, and what strange

bedfellows its whirligigs bring together. You must not, of course, repeat them to any one, nor let any of the children do it."

It may seem strange that Douglas did not become a Republican at this juncture; but, in truth, outside of the honest submission of the Lecompton Constitution to a vote of the people of Kansas, Douglas and the President stood on the same platform. The Republicans held that Congress could and should exclude slavery from the Territories. Douglas, equally with Buchanan, denied both the power and the duty. The Republicans held that the people of a Territory, through Legislative enactment, could exclude slavery from that Territory.<sup>1</sup> Douglas, by indorsing the political doctrine of the Dred Scott decision, equally with Buchanan, denied this; denied to the people of a Territory the right or power to determine whether their civilization should rest on free or slave labor; and repudiated the axiom—old as the Government—that freedom is national, slavery sectional. The Republicans held that the Constitution regarded slaves as persons. The Supreme Bench, Douglas, and Buchanan held slaves to be chattels, property, not persons at all, in any sense of the word, although their masters were allowed representation for them. The Republicans held that slavery was against natural law, against the common law, could exist only by virtue of statute law. Douglas, equally with Buchanan, held that "slaves being property, when carried into a Territory the property quality still stuck to them, like the shirt of Nessus—was kept on them by the Constitution—an awful proposition, shocking to the moral sense of mankind." While they agreed on these fundamental principles, the difference between Douglas and the President, respecting the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, amounted to nothing.

As was therefore to be expected, even before the Lecompton Constitution had been juggled aside, a convention was held in Illinois by the friends of Douglas, which

1. They denied the right, however, of the people of Kansas, or of any other Territory north of the Missouri Compromise line, to *adopt* slavery, because it was soil perpetually dedicated to freedom.

claimed to represent the regular "National Democracy," denounced all others as "Danites," or "Black Republicans," and nominated Douglas for Senator on a platform repelling to Republicans. Upon this he began to "crawl" at Washington. The Illinois Republicans met in June, and nominated Abraham Lincoln for Senator. Two weeks later Douglas returned home, and opened the canvass with a pro-slavery speech, unqualifiedly approving the infamous political doctrine of the Dred Scott decision. With Greeley's assistance, Douglas was barely re-elected Senator, after the most exciting canvass ever witnessed in the State.

In November following, in an interview with Dr. Ray, he admitted that his late contest with the Republicans was a blunder, but asserted that it was their fault. They had endeavored to make a mere tool of him, he said. Mr. Medill writes Colfax :

"For the future, he declared that he had no truce or terms to offer the Administration ; that he would fight a slave code [for the Territories] in any shape it might be presented ; that he would vote to repeal the 'English Act,' for the admission of Kansas regardless of population, for an increase of the tariff, for pure squatter sovereignty, for the ejection of Fitch and Bright, 'bogus Senators' from Indiana, whom he damned most bitterly. He said he was not a candidate before the Charleston Convention, did not expect to be, did not intend to fit himself to be, and that he would pursue the same course he had done toward the National Democracy. He said that Wise wrote the slave code article in the *Richmond Enquirer* to head him [Douglas] off with the South, and to reinstate himself [Wise] with the oligarchy, but he didn't care ; that he was still a young man, only forty-five years old, and could wait until the signs came right ; that his friends who were throwing up their caps for him as the next President were a set of jackasses ; that there were a hundred hidden rocks in his stream that they had not the sagacity to see ; that as soon as he set foot in Washington traps would be set for him by both parties ; test questions would be sprung that would either forever sever him from the Southern Democracy or cut him off from the sympathy and support of the anti-Lecompton [anti-slavery was the idea] men of the North. But he was going straight ahead, and consequences and gin-traps might take care of themselves ; that he was secure in his seat until 1864, and he was not going to compromise himself with the people of Illinois or stultify his past course for the purpose of conciliating the Fire-eaters, whom he described as narrow and vindictive in their opinions.

"Such was the general scope of the conversation. You can draw your own conclusions from it. He expressed himself much gratified with the interview, and invited another on his return from New Orleans. He thanked us for preserving inviolate what had passed *between him and you* that came to our knowledge, and admitted his weighty obligations to you for preserving the seal of secrecy on what had passed between you. I think that you can commence with him pretty nearly where you left off. He will talk more freely than ever. My private opinion is that he will never be reinstated in the Democratic Church, and that he will gradually drift *toward* our side, and finally be compelled to act with us in 1860."

Three months afterward Medill writes again, to wit : "What a beautiful convert Douglas has turned out to be ! sneaking and crawling into the Buchanan caucuses after he had been read out, kicked out, snubbed, and spit upon by the Buck Africans !"

What else was there left for Douglas to do ? The time had long since passed, if such time had ever been, when he could have brought to the Republicans a following which would have forced an alliance. But by holding with his party, he perhaps served the ends of freedom better than he could have done by leaving his party. He seems, indeed, to have been the instrument of Destiny in bringing on the revolution ; first, by proposing and carrying the repeal of the Missouri Compromise ; secondly, by defeating Lecompton, and thus preventing the precipitation of civil war by the Northwest in behalf of Kansas,<sup>1</sup> in which case the slave power would have had the prestige of legitimacy, and the partisans of freedom the onus of treason

1. The feeling is indicated by the following : Dr. Ray writes Colfax, January 5th, 1858 : "You will see that the internal affairs of Kansas are threatening. Is there no way to disband the army of the United States—to tie up the strings of the public purse—to raise hell generally ? The country will justify the most radical measures." And Medill writes, December 22d, 1857 : "Since writing the foregoing the late news from Kansas has come to hand. Things look bloody and belligerent up there. I hope claret may be drawn. The thing will never be well settled until the free-State men thoroughly thresh the Border Ruffians, troops and all. Public opinion is such in this State that if the necessity comes, the Governor can call the Legislature together, and it will vote men and money to support the people of Kansas in their right of self-government. Nineteen men out of every twenty in Illinois are in favor of that doctrine. Iowa and Wisconsin are all right and *ripe*, too, for a pretty muss. Our friends in Missouri are nearly a match for the Fire-eaters there—perhaps more than a match. I say, let the thing be fought out, and now is as good a time as any. But if Douglas falters in this crisis, he is a *dead* man. Now is his time to make a ten-strike, and redeem the great blunder he made three years ago. Tell him, and *rub* in the idea."



and rebellion ; thirdly, by controlling, through his friends, the Charleston Convention, forcing the slave interest to bolt, and allowing Lincoln to be run in as a minority President. His was the Trojan horse, his the acts that forced the issue, and he redeemed all his errors by ringing true when the crisis finally came.

Early in February (1858) President Buchanan transmitted a special message to Congress, urging the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, a copy of which accompanied the message. In the House a great parliamentary struggle ended in its reference to a special committee of fifteen, with instructions to investigate the whole subject. Mr. Speaker Orr appointed a majority of Lecompton men on this committee, and so the committee refused to investigate it.<sup>1</sup> Thereupon the House would not allow the committee to report at all, and Alexander H. Stephens, chairman of the committee, published their report. Debate on the subject began March 19th, the House being in Committee of the Whole on the Deficiency Bill. Three gentlemen had spoken on each side, when, on March 20th, Colfax got the floor, and opened a set speech, as follows :

“ Mr. Chairman, when the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. Barksdale] was upon the floor a little while ago, he wished to know whether if Kansas came here with a constitution, adopted by her people, recognizing slavery, I would vote for her admission under that constitution. I tell him now, emphatically, that I would not. When the Missouri Compromise—that time-honored compact—was repealed, I declared then, and I maintain it now, that by no vote of mine should that repeal ever be carried out to what I feared was intended to be the result ; and therefore I would refuse to admit Kansas as a slave State in any contingency.”

He cited the weighty denunciation by great Democrats of the disregard of the expressed will of the people in the New Jersey election cases of 1839, and compared their stand

1. Mr. Greeley writes Colfax : “ Orr has acted like a fool in making a Lecompton committee. I shall yell at him like an ox in a cornfield. But I guess it will prove all for the best. It will *harden* the Douglasites.”

then with the contempt of the will of the people of Kansas, exhibited by leading Democrats now. He gave a condensed history of the fraudulent elections in Kansas which had culminated in this infamous Lecompton Constitution and the more infamous attempt to impose it on a people who detested it. He demonstrated by incontrovertible evidence that the President's Message belied the history of the case, as the President had falsified his word of a year ago, given through Governor Walker, that the Kansas people should be protected from fraud or violence in voting on this constitution. He exposed the monstrous features of the instrument itself, aside from its pro-slavery character, and the methods of its creation and attempted imposition upon Kansas. He reduced to an absurdity the arguments of the President and his committees and champions, by citing the case of polygamous Utah, which was at that time applying the very principles the President and his friends were promulgating, by engaging in actual rebellion. "Utah," said he, "had merely, in the language of the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. Lamar], interposed between your laws and her people the broad and radiant shield of State sovereignty, and attempted to back up her position and pretensions by force of arms." The President professed to be tired of the troubles in Kansas, and wanted peace. "How easy the way to peace, with Justice for guide! Release Kansas from the grasp of the despoiler, and let her go free! In the language of an eloquent orator of my own State, I say: 'When she comes to us, let it be as a willing bride, and not as a fettered, manacled slave.'"

The speech was spoken of by the press and the Washington letter-writers as the best delivered in the House during the session. Mr. Greeley said it contained more new points than any yet made in the discussion.<sup>1</sup> Even

1. Mr. Colfax writes his mother, March 17th: "Besides everything else, I have been franking about two thousand speeches for St. Joseph County, having hired a clerk to direct them, and have finished the preparation of a speech which I will deliver in a week or so if I can get the floor, and which, as I made a hit two years ago, I have had to prepare with some labor and care, so as not to entirely disappoint friends, who would expect to find some new points in it—a very hard job to accomplish."

the opposition paper in his own town was moved to thank him for his services against the Lecompton iniquity.

On the 4th of March he addressed a letter to the Indiana State Convention, pointing out the danger of the admission of Kansas, and urging popular demonstrations against it. He deprecated the tendency of the Northern people, even in great crises like the present, to array themselves in factions, seeking rather to define more sharply the points on which they disagreed than to lock shields in defence of the imperilled rights of free men. He insisted that all should take the field together, with a platform higher than party, "resolved to consign to political oblivion every man who aids or abets this gigantic crime. Such a stand would be powerfully felt in the struggle here in Washington." Nothing of the mere partisan in this letter, there is much of the statesman of high aims and character, as there is in his comments on the attitude of many Republicans toward Douglas. The duty nearest us, said he, is to crush out the Lecompton swindle. Though disapproving the previous course of Douglas, he welcomed his powerful aid in the pending crisis. It was not material whose plan should be adopted for the settlement of details. "Let us join together heartily to prevent this great crime, if possible; it will be easy enough to agree afterward upon some fair way to give Kansas her free will."

The struggle resulted in sending the constitution back to the people of Kansas indirectly, in the guise of an ordinance granting lands, an expedient due to the political genius of Mr. W. H. English, of Indiana.<sup>1</sup> If they adopted this ordinance, Kansas was to be declared a State of the Union by proclamation of the President; if not, Kansas was to remain a Territory until she should have population enough to entitle her to a Representative in Congress. Colfax regarded this as a continuation of the same atro-

1. Mr. Greeley writes Colfax, April 21st: "Don't be frightened at the looks of English's bill. It is a vicious blunderbuss, and will kick over those who stand at the breach. Of course the earnest anti-Lecomptonites must all oppose it, but if it is passed, I shall not shed a tear. The Kansans will dispose of it, and then what is there in the way of the Leavenworth Constitution? Be steady at Washington, and all's well."

cious policy, and more infamous than anything yet, because of its indirection, its discrimination against freedom, and its proffer of a vast gift of lands as a bribe for the acceptance of slavery. It proceeded on the theory that the Kansas people were idiots. But it was the best that could be done, perhaps, and it turned out well enough.

Before Congress adjourned it was understood that the sitting Member from the Ninth District would be nominated for the Thirty-sixth Congress. "We stated some weeks ago," said the *Rensselaer Gazette*, "that we saw no use in a convention, as Mr. Colfax has no opposition; but, since reading his speech on Kansas, we desire a convention, to show our honored Representative how deeply fixed he is in the affections of his constituents." On his return home in June he was received with addresses and other demonstrations of welcome by the people of South Bend. The *Register* of July 8th gives an account of the celebration of Independence Day, at which he was the orator, with ten thousand in attendance—a large gathering for 1858. It measured the growth of the country and of the speaker since the celebration at Carlisle Hill in 1839, which boasted an attendance of seven hundred, and which the future Congressman reported for the county paper as "Casparus," the given name of his great-great-grandfather. The same issue of the *Register* contains the proceedings of the Republican Convention of the Ninth District, which renominated him for Congress by acclamation, "amid thunders of applause," adopted resolutions approving his course in Congress, denouncing the extravagance of the Administration and its Lecompton policy, and listened to a speech from the candidate. Urging his renomination, in common with many other journals, the *New York Tribune* said :

"No man in either House has, during the last three sessions, been a more indefatigable or a more effective worker than he; no man whom Indiana has sent to the House these ten years has achieved a higher distinction or a more general esteem. Several of his speeches have been among the very best made in the House since he took a seat on its floor, and have been most serviceable throughout the Union."

Senator Douglas returned home about this time. Received with unprecedented demonstrations of welcome at Chicago, in a responsive speech he denounced Lecompton as a fraud and the English Act for discriminating between free and slave constitutions, approved the Dred Scott decision; said that he cared not whether slavery was voted down or up in Kansas, and that he would canvass the State as a Democrat, in opposition to the principles of the Republicans. Mr. Lincoln had spoken at the State Convention of the Republicans, saying: "Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

To this conclusion five years of agitation to put down slavery agitation had brought Mr. Lincoln and all thoughtful Republicans. The logic of the Dred Scott decision was that slavery existed, by virtue of the Constitution, wherever that instrument was recognized as paramount, whether Territory or State. The South had the advantage, because its direct pecuniary, political, and social interest in the question formed a bond of union. The North was divided and subdivided. The probabilities were, at that time, that this doctrine would become that of the majority, and ultimately, and at no distant day, be realized in fact as well as recognized in law. Let us not forget what freedom owes to the men who set themselves to stem the tide of this desperate tendency, with all the disinterestedness and firmness of apostles and martyrs. On the prairies of Illinois, in 1858, the lists were set, and the two great champions met. The stake was the future of mankind, the contest an intellectual duel, rarely if ever equalled. But other champions met in similar lists that year, as they had in previous years, and rendered equally as courageous and zealous if less conspicuous service.

Of these was the Representative of the Ninth Congressional District of Indiana. For this race the Democrats pitted against him Colonel John C. Walker, of the *La*

*Porte Times*, born and raised in La Porte; a Whig who, in the break-up of parties, found himself a Democrat, and was looked upon by his friends as the very flower of Indiana Democracy. His platform approved of the Cincinnati platform and the Administration of President Buchanan. Douglas had failed to obtain the nomination of a Leocompton Democrat. The people of Kansas, early in August, rejected the English proposition, and with it the Leocompton Constitution. This "bone of contention" within the party removed, there was a sort of Democratic revival; several new Democratic papers were started in the district, and it was determined to remand Mr. Colfax to private life. Speaking of it in after years, Colfax said that "Walker succeeded in infusing both hope and zeal into the hearts of his political followers; and he failed to win from a lack of votes, not from lack of work." The candidates could not agree on arrangements for a joint canvass, and each took his own way.<sup>1</sup> Beginning on the 5th of August, in less than sixty working days Colfax travelled twenty-four hundred and thirty-four miles, and made one hundred and one speeches, of probably three hours each—three hundred hours of continuous speaking within ten weeks—a task that Hercules would have declined. To the speaker something was involved of greater moment than the mere glory of going to Congress.

Hon. Jasper Packard, who represented the district in three Congresses after Colfax was elected Vice-President, writes the author: "It was in 1858 that I first heard Mr. Colfax speak, and neither before nor since have I ever been so completely enchained by a speaker." Judge Stanfield, whose obsequies were celebrated as these lines were written, said to the author:

1. July 29th he writes his mother: "The *Register* will tell you all about the failure of the joint canvass. Walker was determined not to go into it, and *his* offer was a blind, knowing that I would not agree to seal my mouth while his hounds were baying on my track, as they will be this fall. Instead of thirteen speeches, as he proposes, I expect to make eighty or one hundred, if I have health and strength. I fear my throat; but if it stands, I will canvass the district *twice* over—once *after* my defamers—and speak twice a day, too. They are determined to beat me at all hazards, and I suppose will have two thousand railroad hands and swamp-land ditchers in the district. But they will not have my scalp, after all, if I only have my health."

" He just carried the people away. There was not a more pleasing or more powerful speaker in the West. He had no loads to carry, nothing to explain, no drawbacks. The women and children loved him. He was very popular before the people, always. His temper could not be ruffled. He seized the telling things in the situation by instinct, and no one could present them more clearly, or more of them in the same time. Often he was eloquent, especially in his earlier years. We used to go canvassing together when he was a mere boy. At first he told me he had a speech prepared and committed that would take four hours to deliver. It was divided into sections, and he used them as occasion served or required. He never failed before an audience, and never seemed to dread the ordeal, as most of us do."

None of his speeches in this canvass were printed. One of them would have filled two issues of his paper, and there was no great city in his district, with a metropolitan press, to catch and transmit them to future times. The *Register* said: "Mr. Colfax spoke three hours and ten minutes. His speech was an able and eloquent vindication of Republican principles and of his course in Congress; a convincing exposure of the wrongs and extravagance of the Administration; and a triumphant refutation of the miserable slanders which have been heaped upon him by some of his political enemies."

Occasionally he came in contact with his adversaries. At one place Colonel May, a supporter of Walker, professed to read something from Colfax's paper, and then made it the theme of reprobation. Mr. Colfax had given Colonel May five minutes at his meeting in the morning, and when the Colonel finished, he asked and was granted the return of the favor, and the paper. Holding it up, he showed the audience that May had cut out a part of the article. Drawing a *Register* from his pocket, he read the whole article, and won nine rousing cheers from Colonel May's crowd, as he stepped down at the end of his five minutes. The fight against him was mainly personal, but it was idle. Colonel Walker's paper, the *La Porte Times*, was especially bitter, misrepresenting and slandering him as a man and a Representative. He and Walker met at last before thousands of people in South Bend. In his opening Walker denied that his paper had traduced his opponent. Follow-

ing, Colfax first recited Walker's denial, then drew a lot of the papers from his pocket, and tossing them one by one among the crowd, told them to read for themselves. Walker sprang up, and approached him as if to use personal violence ; but he was restrained, and, Colfax paying no attention to him, he sat down again.<sup>1</sup>

The *Indiana State Journal* pronounced this " the hardest contest in the whole State," adding :

" And there, as might have been expected, the Republican ticket gained handsomely, even over the triumphant vote of 1854. It is the only district in which the State ticket gains over that contest, although both wings of the Democracy were united there. The whole State was filled with predictions by our opponents that the Ninth District would certainly be redeemed ; but while they were boasting Colfax was speaking every day except Sundays from July to October. The result is seen in the brilliant victory, despite hundreds of imported voters and the dozen Democrats constantly speaking throughout the district."

He ran ahead of the State ticket in every county, winning by 1931 majority in a total poll of 27,151.

Hon. E. B. Washburne writes him, October 15th :

" I congratulate you on being through the woods. Though the ruffians were making a desperate dash at you, I was satisfied you would come in. But your overwhelming majority surprises and gratifies me. You have achieved not only a political but a proud personal triumph. I think they will permit you to pass hereafter."

After his own election, at the request of the Illinois Republican Committee, he made a dozen speeches in Illinois, taking no direct part in the Senatorial contest, confining himself to the advocacy of Republican principles. He still retained a lively sense of the vital aid of Douglas in defeating the Lecompton conspiracy, but he did not coincide with Greeley in thinking he ought to be re-elected

1. "The offensive article was written by a man in Walker's employ as editor and publisher. Walker had full knowledge of it, but failed to realize his responsibility till Colfax charged it. He denied it, probably meaning direct connection with it. His purpose was not to stab or shoot Colfax, but to push him off the platform, as we heard him say directly after the occurrence. He expressed the utmost gratification at the restraint put upon him by his friends, as he believed it saved a bloody riot. He was a very impulsive but a kind-hearted man."—*Elkhart Review*.

He raised and led a regiment to the field during the war, but soon resigned, and became afterward a leading spirit among the Knights of the Golden Circle, on account of which he was forced to fly the country



Senator over a Republican. Irrespective of his former relations with Douglas, or of any hopes concerning him he may still have entertained, non-interference in the Senatorial contest was the proper course for him in his judgment, and it was entirely consistent with his character. Writing editorially of the election of Douglas, he says : " A voter in Illinois, I would most decidedly have supported Lincoln ; between Buchanan and Douglas, I would have been as decidedly for Douglas." <sup>1</sup> " Everywhere in my own canvass," he continued, " I avowed my utter and inflexible hostility to the further extension of slavery ; my desire to consecrate every acre of our national domain to the uses and purposes of free men and free labor ; and my unqualified repudiation of the monstrous assumptions of the Supreme Court in the political opinions published by them in the Dred Scott case."

A banquet was given to Hon. N. P. Banks, in Waltham, Mass., in November. Colfax was present, and spoke in his turn. A correspondent of the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* writes of him :

" He speaks with great elegance and force, as well as directness and perspicuity. There is more of ornament and figurative expression than our best Eastern political speakers use, but the popular effect is correspondingly greater. He must be, indeed, a hard man to beat on the hustings, with his rich, glowing, nervous style of speaking, since he adds to this the most perfect familiarity with political history. He has been here [Boston] with his wife this week, and has received much attention from the Republicans. No other man of thirty-five years has so high and honorable a position in our national politics as he now holds. As a consequence, he is marked for bitter opposition by the pro-slavery Democrats, and the most determined efforts to defeat his re-election for a third term were made in the recent Indiana campaign.<sup>2</sup> No other district in

1. From a speech in the House : " In going to the different places appointed for me to speak, the Buchanan men, at nearly every one of them, sent to me written questions, asking me if I had not been the bearer of a letter from Judge Douglas to Mr. Blair, in relation to the Senatorial election in Missouri, and asking me to answer them while on the stand. To these I responded that whatever conversations were had between Judge Douglas and myself were had at his own private house, under his own roof ; my self-respect forbade me to divulge them save at Judge Douglas's demand."—*Cong. Globe, 36th Congress, 1st Session.*

2. To Mr. Matthews he writes from Washington, in December : " You know Frank, Jr. [Blair], came into my district voluntarily, and made four speeches in his desire to help me, but went away, saying, that with the enthusiasm he saw manifested for me, the Administration could not send enough money or men into my district to beat me."

the country has probably witnessed such an expenditure of intellectual and physical effort."

Undoubtedly, thus early, influences originating in the national political capital were felt in this comparatively obscure and unimportant Congressional District, seeking to put an end to Mr. Colfax's career. Hon. Thomas A. Hendricks, then Commissioner of the General Land Office, Lieutenant-Governor Hammond, Joseph E. McDonald, and sundry lesser oracles were sent into the district to talk against him. This opposition grew in bitterness till its object was dead, and then it did not altogether cease. "Reading had made him a full man, writing a correct man, talking a ready man," nature a gentleman. His command of all his powers and knowledge was extraordinary. His capacity seemed equal to any demand upon it, his character was without a flaw, his influence with the people promised to become unbounded. It was wise policy on the part of those to whom he was constitutionally opposed to consign him to obscurity if they could, and the sooner the better.

Remonstrating in 1860 with a correspondent of a leading New England newspaper, then as now famous for furnishing ammunition to its adversaries with which to attack its friends, Mr. Colfax says :

"The fact is, I am hardened pretty well by long experience to the abuse of the enemy, but the strictures of friends pain me as much as in more youthful days, especially when they are of a character to be caught up and echoed by opponents. You do not know what canvasses I have had to go through with at every election. It seems as though all the devils were let loose on me; and if you think this an exaggeration, ask any one you meet who has lived in my district during a Congressional campaign for the last six years. No such exertions are made anywhere else within my knowledge. Fortunately, I have always run largely ahead of my ticket, several hundred Democrats voting for me each time; but this makes the hate of the leaders more intense and their efforts more desperate. But for the work done in my district by my friends they would, however, overwhelm me, for if new-comers—and one fourth of our people are new voters at each election, the emigration and immigration both being large—believed a tithe of what my enemies say about me, they would not vote for me for fence-viewer. But this is 'shouldering my crutch,' like the old soldier, and fighting my battles over again. Let it

pass. I would not have alluded to it except to show you *why* I felt sensitive to the stings of your pointed pen."

Passing through New York he attended a meeting in behalf of the People's College, and spoke a good word for education. "That mysterious receptacle of knowledge, the mind, could never be filled," said he. "The more you pour into it, the more it will hold, and it imparts continually without loss." He passed in review the great men of the present and past who had educated themselves and become famous. "It would be one of the most pleasant acts of my life to vote lands to every State to establish colleges in sufficient numbers to educate all."

The short session of Congress was not important. He writes Mr. Matthews :

"Alexander H. Stephens, the great Southern leader, told me this morning that he expected we would take all the Territories, and I told him we should, God helping us. They feel beaten on the old issue, and this accounts for their 'bloviation' on Cuba, Mexico, Central America, and 'manifest destiny.' If we are prudent in 1860 we shall break their wand of power effectually and happily."

Again :

"My theory is that this country is a great and glorious one, and that the Union should be perpetual. But, first of all, and at all hazards, I think that our primal duty is to do right, and leave the consequences to Him who commands us to abstain from wrong-doing. I don't think I shall speak at this session ; but if I do it will be to rebuke and condemn this thieving, aggrandizing, 'manifest destiny' tendency to steal land—coveting Cuba, Mexico, Central America, etc. It will not be popular, for it is our besetting sin as a race, since our Saxon fathers came out of the woods of Europe, to hanker for land as a burglar does for gold. But it will be right, and that will be far better. I trust you concur with me in this."

To Mr. Bowles he writes in December, 1858 :

"You see that your idea of the South wanting peace and quiet has not been confirmed. With you, I have been astonished at the reopening of the war on Douglas, and the fight the slave power intends to make on all who do not succumb. They are getting new issues ready. A couple of Alabamians told me to-day they had no confidence in Hammond now! Still, if Douglas submits to tearing off his epaulettes, and appeals to the country only inside of his party, keeping his followers within its bounds, he may save it from the destruction on which it seems

bent, and to which I say 'good speed.' But submission to this intentional insult seems impossible. Stuart has gone back, but Broderick progresses in the right direction, finely."

He resumed his old vigilant watch over the appropriations. Leaving it to others to make set speeches on the extravagance of the Administration, he endeavored to have the estimates reduced, as they were taken up, clause after clause, for consideration. He moved to have Persia struck out of the Diplomatic and Consular Bill, the United States having no representative accredited to Persia, and there being no present necessity for one. This was done. He moved a reduction in the amount appropriated for printing Post-Office blanks, and that the work be given to the lowest responsible bidder after advertising, which was agreed to. When the Navy Bill came up, he moved the authorization of payment for defending suits, if any, brought against Commodore Paulding for his arrest of William Walker. He regarded this act of the Commodore as akin to that of his ancestor, who captured Andre, the British spy. His proposal was ruled out as not germane, and on taking an appeal, the appeal was overruled. Many of his propositions, offered in the form of amendments to the appropriation bills, were ruled out. On one occasion he cited twenty precedents for his action in this respect. But it availed not; then, as now, it was almost the only chance to get anything of a general nature passed at all, and it was not worth much. Supporting a bill reported from his committee, authorizing the issue of land patents to certain Indians, he said: "It ought to be a principle of our Government, so far as it is consistent with the rights of the Indians, to open up the country to settlement and improvement." The bill was rejected, but the country long since came up to the young statesman's position, at least in opinion.

His correspondence during this session is full and interesting. He notes with pain the tendency of the ruling party to carry out the logic of its premises on the subject of slavery, and the gradual yielding of the Northern Democrats. He says:

"We were told that the Missouri Compromise was repealed as a measure of freedom. Then came the long and reckless strife to make Kansas a slave State. Next in order was the Dred Scott decision, declaring that the Constitution carried slavery into the Territories; and now the reopening of the African slave trade is boldly advocated—nay, it is reopened. They are selling a cargo of slaves in Georgia to-day, and a grand jury refuses to indict the officers of a captured slaver. With all this, the attempts to increase the army, to place the war-making power in the hands of the President, to seize Northern Mexico and Central America, the determination to acquire Cuba at any rate, and the vicious striking at every Northern interest. We have fallen on strange times when the solid South in the House and a score of Northern Democrats dare to vote 'No' on a resolution approving existing laws against the African slave trade."

The power of the South in the House had now departed, and it was crumbling in the Senate. Its last stronghold was in the Administration. The Cabinet knew what it wanted, and was resolved to have it. Having failed in Kansas, the South began to contemplate secession in earnest. The President's newspaper organ at the Capital discussed a reported conspiracy in the South to destroy the Union when it could no longer be controlled. Mr. Colfax writes :

"Is it not full time that the government of this country was in the hands of men who, instead of trimming and shrinking before such a conspiracy, would, with Jackson's boldness and self-reliance, rebuke and suppress it? It grows by the license it receives, for its Senators make no secret of their position—that when they can no longer use the Union and the Government in the interest of slavery, both will be valueless to them. The greatest need of this country now is an Administration which will endeavor, in the language of the Constitution, 'to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.'"

He introduced a bill to organize the Territory of "Colona" (now Colorado), where gold had been recently discovered.<sup>1</sup> It was reported from the Committee on Terri-

1. He writes Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, January 24th, 1859 : "I have worked up the Territorial Committee [two thirds bitterly pro-slavery] to recede from their former vote against the new Territory I proposed, and they will now report in favor of it. This is quite a success, as the President was dead against it, openly and earnestly. He doesn't like me or any of my works, and I don't want him to. But the Committee, while reporting it, will put in pro-slavery provisions that we cannot vote for. You cannot imagine the devices of the slave power till you look it in the eye and watch its acts. They decided against my name, which I did not altogether like myself, preferring 'Montana' or 'Centralia,' but the name doesn't matter."

tories in connection with Arizona and Dakota as "Jefferson," but with pro-slavery features in the bills which caused the House to reject them. Oregon was admitted into the Union, the member from the Ninth Indiana voting with fifteen Republicans for admission, all other Republicans voting against it.<sup>1</sup> He writes :

"I never felt a doubt as to the proper course, and any one who hesitates in what he thinks duty requires is not fit to be here. Oregon is now to govern herself, instead of having rulers sent her by pro-slavery Administrations three thousand miles away. The question of admitting a State should not be decided on the politics of her first Senators, since in these times they could hardly be expected to be anything but pro-slavery. Oregon is a free State, however, and it will have to be an extraordinary case which shall cause me to vote against other free States that are to follow."

When the Thirty-fifth Congress met, the friends of the Administration organized it without difficulty. Their pet measures were the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution ; the grant to the President of thirty millions to apply in his discretion toward the acquisition of Cuba ; the lodgment of the war-making power in his hands, so far as Mexico and Central America were concerned ; the establishment of an armed protectorate over Sonora and Chihuahua ; the increase of the rate of postage, and the reissue of twenty millions of Treasury notes. All of them but the reissue of the Treasury notes met the fate of Lecompton, and that was carried through the House only by personal appeals of Cabinet Ministers on the last night of the session. The defeat in Kansas was like a stroke of paralysis to the Administration. Its own Committee of Ways and Means could not secure the passage of any measure for the improvement of the revenue.

1. Mr. Greeley writes him, February 14th, 1859 : "I do think you fifteen bolters ought to be whipped. At least, you ought to have had a full share in the 'Buck and Breck' demonstration of Saturday night, and listened to their speeches on Cuba, expansion, and 'manifest destiny.' It is a great responsibility which a few take when they beat their own party, and I should not like to take it without the best of reasons. But the milk is spilt, and I only hope that Joe Lane and 'Delusion's' votes will beat your Senators. . . . Well, we are going to be defeated in 1860. Everything done this winter in Washington foreshadows it. You have made no good point but passing the Homestead Bill, and that is going to be killed in the Senate, without giving us the benefit of a veto from 'Old Buck.' So good-night to the Republican Party."

The House materially razed the appropriation bills, especially the Navy Bill, upon startling exposures of corruption and profligacy in the administration of the Navy Department. The House resisted the Senate's proposed increase in the rate of postage, the Senate insisted, and so the Post-Office Appropriation Bill failed. To punish the contumacy of the House, the Senate, or the Presidential veto, killed the Agricultural College Bill, the Homestead Bill, and a bill for the improvement of the St. Clair Flats; and the Senate retained the two fraudulent Senators from Indiana, Bright and Fitch, in their seats, notwithstanding the protest of their State. If it was not for the Thirty-sixth Congress, the Thirty-fifth might rank as the most disgraceful and demoralizing and, at the same time, as the most imbecile in our annals.

After the adjournment, but before leaving Washington for home, Colfax wrote Mr. Bowles :

“ You have seen how Congress broke up, Toombs playing over again his ‘ let-discord-reign ’ part in the Speaker’s contest of 1849. I think we have them at a decided disadvantage. Many of our folks wanted our side to revolutionize, ‘ filibuster,’ etc., against the Treasury-note amendment, but we could not have stood on that. They wanted to prevent the Senate’s amendments to our bill being considered, and let it fail from lack of two thirds to take it up. But Morrill, Winter Davis, the Washburnes, Stanton, myself, and others insisted not, exciting their wrath for a while. We wanted the stand on the Senate’s increasing the postage rate, which is far stronger and more defensible for us, and all our folks now acknowledge that it is far better, putting the revolutionary boot, as it did, on our opponents’ legs instead of our own.

“ We have been razeing the appropriation bills more than you suppose, so much that I fear we shall not be able to show the retrenchment we should, next session, especially as we will have to commence with a twenty-million Post-Office deficiency. But our folks got a taste of their power, and they slashed away a million here and another there, without mercy. Not counting the reissue of Treasury notes, which is not an appropriation proper, and leaving out the bill that Toombs and Mason choked to death, the actual appropriations are less than fifty millions.

“ As to *the* vote [on the admission of Oregon], the more I think of it the better I like it. Had we all gone with the crowd, there would have been a million and a half of Republicans all over the land to-day on the defensive, explaining why free-State Representatives rejected a free State, and they would have been explaining till after the Presidential

election, losing votes all the time by their explanations. The Democracy would have recovered much lost ground by appearing to favor admission of a free State, and being foiled in it by the Republicans. Seward's speech in its favor would have been quoted against us as a self-condemnation, and they would have made the people believe that we were not only opposed to slave States, but also to free States, unless they were Republican. I am glad that enough of us had the firmness to stand fast to avert this suicidal policy."



## CHAPTER V.

### THIRTY-SIXTH CONGRESS.

1859-1861.

POLITICS IN 1859.—EDWARD BATES FOR PRESIDENT.—SUCCESS IN 1860 A DUTY.—JOHN BROWN AT HARPER'S FERRY.—EIGHT WEEKS' BALLOTING FOR SPEAKER.—CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON POST-OFFICES AND POST-ROADS.—IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SERVICE.—DAILY OVERLAND MAIL.—HIS WAY IN THE HOUSE.—PRESIDES IN A NIGHT SESSION, VOTE OF THANKS.—RE-ELECTED, A WALK OVER.—SECESSION.—COMPROMISE WINTER.—SOUTHERN DELEGATIONS WITHDRAW FROM CONGRESS.—FIRST PRACTICAL COUNTER-MOVE.—"VOTES BETTER THAN SPEECHES."—COMPROMISE IMPOSSIBLE.—SEIZURE OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY BY THE SECEDED STATES.—CRITICAL TIMES IN WASHINGTON.—STRIFE FOR OFFICE.

UPON the adjournment of Congress in March, the Congressman again became editor. A new press was bought, and as the paper entered upon its fifteenth year it was enlarged to its size previous to the fire of 1855. "Schuyler gets up a good paper," said the *North Iowa Times*; "a little too political generally for our taste, and, by the way, its politics don't suit us either; but Schuyler is a member of Congress, spoken of for Speaker, and threatened with the nomination for Governor of Indiana, and it is expected that he will overload his paper with politics."

The battles of the late Congress were discussed by the editor, confusion eliminated, and the responsibility for what was well or ill done, or was not done at all, placed where it belonged. The Republicans carried the important spring elections, but were imperfectly organized and undisciplined. The editor contemplated this with some impatience, and, commenting on the town election of South Bend, he said that "while the Republicans could have elected their entire ticket, part of them had chosen to elect

two of their political opponents over their political friends." He admitted their perfect right to do so, but for himself, he said he took pleasure in working and voting for his political friends rather than for his political adversaries. After numberless defeats in the most offensively aggressive warfare on the North, the South was able to keep the field, by reason of the high organization, the strict discipline, the systematic and unceasing work of the party it controlled. The North, on the other hand, strong in principles and votes, frittered away, from its lack of organization and discipline, the fruits of one victory, while another battle was drawing on.

His frequent absences to deliver orations or addresses were indicated by interesting letters to his paper from the points he visited. At the request of the Republican State Committee of Minnesota, he canvassed that State in September, travelling forty to sixty miles and speaking every day, for four weeks. It was an important battle-ground, and several speakers of national reputation took part in the canvass. A Republican (Mr. R. N. McLaren) wrote him from Red Wing, Minn., in October: "We have met the enemy, and they are ours; they are flying to the hills, they are hunting for hiding-places among 'the mountains of Hepsidam.' Hurrah! Hurrah! Our cannon is roaring, it is a glorious day!"

In the summer and onward till the next summer newspaper discussion had large reference to the coming Presidential election. The *Register* held that the Republicans must succeed, or the title of "American citizen" would become a disgrace instead of an honor. Living in a doubtful State, and an October State, he was impressed with the necessity of choosing a candidate who would draw to his support the anti-Lecompton Democrats. With this in view, he favored Edward Bates, of Missouri, for the Republican nomination.<sup>1</sup>

1. Mr. Bates had declined a portfolio in a Whig Cabinet years before. He was an early and steadfast friend of emancipation in Missouri, and had freed his own slaves. "His views were never the echo of other men's opinions, nor could he brook factious dictation. Those who understood him felt little occasion to be proud of any difference with him." He was the first member of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet decided on; he was Lin-

He writes Mr. Bowles in March, 1859 :

“ I have been in correspondence with Mr. Bates for many years. He always disclaims Republicanism, but goes with us on all the issues of the past five years. He is a modest, unassuming man, not disposed to reach out for the Presidency, but of course would not decline it. His strength in the North lies in his being regarded as nearest right and more worthy of trust than any other Southern statesman, although he may destroy this by a single injudicious remark. I am not committed to him for President, but he knows that I have thought a great deal about it, and favorably, and he has thus far confided in me, and conferred about matters frankly and freely. Blair says he can carry Missouri, if brought out right, and Illinois, of course, he being quite strong in Southern Illinois, where our cause is weak. And Winter Davis says he can carry Maryland and Delaware, if we do not repel them by too strong a platform. Winter wants a great anti-Administration Opposition Convention, but I don't see how it can be done. Ignoring the Republican organization might cause a formidable bolting convention, and there are too many people who believe in its principles ardently to hazard that. I have sometimes thought that possibly two conventions, a-la-Massachusetts, might be easier, if the ticket for both could be understood beforehand. But the Lord has it all in charge. He will bring it right. He kept us from winning in 1856, when winning would have been fruitless—a powerless Administration contending against a united Democracy in both Houses.

“ Bates and Banks would be a magnificent ticket, but, as you say, Governor Seward stands in the way. He is determined on having the nomination, thinks he would poll the entire German and Irish vote ; that Pennsylvania and New Jersey, though so Hunker and American, would go for him cordially, on account of the tariff ; that thousands of Democrats in New York and elsewhere would vote for him, etc. He is a very able man, there is no disputing, but I have great fears that the many prejudices against him, including what are really unjust, would be a heavy dead weight to carry in the election. You know our folks bolt on all kinds of excuses, whims, and prejudices, while the other side quarrel, but vote together, generally.”

A year later, in March, 1860, he writes Bowles again :

“ You say, speaking about the printing squabbles, ‘ I dread our national success.’ I don't think you need to. If Seward's reliable friends are not awfully deceived, he is to be nominated, and on the first ballot (for he will be the strongest then), and we shall go forward to a defeat as inevitable as election-day. Even if the Democratic ranks are all shattered and disorganized at Charleston, his nomination will be the solvent that will reunite and compact them. He is as exacting for the

coln's cordial friend as well as judicious adviser nearly to the end of his first term, resigning for personal reasons an office which he had never sought, but had filled to Lincoln's entire satisfaction.

nomination as ever Henry Clay was, and with tenfold more prejudices against him. He told Medill [of the *Chicago Tribune*], the other day, that if not nominated he would turn his back on public life forever. He and his friends are determined on it, and will force it through, though certain defeat stares them in the face. *That* is a minor matter with him.

"His late moderate speech helps the current in his favor. But when we go into the campaign and talk retrenchment, they will parade on the other side eighty millions per year voted by his vote; his speech at Cleveland in 1848—'Slavery must be abolished, and you and I must do it'—and his letter, only nine years before, justifying the law allowing slaveholders to bring their slaves into New York and hold them for nine months. His friends insist that he will receive enormous accessions from the foreign vote, and I sincerely hope so. But it will be a surprise to me if it occurs.

"It is well known that I believe success to be certain with Bates, if our Republicans will take as sound an anti-slavery extensionist and practical emancipationist as he is. He can rally an outside vote to our banners that will insure success from the day he is nominated, if our Radicals will go for him. I have not time, even at this hand-gallop, to argue it.

"But I do believe success to be a duty. If beaten this year, Dred Scottism will be ratified and affirmed by the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government, thus fastening it on us by all three branches; the Supreme Court will be filled up with young judges for life, to forge chains for us for a quarter of a century. Our friends at the South, by the reign of terror already inaugurated there, will be driven into silence or exile. The Northern public mind, wearied by two Presidential elections thrown away by a divided opposition, will, I fear, relapse, and I need not paint any darker picture of Lemon case decisions, Cuba, etc. With a formidable third party in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois, we are beaten, even if we poll a million majority in the other free States. Seward's nomination will make just that third party, and with it certain defeat.

"But I must break off. And, in conclusion, of all the Radicals, old 'Rough and Ready' Wade would suit me best. His pluck and grit would atone with many for his 'ultraism,' as they call it. But with Seward or Chase defeat is inevitable."

Early in June he discussed this subject in his paper, contending that union of all voters opposed to slavery extension, whether technically Republicans or not, was the duty of the hour. Victory was missed in 1856 by division; to lose the coming battle from the same cause would be criminal. The article was widely copied, and in the less sure Republican States with approval.

Not conservatism, but radical, aggressive Republicanism was regarded by many influential men, particularly old Whigs, as the peril of the times. "The intemperate zeal of the Republican leaders is now the only danger which threatens defeat to us," Thomas Corwin writes him. "It did us mischief in our recent convention in Ohio. It seems to me impossible that any one not wilfully blind can fail to see (what you assert) that slavery extension ceases when the Democratic Party is conquered. Vengeance to the South, and not love of South and North, seems to be the animating principle of too many of those who proclaim themselves the only friends of human rights."

"We have the power to create a safe and upright Administration and reform the Government," Washington Hunt writes. "All can agree that this ought to be done, and it is easy to see how it can be done. It is only necessary that moderate and sensible counsels should prevail. But if the contest is to be placed on extreme and impracticable issues we must expect to see the present evils and abuses continued, Heaven knows how long. I am glad to know that the cause of union is to have your able and influential advocacy."

Charles A. Dana writes: "I wish you would let me know how the Bates movement stands. If Bates can be put forward as a representative of the emancipation cause in Missouri he will be the strongest candidate we can have. With any other man we shall have the Fillmore split again."

"I should long ago have thanked you for your powerful plea for union in 1860," writes Henry Winter Davis. "I think with you that it is a duty and not a choice, and I think so not at all because I am in a minority in the South, but because you, though in a majority in the North, are in a minority in the United States. I am profoundly convinced that division in 1860 is defeat, and that a Republican nomination is fatal if made by Republicans alone on their platform of 1856, and without the concurrence of the non-Republican masses." Mr. Davis deprecated the resolutions of the Ohio Convention, striking at the Know-

Nothings of Massachusetts, and proposing, for political purposes, the reorganization of the Supreme Court. "Ohio is leading off on the false scent of 1856—the attempt to reform the Administration by legislation, requiring concert of all three branches—instead of dashing at the head, the Presidency, which is the key of the position. With it everything may be done that ought to be done, against us, nothing can be done without our consent, and without it everything else is absolutely worthless."

Abraham Lincoln writes him, regretting that he (Lincoln) missed seeing him when he was at Jacksonville, Ill., as Fourth of July orator. Mr. Lincoln says: "Besides a strong desire to make your personal acquaintance, I was anxious to speak with you on politics a little more freely than I can well do in a letter. My main object in such conversation would be to hedge against divisions in the Republican ranks generally, and particularly for the contest of 1860. The point of danger is the temptation in different localities to 'platform' for something that will be popular just there, but which, nevertheless, will be a firebrand elsewhere, and especially in a National Convention. As instances, the movement against foreigners in Massachusetts; in New Hampshire, to make obedience to the Fugitive-Slave Law punishable as a crime; in Ohio, to repeal the Fugitive-Slave Law; and squatter sovereignty in Kansas. In these things there is explosive matter enough to blow up half a dozen national conventions, if it gets into them; and what gets very rife outside of conventions is very likely to find its way into them." Lincoln, as well as Davis, writes at length, urging Colfax to disseminate their views—through his paper, his correspondence, and on the stump, so as to "avoid, to some extent at least, these apples of discord."

"How about the Presidency?" writes Sam Bowles. "Do you look to Bates yet as the Moses to lead us out of the wilderness? I do not give him up, but he lacks, I fear, the robustness for the crisis. He can be the man if he wishes, but he has got to do and say something more than he has. A simple repudiation of the Dred Scott de-

cision that 'slavery is national,' is what we must have from him, and I do not see how we can take less."

Joseph Medill writes: "Mr. Bates is a very nice man, but he has not said and dare not say to the world that the Constitution recognizes no property in man, that the common law recognizes none, that justice and genuine democracy recognize none, and that the general Government must recognize none. That's our position. Whenever we fall below it we sink into the quicksands, and will soon disappear. Let us be beaten with a representative man rather than triumph with a 'Union-saver.'"

Mr. Medill expressed the sentiment of the more radical Republicans.

To anticipate a little, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois might have named the candidate, since they were the real battle-ground; but instead of uniting they presented three candidates—Lincoln, Bates, and Cameron. Cameron's candidacy meant nothing but a trade, and his name was withdrawn after the first ballot demonstrated Seward's strength. Bates was not a Republican, and in his published letters was too long in reaching a position satisfactory to the sure Republican States. Colfax believed that if he had stood in the early part of 1859 where he did a year later, he would have been the choice of the conservative element of the party. The impression prevailed that the Germans would not support him. Meanwhile, Lincoln's candidacy, not openly pressed for first place until a short time before the convention, had rapidly grown in favor. He had been identified with the party from the beginning, and when the trial came he proved the only alternative of Seward.<sup>1</sup> John D. Defrees, who was at the Convention, writes Colfax: "The hard-

1. Lincoln's friends felt absolutely sure that he could, and that Seward could not, be elected. The Convention sitting in Chicago gave them many advantages, and they worked night and day with the energy of desperation, pledging Lincoln to everything. The choice of Cabinet positions was promised to Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, and these promises were kept, although made without Lincoln's knowledge. "They have gambled on me all around," Lincoln said after the nomination, "bought and sold me a hundred times. I cannot begin to fill the pledges made in my name." Colfax regarded Lincoln's strength as local in comparison with that of Bates. He believed that Bates, if nominated, would be supported by a large element outside of the Republican Party.

est-fought battle of the age has just closed in victory. I did not expect it last night, but Providence smiled on us this morning. Greeley slaughtered Seward, and saved the party. He deserves the praises of all men, and gets them now. Wherever he goes he is greeted with cheers. I have not seen Weed since Monday. We worked hard [for Bates], but could not make it. They are now balloting for Vice-President, and I suppose that Hamlin will be nominated, though I prefer Hickman. We Bates men of Indiana concluded that the only way to beat Seward was to go for Lincoln as a unit. We made the nomination. The city is wild with enthusiasm.' Greeley went into the Convention on a proxy from Oregon as a Bates man. He had given Bates the support of his great paper. He writes Colfax :

"As to Chicago, I don't see why more of you didn't come on to help, when the matter was so vital.<sup>1</sup> My share of the load was unreasonably heavy, considering where I live, and the power of the sore-heads to damage me. Bartlett, Pike, Chaffee, and yourself—all should have been on hand. Chaffee, I think, kept away from fear of Weed's resentment. I don't think you wanted to come face to face with Weed in a case wherein his heart was so set on a triumph. Pike ought to have been able to do something with Maine, and Bartlett with Massachusetts—the two worst-behaved delegations in the Convention. I ought not to have been obliged to expose myself to the deadliest resentment of all the Seward crowd, as I did. But what I must do, I will, regardless of consequences."

Mr. Bates writes him :

"As for me, I was surprised, I own, but not at all mortified, at the result at Chicago. I had no claim—literally none—upon the Republicans as a party, and no right to expect their party honors ; and I shall cherish, with enduring gratitude, the recollection of the generous confidence with which many of their very best men have honored me. So far from feeling beaten and depressed, I have cause rather for joy and exultation ; for, by the good opinion of certain eminent Republicans, I have gained much in standing and reputation before the country—more, I think, than any mere private man I have ever known."

The elections were contested on the same lines as in the

1. Colfax writes Bowles : "It is well known that I do not intend to be at Chicago, that I am opposed to Congress adjourning during the session of the Convention, and hope no member of Congress will be a Delegate there, so that the people will be represented, and not Congress."



previous year. The Republican Convention of St. Joseph County, of which Mr. Colfax was President, denounced Democratic opposition to the Homestead Bill and the attempt to increase the rate of postage ; denounced the abandonment of adopted citizens abroad, the political doctrines of the Dred Scott decision, the reopening of the foreign slave trade, and the general corruption and extravagance of the Administration party. It favored free homes on free soil for free men ; affirmed slavery to be an evil existing only by virtue of local statute law ; declared that American citizens abroad, whether native or naturalized, are entitled to protection ; declared for internal improvements, inclusive of a Pacific Railroad, for the promotion of peace, and for retrenchment in national expenditure. Mr. Colfax took the stump on his return from Minnesota. The county elections in the district and throughout the State were largely carried by the Republicans.

Toward the end of October the Kansas chickens began to come home to roost. John Brown, having witnessed the endeavor to enslave free men in Kansas by force of arms, undertook to liberate slaves in Virginia in the same way. Descending in the night with twenty men on Harper's Ferry, he took possession of the United States Armory, and in the morning began to take the leading citizens prisoners, and to free the slaves. Troops and militia gathered by hundreds, he was assailed by twenty to one, several of his men were killed, and he was severely wounded. As soon as he recovered, the State of Virginia tried, convicted, and executed him. His bearing in the fight, and more especially in the trial, won the respect of the Virginians and of all other men. "He was not a man possessed of convictions," some one has said ; "he was himself an embodied conviction ;" and as early as the murder of Lovejoy had solemnly devoted himself, "God helping him," to the destruction of slavery. His sons had gone to Kansas as settlers, and were so harassed and preyed upon by the Missourians that they sent to their father for arms. To make sure that they would get the arms, he went with them, tarried in Kansas, and, gathering about him a few

men of like temperament, became a prominent factor in putting an end to the marauding, murdering raids from Missouri. When the free-State men got the upper hand in Kansas, he engaged in running slaves out of Missouri into Canada, and afterward undertook the same business in Virginia. Great efforts were made to implicate prominent Republicans in his plans, but to no purpose, and the succeeding Northern elections showed that Brown's raid had had no appreciable political effect. The editor of the *Register* alluded to it as "the insane act of an insane man." He disclaimed it for himself and his party.<sup>1</sup>

On the meeting of the Thirty-sixth Congress in December (1859), the spirit which a year later precipitated secession long obstructed the organization of the House. Only at the end of eight weeks was a Speaker elected. The Representatives had removed into their new hall since the struggle of four years ago. There was more room in the galleries, and men's passions were worse stirred. Four years of determined aggression by the slave power had done their work. The Northern elections had all gone

1. "Are the Locofocos going to 'cross the river of their difficulties at Harper's Ferry?' " Medill writes him. "It is a most unfortunate affair, and gives the corrupt demagogues whom we had unhorsed ammunition with which to renew the fight. How much will it damage us in your opinion? I fear the affair may defeat us in New York and New Jersey and hurt us in Wisconsin. At the great American ratification meeting in Baltimore Winter Davis charged the whole blame on the Locofocos, and made his points stick."

Mr. Greeley writes him: "Don't be downhearted about the old Brown business. Its present effect is bad, and throws a heavy load on us in this State—I am afraid it will elect the Brooks-American half of the Democratic ticket—but the ultimate effect is to be good—see if it is not. It will drive on the slave power to new outrages. It settles the Charleston coffee of Douglas. It will probably help us to nominate a moderate man for President on our side. It presses on the 'irrepressible conflict'; and I think the end of slavery in Virginia and the Union is ten years nearer than it seemed a few weeks ago. I know you are not a Universalist; but wait and see. Are you openly, decidedly for Sherman for Speaker? I am. But it is by no means certain that we can elect him, if Cobb gets the Democrats all to vote for a South American."

And a few days later: "I despair of you. Your reasons for voting for Grow are just like those which entangled you [and others] with Lew Campbell in 1856, and led us into all manner of troubles. There are two reasons against supporting Grow—he is not the man for the place, he can't be elected. You are just as well aware of these facts as I am. The first question to be asked with reference to every candidate is: Is this the road to Byzantium? If not, I don't go it, and you have no right to. If the Americans want the Clerk, and will come in and behave themselves, I go for giving it to them, and making Forney Printer. The House election is but the prelude to the Presidential, and I want to elect every man on the first pop, by fifteen or twenty majority. We can do it if selfishness don't defeat us, and it mustn't."

Republican, and the election of a Republican President was in the air. The Clerk of the preceding House, who presided, held that everything was debatable, and there was of course no previous question. A vote could not be taken, not even a ballot for Speaker, without unanimous consent. Debate on the Administration side took the widest range, and through fifty speakers that side declared itself for Disunion whenever a Republican President should be elected. Demonstrations to frighten the North from its purpose, and to familiarize the public ear with Disunion sentiments, began on the first day of the session. The rudest language was used. Personal encounters were narrowly avoided, and duels only because the Northern Representatives declined them.<sup>1</sup> John Sherman, of Ohio, received on every ballot 115 votes—within three of a majority—but he had informally commended a book on slavery, written by a North Carolinian, without having seen it, which the supporters of slavery chose to regard as incendiary. A resolution was introduced, that because of this recommendation, John Sherman should never be Speaker. The Republicans exhibited their capacity for government by the self-control with which they listened, almost in silence, to a constant tirade of denunciation from the other side during all these weeks, contenting themselves with insisting that the only business before the House was to organize.

They desired to vote on the plurality rule, and, as in 1855-56, Colfax urged it by every consideration, citing, in support of its constitutionality, which was questioned, the precedents of 1855 and of 1849, and also the fact that all the members held their seats under that rule. He demonstrated that the recognition of the rule is a necessity in the

1. Colfax writes his mother, January 15th: "We are still just where we started six weeks ago, except that our Southern friends have dissolved the Union forty or fifty times since then. Certainly we have been the most patient and long-suffering people in the world, to bear as stoically as we have the torrent of obloquy poured on us in a steady stream all that time. If ever we organize the tables will be turned, and we shall see how these doctors like their own physis. Nearly everybody goes armed, and a general field fight is expected by many. But I think the almost universal arming on all sides is a bond and guarantee of peace. The Southern men understand that any attacks will be met on the instant and at every hazard, and in the two or three threatened rows we have had, they endeavored to restrain their impetuous men more than I have ever noticed before."

organization of any political body, since without it all governments by election may at any time come to an end. On the 19th of January, by skilful questioning, he brought out the fact that some half a hundred Democrats had pledged themselves in writing to resist by every parliamentary means any vote by the House on the plurality rule. "He carried himself in splendid style and to the admiration of all his friends," writes Medill for the *Chicago Tribune*; "he smoked out the disorganizing pledge most beautifully." At the same time he announced the willingness of the Republicans "to vote without discussion on any and every proposition now pending or which may be pending."

Meanwhile President Buchanan's message was received, and by contrast it made men recall even President Pierce with a feeling akin to regret. Kansas was present with a constitution, adopted by her people, excluding slavery, but that failed to interest the President. He seemed to almost gloat over the Dred Scott decision; he desired a Territorial Slave Code, and the power to seize new territory on the South for slavery. The Senate was engaged in an effort, more or less statesmanlike, to crush Douglas, and he was trying to outbid Buchanan for the Presidential nomination of his party. Threats of disunion, unless the Republicans ceased their resistance to the demands of slavery, were the burden of Administration Senatorial oratory. The slave States were passing laws banishing or enslaving free negroes. Kansas, by the way, having become hopelessly free, the South had no further use for. She was to be kept out of the Union indefinitely, and she was kept out until after these gentlemen had themselves gone out. Parties were merging rapidly into Disunion and Union parties. In the course of various and varied coalition experiments in the House, the Know-Nothings and Democrats stumbled on the same candidate, and he received a majority vote; but certain members changed their vote before the ballot was announced.<sup>1</sup> This brought a few men

1. To his mother Colfax writes, January 30th: "We are at the end of the Speaker contest. Last Friday we were beaten at one time, the Democrats and Know-Nothings

who had steadily voted "scattering" over to the Republicans, on condition that the Republican candidate be changed. Thereupon Mr. Sherman withdrew his name, saying he "had stood ready to do so at any time when it should appear that any one of his political friends could combine more votes than he." No nomination was made in his place, but when the name of the first Republican on the roll—Charles Francis Adams—was called, he responded "William Pennington." Every Republican followed this lead, and they gained one vote on this ballot, but still required three votes to elect. On each of two succeeding ballots they gained one adherent, and on the next (forty-fourth) ballot, one more came to them, and made Mr. Pennington, of New Jersey, Speaker.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Colfax was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, a position which afforded ample scope for his activity and administrative capacity. He recognized the importance of his place. "No expenditures made by us," said he, "are wiser or more beneficent than those that furnish improved mail facilities for the people—the only direct manner, indeed, in which the blessings of government are dispensed to all its citizens." The service was very crude and restricted compared with what it is now. It was especially demoralized at that moment from the failure of the Post-Office Appropriation Bill in the previous Congress, and the consequent curtailment and discontinuance of service by the Postmaster-General.

having concentrated their votes on a pro-slavery Know-Nothing of North Carolina, and half a dozen of our Republican Know-Nothings from New Jersey and Pennsylvania having voted for him complimentarily at the opening of the roll-call. They changed back, however, defeating him, but the excitement for a short time on all sides and in the crowded galleries was unexampled. We then effected an adjournment over to Monday, and spent yesterday in caucussing. Many of our members objected to leaving Sherman, even to avoid defeat, but as I believe success is a duty, I was not among them."

1. "Let me tell you what I think," Greeley writes him, February 3d, 1860: "I think that Sherman fight was badly fought throughout—without nerve, tact, or resolution. I think Sherman might have been, should have been, elected. I can't see why the plurality rule was not moved and voted on, or else the Disunionists obliged to win general disgust by filibustering through two or three days. I cannot guess why you did not insist on two or three night sessions. In short, I am in a state of general disgust. A party so gloriously backed up by the press and country ought to have won."

Unfortunately, Colfax's letters to Greeley, written almost daily for thirty years, were destroyed upon being read. Hence the author cannot give his responses to Mr. Greeley's rough but good-natured criticisms.

Mail contractors had been running a year without pay, and were on the verge of bankruptcy. Without calling in question the motives of the Department officers, Mr. Colfax protested against the harsh treatment to which the contractors were being subjected, and carried through Congress a joint resolution for their relief.

The demands on the service were fast increasing from the rapid extension of settlement in the West and Northwest. The revenue system was in a bad way: disbursements exceeded collections, and resort was had to borrowing to meet the deficiency. The Committee on Ways and Means cut down estimates remorselessly, and ruled out the incurring of new obligations whenever it could muster the power. Nevertheless, the postal service, as it was on the 4th of March, 1859, was restored by the House, under Colfax's management, with pay for service actually rendered in the mean time. The Senate refused, however, again and again, to concur in this restoration, and on the last day of the session, to save the Post-Office Appropriation Bill, the House was obliged to recede from its position. At the short session secession had intervened, and the matter was left to the discretion of the Postmaster-General.

Improvements making the service less cumbersome and a greater convenience to the people, wherever originating, found in Colfax a zealous and intelligent advocate. Such were provisions for the return of undelivered letters, when the request and the address were written on them; reducing the rate on drop letters delivered by carriers to one cent, and authorizing letter-boxes in the suburbs of cities; making printed matter, maps, engravings, cuttings, seeds, etc., mailable matter at one cent per ounce; allowing the end of term of subscription, as well as name and address, to be written or printed on papers and periodicals; instructing postmasters to distribute to individual subscribers papers sent to clubs in one wrapper; permitting newspaper dealers to receive their packages by mail, paying *pro rata* for each package at the time, at the same rate as regular subscribers; authorizing the impression of stamps on letter sheets. Some of these provisions looked

to increase of revenue by drawing business from the express companies to the post. These, and a hundred like improvements since, have made the postal service almost ideally perfect ; but each of them required an act of Congress, and invariably met with opposition from the conservative element in Congress and elsewhere.

The Chairman of the House Committee had a sharp eye to retrenchment as well as to improvement. The compensation of postmasters had increased sixty per cent in six years, while receipts had increased but twenty-five per cent. The pay of clerks had increased four hundred per cent in eleven years. Colfax endeavored to limit the number and pay of route agents. He desired, he said, to reduce the compensation of postmasters paid in excess of one hundred dollars a year, not only because it was extravagant, but to diminish the scramble for post-offices on the change of Administrations. "While I want the mail service restored to the people, I believe the administration of the postal system should be governed by economy, and wish the axe of retrenchment to fall where it ought to fall, lopping off needless expenses, useless offices, excessive salaries."

Several of his less important propositions failed, but only on one important measure did the House disagree with him—a Senate bill in aid of a telegraph line to the Pacific. This was referred to his committee, and a substitute reported back to the House, reducing the land and money subsidy and the charge for messages, incorporating other salutary restrictions, and naming certain gentlemen engaged in telegraphing in the States as corporators, the committee believing that no others would be likely to undertake the construction of the line on any terms. The House struck out the named corporators, and in substance offered the franchise to the lowest responsible bidder on the work. The Senate adopted the House substitute, reinstating the corporators ; but the House again striking them out and insisting, the bill finally passed in that shape. The telegraph line was completed October 26th, 1861.

But his great work in this Congress, in connection with Senator Latham, of California, and others, was the re-organization of the mail service between the Atlantic and Pacific. The existing service was in as unsatisfactory a state as anything well could be. It was by different land and water routes, at long intervals and low speed. The full contract price was two million three hundred thousand dollars a year; the revenue, two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars. The contractors were naturally opposed to any change, and so were the express companies, which were carrying letters at two to eight shillings each.<sup>1</sup> The House and the Senate did not see this, or much of anything else, in the same light. In 1853 Colfax had noted in the *Register* that the firm carrying the mail from Independence to Santa Fé had offered to carry it semi-weekly to California for two hundred thousand dollars a year, as against a round million paid the steamers. He had then discussed the advantages of carrying it overland instead of by sea, in the way of encouraging settlement, and urged its favorable consideration by Congress.

At that time the Mormons had just left the neighborhood of Council Bluffs for the Great Salt Lake Valley, and the western slope of Iowa had begun to be settled. In 1854 the right bank of the Missouri River was still unbroken Indian country, but after the passage of the Nebraska-Kansas Bill the Indian title to large tracts was quickly extinguished. Four years later gold was found on Cherry Creek, near Denver, and the next year but one (1860) silver on the Washoe Range. The first coach of the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company" arrived at Denver *via* the Smoky Hill June 12th, 1859. The company was composed of Majors, Russell, and others, and they ran from Leavenworth to Sacramento. The line was transferred to the Platte in August, starting from Atchison. On the 3d of April, 1860, these men established a weekly Pony Express between St. Joseph

1. The author has been one of a line of hundreds of men in Central City, Col., on a Saturday evening, awaiting his turn with the rest for the chance of a letter at one dollar expressage.



and San Francisco ; speed, two hundred miles a day ; postage, five dollars an ounce. Coaches with mail had run weekly between Independence and Santa Fé, between Council Bluffs and Salt Lake City, and between Sacramento and Salt Lake City for some years, and a through mail (letters only) by the southern (Butterfield) route had first arrived at St. Louis on the 10th of October, 1858.

Life on these long stage lines had been about as free for men as for horses. It was fascinating in some of its features, as the earth and sea are, but the conditions were as conducive to brutality as to heroism. There was but the weekly mail coach to remind one of the world of civilization. Life was mainly in the saddle, and fleeing overland emigrants, directly or indirectly, afforded the only variety in the pastoral pursuits of the few and widely-scattered rancheros. There were military posts on the Pecos and the Rio Grande ; there were Forts Kearney, Laramie, and Bridger ; but there was no civil authority. Strong men, quick with the pistol, became "chiefs" by common consent, and administered a rude justice on the long lines. But conditions were changing ; gold at Pike's Peak (now Colorado) and silver at Washoe (now Nevada) indicated other mining fields, and they were soon found in Oregon and Arizona, in Idaho and Montana. The organization of the Rocky Mountain region had become a necessity. Many of Colfax's constituents had gone to the mountains, and this gave them additional interest to him.

He introduced a bill, which became law, providing for mail service in Western Kansas (Pike's Peak), commencing July 1st, and looked after its passage through the Senate ;<sup>1</sup> also a bill inviting proposals for carrying the entire between-seas mail by one overland route—the contractors to choose it ; these proposals to be laid before Congress

1. Speaking at a Colorado State agricultural fair, years afterward, Colfax said : "I shall never forget, after having secured the first application for this region, and the consequent establishment of the first post-office in the mountains, how many letters from the mining camps reached me, written in rough-and-ready language, but some of them blotted with tears, telling how they rejoiced that they could at last receive letters regularly from the loved ones in distant homes, and could repay their replies with a three-cent postage-stamp, instead of the precious gold-dust it had cost them before for their uncertain transmission by express."

later in the session, and if satisfactory to Congress, the authorization of a contract to follow. This bill was strangled in the Senate, but the gist of it appeared in a Senate amendment to the Post Route Bill, providing for a daily overland mail between St. Louis and San Francisco, to be let to the lowest bidder. The Post Route Bill, sent early in the session to the Senate by the House, was not returned till the last day of the session, and then with ninety-nine amendments. Colfax warmly urged its consideration, but the House refused to suspend the rules, 94 to 55, not two thirds.

At the short session he carried an amendment to the Senate amendment, providing for a daily mail between St. Joseph, Mo., and Placerville, Cal., semi-weekly service to Denver and Salt Lake City, inclusive; time, twenty days for a thousand pounds of mail per day, thirty-five days for the remainder, at eight hundred thousand dollars a year. The Senate now desired to merge the Butterfield route and contract in this, but fearful of losing the bill altogether, finally concurred in it as it came from the House, and tacked the consolidation of the two routes and contracts on the Post-Office Appropriation Bill. This in turn Colfax carried through the House. It provided for tri-weekly service to Denver and Salt Lake City, for the continuance of the Pony Express at two dollars an ounce postage, five pounds for the Government free, with some minor modifications, and made the pay one million a year. All California letters were required to pay ten cents postage. The monthly ocean service between San Francisco and Olympia was changed to a land service through California, Oregon, and Washington, and the weekly steamer service on Puget Sound enlarged to a semi-weekly.<sup>1</sup>

1. Colfax and Latham remained in Washington after the adjournment until the contract was let, and at the invitation of Latham and other Californians, Colfax and John Sherman intended to cross over in the first coach, starting about the middle of June, 1861, but that was not to be. The city authorities of St. Joseph, Mo., invited Colfax to visit the city and attend a banquet in his honor, which he did in April. General Bela M. Hughes, now of Colorado, presided at the dinner. The *St. Joseph Journal* said: "If the people of the whole land felt as that audience did while the guest of the city was speaking, we would soon see peace restored. He can bear with him the assurance from us that his sojourn among us did great good, and contributed to soften the acerbity of political feeling and bring about pleasanter relations among ourselves."

The Pacific States and the intervening Territories were now as well supplied with mail facilities as was possible without a railroad, and a daily overland mail on a central route was the first practical step toward a railroad. It was a great work, requiring exhaustless enthusiasm as well as resources, pertinacity, and tact. Possibly it could not have been done at that time if the South had not withdrawn its Representatives from Congress. With them went much of the natural opposition, and their going inclined the East to look toward its Pacific sea-front with new solicitude. It established the reputation of the Chairman of the House Postal Committee as a capable executive officer.

He was an adept in the art of getting his way with a legislative body. He was truthful, self-possessed, clear-headed, alert ; courteous under all circumstances ; patient with opposition, whether sincere or malicious ; patient with inattention, with stupidity, and even with rudeness. He knew all his rights under the rules, and used them ; he knew the rights of others, and respected them. His was the hand of iron in a velvet glove. He knew how and when to yield or to be firm ; and how to seem to yield while not yielding at all. Perfectly informed as to the matter in hand, his statements were clear and compact, his facts marshalled to compel the desired conclusion. He allowed opponents to do most of the talking, answered all questions frankly, accepted amendments if not materially objectionable, never repeated himself, never denounced or appealed, seldom argued, but pressed directly forward to his object—a vote.

“He will help you,” Defrees writes him of Greeley ; “but he intimated that your position as leading business member on the floor, with such a constituency to back you, was far preferable to a Cabinet appointment.” His province was not political, it was administrative. The restoration of discontinued service on the South-eastern seacoast was as much his concern as the establishment of new service to Pike’s Peak, and he devoted as much energy to the one as to the other. He took little part in political dis-

cussion, even under the pressure of secession, giving his time and energies to securing the best possible administration of the postal service.

From the quickness of his perceptions and his natural courtesy and fair-mindedness, he was a born presiding officer. His principles had strengthened his naturally fine qualities, and practice without variation had made them habits. On the occasion of a twenty-six hours' session, June 6th, Speaker Pennington, wearied out, called him to the Chair, and retired from the House. The protracted session was brought on by the objection of the Democrats to the Republicans making political speeches in Committee of the Whole without a quorum, which had long been the practice of all parties. If they could no longer do this without a quorum, the Republicans determined that they would have a quorum. The committee rose and reported the absentees to the House, and proceedings under a call of the House continued all night. Such proceedings are usually good-natured but disorderly. The continuous fire of motions, questions, and points of order put a great strain on the Chair. Worn out in turn at last, Colfax sent for Speaker Pennington, and upon his taking the Chair, the thanks of the House to the Speaker *pro tem.*, moved by a Democratic leader, were unanimously voted "for the industrious, able, and impartial manner in which he has presided over the House for the last twelve hours."

"He has a better practical understanding of the rules and of general parliamentary principles than any man in the House," wrote an observer to the *Utica Morning Herald*, "and possesses an equanimity of temper and a happy courtesy of manner, which enabled him to steer through the difficulties of that unhappy night in a way that commanded and elicited the praise of all parties." "He showed the greatest firmness, ability, and endurance," said the *Pittsburg Chronicle*, "and, better than all, the rarest impartiality."<sup>1</sup>

1. "Mr. Colfax is quite a young man, with a pale, intellectual, and amiable face, good physical development, being about five feet eight, and weighing one hundred and forty pounds. He is a member of the Republican Party, but is a moderate partisan, so far

In common with all the North-western members, he supported the imposition of a duty of sixteen cents a bushel on flaxseed, because it was for the benefit of the farming interest, an interest too often lost sight of, he thought, in adjusting protective duties. He protested against the exclusion of certain newspaper reporters from the hall, because they, or their papers, had applied the same epithets to Representatives that Representatives applied to one another. He deplored the lack of parliamentary decorum on the part of both, but insisted that one or two reporters should not be made scapegoats. Reporting from a conference committee on the Homestead Bill, he said: "We accepted a half-way measure rather than allow the whole to fail, but we regard it as only a step toward a comprehensive and liberal homestead policy; and we notified our conferrees of the Senate that we should demand this until we got it."

On another occasion he said:

"The most beneficent act that could be inscribed on your statute-book is the Homestead Bill. It would diminish poverty, suffering, and crime. It would build up a hardy, strong, industrious yeomanry, tilling the soil they own, and defending their homes. It would tender to those whose only capital is their own sinews and muscles, willing hands and honest hearts, a home in the boundless West. It would, by giving them independent freeholds, incite them to surround their firesides with comfort, and to rear families in habits of industry and frugality, which form the real elements of national greatness and power. And as that country is greatest in which there is the greatest number of happy firesides and homes, it would give vigor and strength to the Republic.

"All over the land you see the houseless and landless, where misery and want sit down at their fireside, and penury and sorrow surround their death-bed; where, with no spot on the green earth they can call their own, they earn a precarious subsistence, not knowing one week where the bread for their families is to come from the next. All these it beckons to the West, saying: 'Here is a home with God's free air above you and the virgin soil beneath your feet. Work and be independent. Here the land you till shall be your own; the cabin you rear shall be your own; the forest you subdue shall be your own; the fields you farm shall be

at least as I have observed his course in the House. He has the general respect of the House, and there is no man on the floor who can more readily secure the attention of members, or who is more competent to express clearly and forcibly his views on any subject under discussion."—*Chester County, Pa., Democrat.*

your own. This at last is your home.' What nobler stimulant to industry and well-doing could a great country hold out to its people?

"Under it the tide of emigration and civilization would move forward compactly, and in its path would spring up neighborhoods, towns, cities, and States, churches, mechanics' shops, and schools, and all the varied development of industrial communities. Settlements would become compact and self-supporting. Millions of bushels of products per year would be added to our agricultural wealth; and, as if by magic, new stars added to our flag and new glory to our name. These pioneers would prove the soldiers of civilization, and their victories would be for the advancement and prosperity and development of our boundless, inexhaustible resources."

The Homestead Bill of this session was, in truth, but half a loaf; the homesteader was required to pay sixty-two and a half cents an acre, and the privilege was otherwise restricted. Even this was too much for Mr. Buchanan, and he vetoed and thus killed the bill. A homestead of one hundred and sixty acres for the actual settler was one of the principal objects of the friends of freedom during all these years, and until it was finally secured. It was opposed by the South, its Presidents, and its pro-slavery friends in the North mainly because, as was expressly stated in the Senate, it was calculated to increase the number of free States and was unfavorable to the extension of slavery.

Before the long session adjourned, at the end of July, the national conventions had met, declared their positions, and placed their candidates in the field. The Democratic Party had formally divided, the North nominating Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, on the principle of "popular sovereignty" in the Territories, qualified by the declaration that "all rights of property are judicial in their character, and to be settled by the courts;" the South nominating John C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, on the principle of a Congressional Slave Code for the Territories whenever it should be necessary in the interest of slavery. The Know-Nothings, their oaths and secrecy left behind, but clinging to their "Native" doctrines, nominated John Bell, of Tennessee, taking neutral ground as to slavery. The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, reaffirm-

ing that "freedom is national, slavery sectional." Slavery the Republicans denounced as morally wrong. Existing only by virtue of positive local law, it was the right and duty of Congress to exclude it from the Territories, and its ultimate extinction should be anticipated. The friends of Seward were grievously disappointed at his failure to receive the nomination, but it was the opinion of the majority that his services in building up the new party precluded it from bestowing upon him its highest honors. What a grinning irony is that of popular politics! But in the nature of things, the Moses who leads a new party through the wilderness of its callow years to the border of the promised land of power may not enter therein.

The Republican Convention of the Ninth Congressional District of Indiana met on the 13th day of June, and nominated the sitting Representative for the Thirty-seventh Congress, "without a whisper of opposition or discontent, the cheers emphasizing the acclaim making the leaves of the oaks in the grounds tremble as to a passing breeze." A letter was read from the absent candidate, in which he expressed his regret at his inability to meet with them as of old, and congratulated them on the dawning of a better day. He reviewed the work of the House during the session—the admission of Kansas under an organic law adopted by her people forbidding slavery, and thus re-enacting the Proviso of Freedom; the passage of a liberal homestead bill; the readjustment and increase of the tariff, so as to yield sufficient revenue for current expenditures, and at the same time encourage manufactures; the annulment of the peonage and slave code of New Mexico; the prohibition of polygamy in the Territories; the forbidding of the public sale of the public lands until they had been ten years open to settlers by homestead and pre-emption. "Most of these measures were rejected by the Senate," said he, "and on the issues involved we are to go to the country, and I have no doubt of the verdict."

On his return home he was welcomed more enthusiastically than ever—taken off the train at Mishawaka, four miles east, and after an interchange of compliments es-

corted in procession with music to South Bend. Uniformed bands of "Wide-awakes" bearing torch-lights met the procession on the way, turned and took their place in it, and, with hundreds of citizens, accompanied him to the Court House. Welcome was extended, and responding, he gave an account of his stewardship, discussed the hapless condition of the divided Democracy, the principles and prospects of the Republicans, and closed with a glowing tribute to Mr. Lincoln's capacity and integrity.

For this race the Democrats nominated the Hon. C. W. Cathcart, who had formerly represented the district in Congress. Mr. Colfax invited Mr. Cathcart to the customary joint canvass. Mr. Cathcart replied that he was in a low state of health, and not equal to the task. The nomination had been conferred on him without his knowledge, he said, and he had accepted it with the understanding that he would not canvass the district. So Mr. Colfax went around the course alone, speaking in seventy towns. Not a line of these speeches is on record. In a letter to an opposition paper, he said: "My doctrine now, as heretofore, is: 'No interference with slavery in the States; no extension of slavery beyond their limits.'" The general canvass of the Republicans was enthusiastic to the last degree. After six years of skirmishing, with varying fortunes, they at last felt that a decisive action was on, and that victory was within their reach. The opposing host was divided and more or less demoralized, its victories having served but to shatter it.

Colfax's canvass lacked the stimulus of an antagonist, but it was none the less a triumphal progress from town to town, calling out all the people. One township gave him its total vote—128. At Miami the meeting was in a grove at night, the scene lighted up by lanterns and campfires. Describing the novel theatre, with "hundreds of ladies present in the crowd, 'which no man might number,'" the *Kokomo Tribune* exclaimed: "No wonder Colfax made such a speech! A better one never was made." "We have heard Mr. Colfax in all his canvasses," said the *Peru Republican*; "but in none has he acquitted himself so



well." He carried the district by 3500 majority in a total poll of 27,061.

Appeals for his assistance came from adjoining States—Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois. "We feel like raising the Macedonian cry, 'Come over and help us,' for indeed our enemy is fighting with all the energy of despair." The Hon. N. B. Judd, Chairman of the Illinois State Central Committee, writes him, 17th September: "I want you to save a Senator and Representatives for Trumbull after your election is over. I know your working capacity and willingness to do good, even though there may not be much glory in it. Can you come, and for how long, and when?" Again on the 8th of October: "If you win Indiana, we want to howl at our wigwam on Thursday night, and we desire to make the feature of the occasion Lane, Smith, and yourself. I sent to Lane and Smith by Defrees, and now you will come I know, since Indiana is responsible for the nomination of Lincoln." Indiana made the nomination good. The Hon. Henry L. Dawes wrote from Massachusetts: "All hail to the Star of the West! All hail Indiana and her peerless workers! You have indeed covered yourselves with glory in Indiana. But what work! Who could start a canvass with ninety inchoate speeches all aboard? I should think your throat must be made of brass, and your head as fertile of ideas as a hop-vine of hops." Mr. M. W. Tappan wrote from Bradford, N. H.: "God bless you all for the noble victory you achieved in Indiana. The question is settled, and now let us see them 'dissolve the Union!'"

He repaired to Illinois, speaking first at Alton. "Alton learned one thing from the speech of Mr. Colfax—what enthusiasm is," said the *Alton Courier*. "We have had cheers and uproar and loud demonstrations of applause—enthusiasm we have not had in this canvass till last evening—enthusiasm that lifted men into a nobler atmosphere than every-day life; that made old men young again; that rose and fell and rose again till the walls of our magnificent hall seemed confining, and only the free arch above large enough for the free hearts of the people."

Mr. Lincoln carried all the free States, giving him 180 electoral votes. The other candidates together had more popular votes than Lincoln, but only 127 electoral votes between them. Lincoln, although, like John Quincy Adams in 1824, the choice of a minority of the whole people, was constitutionally elected President. At the same time, he was without qualification elected President, and it must have been so held had there been no electoral colleges, no Constitution even, because he received a plurality of all the votes ; and when the majority divide, a plurality, being the largest number that agree, become the majority, and can maintain their right to rule, as they did in this case, against all comers, the right to rule ultimately resolving itself into the power to rule. A majority may lose their right to rule by carelessness as well as by division. A minority united and inspired by an idea have a relative strength which may be very disproportionate to the number of their polls. Breckenridge was in a minority, even in the South, and a smaller minority than voted for him carried the South into secession. It is questionable if the Republican Party, which wrought a revolution, was ever a majority of the people, except in one or two moments of supreme enthusiasm. The majority should rule, if they can, and because they can, finally ; but much besides mere numbers goes to make a majority. "One with God is a majority."

As soon as the result of the election became known the cotton States began their preparations to secede. Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet Ministers had been preparing for secession ever since the defection of Douglas defeated the enslavement of Kansas ; had been distributing arms and munitions of war in the South where they could be easily seized ; had been scattering the naval force in distant seas, bankrupting the Treasury, dismantling the defences of the country, disabling it for an emergency. South Carolina having led the way about the middle of December, State after State adopted Ordinances of Secession, and withdrew from the Union. Day by day their Senators and Representatives took their departure from the Capital, some with a

sense of the gravity of the step, others lightly or in a spirit of bravado and defiance, few, if any, appearing to doubt that the American Union could be dissolved like a lump of sugar in a glass of water.

The theory that the Union was a league of sovereign States, from which any State could rightfully withdraw at its own pleasure, and the threat to exercise this alleged right in certain contingencies, were as old as the Government. Those who at length so lightly undertook to execute the threat had inherited the theory, and did not, nor do they now, regard their action as in any sense treasonable or rebellious.<sup>1</sup> The National Executive at that time was practically of their opinion. The party holding, on the contrary, that the Union was the work of the people, and that no State could withdraw from the Union except by consent of the people—that the States were a nation, not a mere league—was not in power. It was on the threshold of power, however, and it may seem strange that the secession leaders were permitted to depart at will as traitors. But if the Republicans could have caused their arrest and detention, and had done so, what then? Not one of them could have been convicted of treason, not one of them was tried for treason, even after four years of armed rebellion. If they had been arraigned, no jury of the vicinage would probably have returned a verdict of "Guilty." And while they were withdrawing from the Capital, secession purported to be a peaceable remedy for alleged grievances. The hope of a peaceful solution of the trouble was still cherished. It was only after the Southern leaders had returned home that secession became spoliation and war. Even then prominent Republicans believed that the storm would soon pass over and a satisfactory basis be found for reunion and peace. They had no conception of the tremendous struggle that was at hand, and, in any event, it is questionable if they could have done aught to avert or postpone it.

1. They might have sought the disruption of the Union peaceably, through an amendment to the Federal Constitution providing for it, or through a direct vote of the people of all the States upon the question. What they did was to avail themselves of the option which all men have to overthrow their governments, and if successful to live in peace as patriots and heroes; if defeated, to die as traitors and rebels.

There were three distinct elements in both Houses—the Northern, firm in its insistence on peaceful submission to the constitutional election of Lincoln; the Southern, resolved on separation from the North at all hazards, though little dreaming how prodigious were the hazards; the Middle, representing a mixed Northern and Southern constituency, inevitably more moderate than the extremes, and more strongly impelled to find a common standing ground. Great pressure came, particularly from the middle belt of the country, for another compromise with slavery, and it was an exceedingly critical winter for freedom—more critical than freedom had ever seen, or was ever to see again. Both Houses were full of “Union-saving” schemes. Possibly the North would have sacrificed principle to some extent for Union, and to avoid war; but the Southern leaders declined any terms, even though left to their own dictation. They had long been infatuated with the dream of an empire founded on slavery. The election of Lincoln furnished them the desired pretext. They entertained no doubt of their ability to establish and maintain it, and even to extend its sway over the Northern people, if they should presume to contest its establishment. In a word, one of those crises, in which Destiny works out its ends, and tendencies carry men along with the irresistible strength of a torrent, had reached its climax. It is not easy to see, even now, what better the representatives of freedom could have done than to stand firm and wait, as they did. Left to its own devices, secession speedily passed into actual rebellion, and from that moment its doom was certain. Slavery had bred in the men who upheld it a domineering spirit, which involved it and them and its progeny—secession, treason, and rebellion—in a common ruin.

Under pressure of the grave questions forced upon Congress by the emergency, Mr. Colfax attended to the business of his committee, looking out that the improvements and reforms initiated at the long session, especially the overland mail and telegraph, should not be lost between the two Houses. On the 10th of December he

wrote Mr. Matthews : " Your views and mine agree exactly as to compromise, except that I wish that the Personal Liberty bills were out of the way, and had never been passed. They have been useless, utterly—never prevented a single fugitive from being returned—and weaken our position by putting us in the attitude of quasi-nullification."

At a meeting of seventy-five border State Congressmen on the 28th of December, Senator Crittenden, of Kentucky, presiding, Colfax offered the following proposition—namely, " That the laws of the Union should be enforced and the Union of the States be maintained ; and that it is the duty of the Executive to protect the property of the United States with all the power placed in his hands by the Constitution."

In the latter part of January he introduced a bill withdrawing or suspending the postal service in certain Southern States, inasmuch as in them the postal laws could not be enforced. He said : " I cannot, for one, recognize as true what has been held in regard to seceding States being out of the Union. The bill is not placed upon that ground at all. If the United States courts had been allowed to remain in existence in the seceding States, we would not have felt it our duty to report this bill." Said the Washington correspondence of the *New York Times* : " This is the best and almost the only practical move which has yet been made for checkmating King Cotton. It is not only the right thing to be done, it is placed on its proper footing. Not recognizing secession, but simply the fact that, under existing circumstances, the mails cannot be protected."

Finding it to be the general desire, he consented to postpone consideration of the bill, had it re-committed, and two weeks later reported it again, modified so as to authorize the Postmaster-General to discontinue the service where the postal laws could not be maintained, reporting his action to Congress. It was debated in the morning hour, and coming up the next day, he said : " Although I have a speech of half an hour which I would like to de-

liver, yet as it was debated yesterday by one speech in favor and one against the proposition, and as gentlemen are desirous that it shall be immediately put to a vote, and inasmuch as I myself think that votes are better speeches than words, I shall forego the explanatory and statistical speech I desired to make, and move the previous question. If the House desires to keep on debating the bill for a week it can vote down the previous question." The bill passed both Houses and became law.

He regarded secession as treason. That the Whigs of the Revolution, the founders of the Republic, lived and labored to establish a nation on slavery, white or black, or bound together with a rope of sand, his mind could not take in at all. Between the imperial and the popular tendency existent in all civilized societies, represented in the early days, the former by Adams, the latter by Jefferson, and in later times by the second Adams and Jackson respectively, he inclined to the former; but the issue since he entered politics and now was not between the high organization of the Whigs and the loose organization of the Democrats, but between freedom and slavery, as to which the fathers were all ranged together. The phase of this issue now presented was simply whether the Government should enforce its laws and maintain the integrity of the Union or not. He had no doubt whatever of either the natural or the constitutional right of the nation to maintain its authority and preserve its unity at all hazards. At the same time, he desired to do this, if possible, without war. He was willing to go to the extreme verge of conciliation short of sacrificing principle. Speaking of this afterward, as editor of the *Register*, he said :

"They organized three Territories [Colorado, Nevada, Dakota] without a word about slavery in either of the bills, because under a fair Administration, which would not use its armies and its influence for slavery, and with governors and judges who were not hostile to free principles, they felt willing to risk the issue and to waive a positive prohibition, which would have only inflamed the public mind and thwarted the organization by a veto from Mr. Buchanan. To answer the clamor about Personal Liberty bills, they voted for a resolution, in which Republicans as radical as Mr. Lovejoy joined, recommending the repeal of such

as were not constitutional. To show that they had no designs on slavery in the States, as was so falsely charged upon them by their enemies, they voted unanimously that Congress had no right or power to interfere therein. When it was urged that possibly but seven slave States might remain in the Union, and that the North, with Pike's Peak [Colorado] and Nebraska, might soon number twenty-one free States, and that then, by a three-fourths vote, the Constitution might legally be so amended as to enable them to exercise that power, a large proportion of the Republicans [68 for to 64 against] aided in proposing to the States, as a proffer of peace, a constitutional amendment, declaring that under all circumstances the Constitution shall remain on that question exactly as it came from the hands of Washington and Madison, unchangeable ; thus assuring to the border States absolute protection against all interference. But when demands were made, in the shape of the Crittenden and of the Border State Compromise, that it should be declared that in all Territories south of 36° 30' slavery should exist and [slaves] be protected as property, irrespective of and even in opposition to the public will, by constitutional sanction, which should also be irrepealable, and that thus the Constitution should absolutely prohibit the people of the Territories in question from establishing freedom, even if they unanimously desired it, the answer was No ! And by that answer, for one, we are willing to live and die."

What the efforts at compromise were, what concessions were tendered by the North, and why, what concessions were demanded by the South, and why they were not granted, may be seen in this paragraph, taken from a long article in the *Register*, reviewing the entire field, published after the Thirty-sixth Congress had expired and the editor was at home again.

Mr. Lincoln's attitude was this :

" I will suffer death before I will consent, or advise my friends to consent, to any concession or compromise that looks like buying the privilege of taking possession of the Government to which we have a constitutional right, because, whatever I might think of the various propositions before Congress, I should regard any concession in the face of menace as the destruction of the Government itself, and a consent on all hands that our system shall be brought down to a level with the existing disorganized state of affairs in Mexico. But this thing will hereafter be, as it is now, in the hands of the people ; and if they desire to call a convention to remove any grievances complained of, or to give new guarantees for the permanence of vested rights, it is not mine to oppose."

The Secessionists had established a reign of terror at home, for secession was nowhere popular save possibly in

South Carolina. Seeing after the admission of free California under the compromise measures of 1850 that not another slave State would ever be admitted into the Union, they had nominated secession candidates in the South, and been ignominiously beaten. Now they overawed opposition by violence, and thus carried the day. Followed the seizure of forts, of arsenals, dockyards, and Government vessels on the Southern coasts and in Southern waters ; of mints, custom-houses, hospitals, and public buildings in the seceded States ; the firing on the Star of the West in Charleston Harbor ; the organization of troops and of a central Government at Montgomery. Of all the forts in those regions, Fort Pickens and Fort Sumter alone remained in the hands of the Government three months after Lincoln's election. It beginning to appear that the felonious work of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet officers was to be questioned, they resigned, and went South. The President may have been helpless, but to the common people his attitude was that of an imbecile or a traitor. His new Cabinet Ministers were already establishing a different *régime* when, happily, his term expired and Lincoln's began.

The work of the session was a tariff act, the admission of Kansas, the organization of Colorado, Nevada, and Dakota as Territories, an overland telegraph and daily mail. Bills authorizing the President to call out volunteers and to collect the customs duties on shipboard off the seized ports failed.

On the 31st of January (1861) Colfax writes his mother : "The excitement here is intense, but whatever the result you will find me here at my post to the end." In the same letter Mrs. Colfax writes : "We are surrounded by conspirators and traitors. There is a plot to seize the Capital, if they can do it successfully. Several companies of flying artillery have been ordered here by General Scott, and stationed in different parts of the city, and more are expected. General Scott wishes to send for the Seventh Regiment of New York, and for the Maryland militia, but the President, who is more than half a traitor,



and cares not how much trouble he leaves on the next Administration, will not give his consent. We are not personally alarmed, because we are in the line of our duty, and that is the safest place.”

The editor's one letter of this winter to the *Register* recommends the choice of postmasters in his district, in case of a scramble by an election. This advice was generally adopted. Still he was half crazed by the rush for office. Three months before Lincoln's inauguration he wrote: “Letters pour in by the hundreds—you can imagine what for—not from Indiana alone, but from all over. Blank wants to be postmaster at Blank, although it is a town of eight thousand inhabitants, and he lives ten miles out in the country; says he must have it; and so on all through.” And two weeks after the inauguration he writes his mother: “It makes me heart-sick. All over the country our party are by the ears, fighting over offices worth one hundred to five hundred dollars. My district, except at La Porte, Michigan City, Valparaiso, and Logansport, gets along better, but it is awful at each of these places. And in New York even, had I the power, I could officer the whole Custom-House from my own correspondence.” This was a new experience.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto his candidates for President had been beaten. The dispensing of office seems to be the *bête noir* of popular leaders. Still, the dispenser of office has much the best of the seeker for office, and perhaps the latter is the more deserving of sympathy. It may be supposed, at all events, that Mr. Colfax became accustomed to it in time, and that it ceased to worry him.

1. Political doctrinaires had not then discovered a way in which the Representatives of the people, and even the Chief Executive, might shirk a very important part of their duties—namely, by referring applicants for office to a board of examiners.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THIRTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS.

1861-1863.

LINCOLN INAUGURATED.—COLFAX GENERALLY COMMENDED FOR POST-MASTER-GENERAL.—CIVIL WAR, SPECIAL SESSION.—CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON POST-OFFICES AND POST-ROADS.—HIS STANDING IN THIS CONGRESS.—DEFENCE OF FREMONT.—FAVORS CONFISCATION ACT.—REFORMS IN THE POSTAL SERVICE.—WAR IN EARNEST.—RENOMINATED, RECRUITING, CANVASS AGAINST TURPIE. — BARELY ELECTED, CONGRATULATIONS.—DISCOURAGEMENT IN THE COUNTRY.—FAVORS THE ADMISSION OF WEST VIRGINIA.—FIRE IN THE REAR.—ANSWER OF CONGRESS.—CODIFICATION OF THE POSTAL LAWS.

MUCH against his inclination, but in deference to well-founded advice, the President-elect passed through Baltimore *en route* to the National Capital in the night, and partly disguised. He was inaugurated without mishap, Mr. Douglas, the choice of one third of the people for President, standing at his side, actually holding his hat during the ceremony. His inaugural address prefigured a firm yet patient policy ; his Cabinet contained all his competitors for the chief magistracy, presumably the strongest men in the country.

An unusually strong and widespread demonstration had been made in favor of Mr. Colfax for the place of Post-master-General.<sup>1</sup> He was commended by the Legislatures and Governors of nearly every Northern and Border State ; by many Congressional delegations and Presidential Electors ; unanimously by the publishers of the

1. It had been canvassed since the nominations. "I see you talk about the Post-master-Generalship," he writes his mother in June, 1860. "Members of all parties talk about it, and many seem to regard it as a settled thing if we win. I do not, however. It is too big a step for one stride, and besides, I don't know Mr. Lincoln personally, although we correspond."

great Eastern cities ; and very generally by the press. Mr. Lincoln called the Hon. Caleb B. Smith, also of Indiana, into his Cabinet, instead of Colfax. Mr. Smith was an old Whig, who had been strongly supported for Postmaster-General twelve years previously, when President Taylor was inaugurated. Failing to receive the appointment, he had gone out of politics and out of the State, and was now but recently returned. He and Lincoln had been intimate during their service in the Twenty-ninth Congress. He was at the Chicago Convention, seconded Lincoln's nomination, and used his influence to bring Indiana to the support of Lincoln. On the other hand, Colfax had supported Bates against Lincoln, and his friend Greeley had helped to defeat Lincoln for the Illinois Senatorship in 1858. The Republicans had carried the Legislature of Indiana, and the State had a seat in the United States Senate to bestow at that time, for which Caleb B. Smith and Henry S. Lane, the Governor-elect, were candidates. If Smith went into the Cabinet Lane would get the Senatorship, and Lieutenant-Governor-elect Morton would be Governor. All of these men, inclusive of Smith, were warm friends of Colfax, but their own advancement was paramount ; and so Smith had strong support from Colfax's own State. Mr. Lincoln subsequently wrote Colfax as follows : " I had partly made up my mind in favor of Mr. Smith, not conclusively of course, before your name was mentioned in that connection. When you were brought forward, I said : ' Colfax is a young man, is already in position, is running a brilliant career, and is sure of a bright future in any event. With Smith it is now or never.' I considered either abundantly competent, and decided on the ground I have stated."

Major Anderson, left to his own discretion in Charleston Harbor by President Buchanan, had evacuated Fort Moultrie as untenable, and concentrated his small force in Fort Sumter. The South Carolina rebels protested, and demanded its surrender, and Buchanan had been good enough to treat with them about it. It was now discovered that the fort was but slightly provisioned, and

must be either relieved or evacuated. At first the new Administration was inclined to choose the latter alternative ; but before April was a week old, for some reason, probably popular pressure, the wind changed ; it was resolved to reinforce Sumter, and word to that effect was sent to the Governor of South Carolina. Secession was hanging fire in the Border States ; " blood had to be sprinkled in their faces " to bring them to the mark ; so the Confederate Secretary of War ordered General Beauregard to reduce the fort. Major Anderson having declined to surrender it, fire was opened on the fort April 12th, forcing Anderson to capitulate within thirty-six hours.

On the 15th President Lincoln issued a proclamation calling out the militia of the several States to the number of seventy-five thousand to suppress combinations in the Southern States against the laws, and summoning both Houses of Congress to assemble in extraordinary session on the 4th of July. We had not at that moment a thousand soldiers at command for the defence of Washington. We could neither feed nor move five thousand men. We had less than a score of war ships. We could hardly borrow a few thousands at ten or twelve per cent. Six or eight months later, notwithstanding the general underrating of the meaning of the crisis, resulting in the calling of one soldier for three months where ten should have been called for four years—notwithstanding the exceeding disappointment and the bad effect of the field of Bull Run, we had six hundred thousand three-years' men in the ranks ; we had arms, munitions, and supplies for a million men ; we had a complete commissariat and transportation service for a continental war ; we had hundreds of war ships, were blockading two thousand miles of coast, and the people took fifty millions of Government seven per cent stock at par in a single day. Such was the effect of the firing on Sumter.

When the smoke of the bombardment lifted it showed Charleston Harbor under blockade, Fort Pickens reinforced and saved, troops enough concentrated to render the Capital momentarily safe, and regiments of militia *en route* to Washington from half the Northern States. The

first company from Northern Indiana, Andrew Anderson, Jr., Captain, left South Bend for the rendezvous at Indianapolis on the 18th. The President was tendered forty thousand men in excess of his call ; in a second proclamation he accepted them and eighteen thousand seamen. He directed the increase of the regular army, and proclaimed the Southern coast under blockade. The garrisons of Forts McHenry and Monroe were strengthened, the Baltimore mob was quelled, Cairo occupied and fortified, secession at St. Louis stamped out, and the Union sentiment in Kentucky and Maryland encouraged to assert itself. On the other hand, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Eastern Virginia were carried over to the Confederacy, with little if any regard to the wishes of the people ; the Confederate capital was removed from Montgomery to Richmond, and Southern troops were concentrated in Virginia. Western Virginia took a decided stand against secession, and the rebel forces in that quarter were soon flying before the Indiana and Ohio Volunteers.

Mr. Colfax was on the wing during these weeks—to St. Joseph, Mo., as the guest of the city, and on confidential missions for the Government in many of the States and in Canada. The volunteers of the different States were anxious not to be outdone by one another ; and when Colfax procured immediate marching orders for three regiments of Indiana Volunteers, and secured permission for these three-months' men to serve through the war, it was esteemed the highest service he could render them. He got them Minié rifles instead of the muskets first distributed, and having done all he could for them, he says in his paper : “ Thousands of anxious hearts will follow them, rejoicing in their successes and mourning over their losses, and none with deeper interest than the writer, who happens to know, personally, more of them than any other one they leave behind.” He followed them, and regiment after regiment that left his district and the State afterward, with a solicitude changing more and more into pain as they came not back, harder to bear than it would have been to go with them and share their fortunes.

His place was in Congress, not in the field. Mankind pay their highest tribute to the successful soldier, not perhaps without reason. Yet it would seem that in a free country, where the people can give or withhold as they please, it is easier to destroy than to create armies; that higher powers are needed for the latter than for the former. With the people all of one mind, as they were at first, the task was organization and administration only. But as the strain was prolonged and increased, as the prospect darkened and hope grew faint, as the natural selfishness of men and of parties materialized, the task became complex and difficult. It afforded, indeed, ample field for the utmost powers of the popular leader. The people had to be convinced that they ought to loan the Government thousands of millions of dollars; that they ought to vote unprecedented taxes; that they must enroll themselves in mass for conscription; subject themselves to martial law—in a word, make the sacrifices necessary to prosecute a vast war against a determined foe to a successful issue. The statesmen of those times were as capable and as heroic as the soldiers, and their work, though less showy, was equally important.

Before the convening of Congress in special session, July 4th, many prominent people and newspapers had mentioned Mr. Colfax in connection with the Speakership of the House. While he was on the way East his paper announced that he was not a candidate, and he made a similar announcement on the floor of the House previous to the first ballot for Speaker. Galusha A. Grow, of Pennsylvania, was elected Speaker on the second ballot. The Republicans had control of both Houses, 106 to 72 in the House, 31 to 17 in the Senate, with an additional 28 in the House and 5 in the Senate, who, although not Republicans, were supporters of the Union cause. Congress was, in fact, all but unanimous. Thaddeus Stevens was appointed Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Colfax was given his old place at the head of the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads.

President Lincoln's message recited the precipitation

of war by the South, and maintained that the President could not decline to accept the issue thus presented. Not only was the existence of the Union at stake, but the existence of popular government. He asked Congress to give him the authority and the means to make the contest short and decisive. Congress approved all his acts to date, authorized him to call into service for three years or during the war half a million volunteers, to increase the regular army and enlarge the navy. It appropriated two hundred and fifty millions for the military and naval service, provided for the collection of the customs duties of the insurrectionary States on shipboard, and authorized a loan of two hundred and fifty millions on Treasury stock. It passed a tax bill imposing an income tax, a direct tax of twenty millions, and increasing the number and rate of tariff duties. At the same time Congress adopted with but two dissenting votes the Crittenden Resolution, declaring that the present deplorable Civil War is waged only "to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution, and to preserve the Union with all the dignity and rights of the several States unimpaired ; and that as soon as these objects are accomplished, the war ought to cease." A bill was passed, purely as a war measure, freeing slaves employed in the rebel military or naval service, and declaring property used for insurrectionary purposes lawful prize.

Mr. Colfax brought in a bill, which became law, providing that soldiers' letters should be carried by the post without prepayment of postage, the recipient paying the postage—a facility extended to the naval service at the regular session. He opposed the levying of a direct tax, believing that it would bear unequally and be very unpopular. He offered an amendment in Committee of the Whole, striking out of the tax bill the direct tax of thirty millions, and filling its place with a tax on stocks, bonds, mortgages, and incomes. Defeated in committee, he subsequently offered a resolution in the House, instructing the Ways and Means Committee to strike out the direct tax, now reduced to twenty millions, and instead thereof to

call in the surplus revenue distributed to the States in 1836, on the stipulation that it should be returned when wanted ; to modify the tariff by reducing the free list, increasing such duties as would bear increase, and decreasing prohibitory duties. Striking out the direct tax was not agreed to, but the event proved him right. Very little was realized from it, and it was soon abandoned.

On the 18th of July he writes home : " For the first time in the seven-sessions I have been here I was absent from my seat yesterday while the House was legislating. There was no important measure likely to be voted on, and I could not resist the temptation to witness the advance on Fairfax Court House." War was new to him, he wanted to know as much as he could about it, so he put in sixteen hours of a July day, afoot and on horseback, to see an army on the march. Charged with having been in the panic flight from Bull Run, he said he was not there, but he would have been, had he known or thought of the good he might have done in assisting the wounded to hospital, and otherwise. The extra session closed on the 6th of August.

He spent the autumn in editorial work, and in talking at war meetings and rendezvous camps. His former competitors for Congress, Messrs. Fitch and Eddy, had his heartiest assistance in raising each a regiment in his district. By the end of September Indiana had filled her quota of the first half million, and he called for conscription to even up, so that Indiana might go on and raise her part of a second half million. Recruiting went on without cessation.

About the 20th of September he visited his old friend Fremont, then in command of the Western Department at St. Louis. Generals Sigel and Lyon had failed to stay the advance of the Confederate General Price, Lyon had been killed at Wilson's Creek, and Colonel Mulligan forced to surrender at Lexington, with twenty-seven hundred men. General Fremont was held responsible in many quarters for not supporting Lyon and for not relieving Mulligan. He was charged with having surrounded himself with a



scoundrelly lot of adventurers, with waste, and even with corruption ; with constructing useless gunboats ; laying out and commencing a system of fortifications for St. Louis ; and with much else. On the 31st of August he issued a proclamation, declaring the lives and property of men found in arms within his lines forfeited and their slaves free. This act was enthusiastically approved by the radical element of the Union party, but President Lincoln annulled it, because, as he afterward said, he " did not [then] deem military emancipation an indispensable necessity." Frank Blair was dictator in Missouri until Fremont went there. He and Fremont failed to agree, and Blair had sufficient influence to have Fremont superseded by General Hunter about the 1st of November.

This is not the place to canvass the merits or demerits of John C. Fremont as a soldier, or otherwise ; but it may be remarked that for the most part of his command of four months in Missouri he was without men, without arms, without money, and without transportation ; that in spite of this he organized an army, took the field, drove the enemy back toward Arkansas, and was on the eve of the delivery of a decisive battle—the same won by Generals Curtis and Sigel at Pea Ridge, the next March—when he was relieved. But for his much-ridiculed gunboats, co-operating with General Grant, under Admiral Porter, the Tennessee, the Cumberland, and the Mississippi could never have been cleared. A year later the Administration was forced to resort to military emancipation, or lose the cause and the country.

The military operations of the season, culminating in the Union disaster of Bull Run,<sup>1</sup> were about a stand-off. If Washington was safe when Congress met in December, so was Richmond. But the political effect of operations

1. A Washington correspondent of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* says that Senator Chandler, of Michigan, called on the President after this battle, and found him weeping and wringing his hands. " My God ! Chandler, I'm glad to see you. Oh, we are ruined, ruined ! What shall be done ? " " Done, Mr. President, done ? Write out your proclamation, calling for three hundred thousand men at once." After some hesitation, which was finally overcome by Chandler's urgency, Lincoln did so, and Chandler carried it off to be telegraphed to the Associated Press. Its publication reassured the people. Lincoln had strong hearts around him.

in the field on North and South respectively was by no means a stand-off. On the contrary, the 21st of July substantially reversed the relative strength of the parties to the war. In April Disunion was favored only by a decided minority in the South. December saw the whole South arrayed for Disunion. In April the general enthusiasm in the North swept all along together. In December division of the North, on the old political line, was become quite marked. So that in December, roughly speaking, instead of the whole North and half the South maintaining the Union against half the South, as in April, it was half the North maintaining the Union against the whole South and nearly half of the North. True, many Democrats supported the war, and but for them the Union could not have been preserved ; but as an organization the Democratic Party henceforth opposed the war, and did whatever it could and dared to embarrass and obstruct it.

The member from the Ninth District of Indiana was a conspicuous figure in this Congress, which had more and graver responsibilities to meet than any Congress in our history. An observer wrote to the *Indiana State Journal* : " He is as much the master spirit of the House as Thaddeus Stevens, because over all, regardless of party, he wields a wider and deeper influence, while in debate he stands among the invincible on the floor. He is the most remarkable man in Congress."

On his birthday (March 23d) his mother wrote him :

" Many happy returns of this New Year's day to you, my dear son, and may every one find you happier, both in your temporal and spiritual life. . . . Dear Schuyler, how I have enjoyed reading your defence of your friend Fremont ! It is a noble speech, and well might the Squire write, as he did, in raptures about it. He always was proud of you, but this winter it appears as if he cannot say enough of the influence you have and the respect paid you. What a gratification it would be to me to hear you speak once in that House ! And how nobly you did defend Fremont !"<sup>1</sup>

1. Mr. Matthews writes Mrs. Matthews on various dates between November 30th, 1861, and March 8th, 1862 :

" It is supposed there will be some sharp times here about Fremont ; some members say they will denounce the Cabinet and the President from their places. Although Mr. Lincoln has denied himself to everybody, he sent for Schuyler last night, and was closeted

The Hon. Francis P. Blair was at the height of his fame. He and General Lyon had saved Missouri. His brother was Postmaster-General, he himself had received forty votes for Speaker on the organization of this House. To his savage attack on General Fremont in the House, Mr. Colfax replied in the same place, demonstrating from official documents that under the most incredible difficulties and embarrassments Fremont had made a record in Missouri of which any general might be proud. The speech was a hit, the radical Republicans responding to it most heartily. The *New York Tribune* pronounced it "impregnable." He received scores of letters of congratulation and thanks. A conductor on the Brooklyn Street Railway said to Mr. Henry A. Bowen :

"Have you read Colfax's speech?"

"Yes; what do you think of it?"

"Well, I think Fremont a great rascal, and I do not believe he can be vindicated, and I do not think Colfax really did it; but, my God, what an effort! Old Blair was completely used up."

with him for several hours. Schuyler says it will all be fixed satisfactorily, and I hope it may be."

"Schuyler made a speech yesterday on the death of Mason. It was the only speech listened to; the House was still as death; but when the others spoke and read their speeches, members were running about in every direction, and talking. I felt that we had no right to be ashamed of our boy. He is getting large and stout; I never saw him looking so well."

"It does look as though Schuyler had more influence than almost any other person in the House. He is so truthful, and has such a pleasant, easy way of getting along, that he seems to be able to do what no other person can. I notice he always has a lot hanging around, advising and getting instructions, and when he undertakes to cross the chamber he will be stopped twenty times to answer some question or to chat about something. Nobody seems to get out of patience with him, and everybody has a smile for him and a kind greeting. Without partiality and without question, he is the ablest man in the House. I used to look upon some men—off at a distance—as being ahead of him for statesmanship, etc., but they don't begin to have the influence in the House that he does. He seldom speaks, but when he does everybody listens, for they understand there is something to be done, and he uses no more words than necessary. Members know that he doesn't talk for the sake of talking."

"Yesterday Schuyler made a magnificent speech in the House in defence of Fremont. Blair spoke, and it came on the House unexpectedly. It was unprepared, and was a magnificent burst of eloquence. I don't think I ever heard him make a more happy effort. He spoke an hour and fifteen minutes, and as soon as he had finished the House adjourned. Members went up to him from all quarters and complimented him; the galleries came down and shook hands with him—a great number of them. The speech was very highly praised by those even who are enemies of Fremont. Schuyler may well be proud of his position in Congress."

A gentleman wrote him from La Porte, Ind. : " You have won the lasting gratitude of thousands by your defence of Fremont, and those who don't believe you have entirely vindicated him honor your manliness in espousing your friend's cause when it was at the darkest." A few days after the speech Fremont was appointed to a new command in Western Virginia, but he was dissatisfied with the treatment accorded him, and soon retired from active service. He was the favorite of the " Radicals," and radicalism was not yet in vogue with either the Administration or General Halleck, the Chief Commander of the army.

January 3d, 1862, Mr. Matthews writes home :

" Last night Horace Greeley lectured at the Smithsonian Institute. The President, Mr. Chase, Seward, Speaker Grow, and other distinguished people were on the stand. Greeley made a fine address, and was loudly cheered. During the evening he spoke of the demand of the people for the confiscation of the property of the rebels, slaves included, and alluded to the Fremont doctrine as being a little in advance of the law of Congress, but not of the public demand. No sooner had the name of Fremont escaped his lips than a tremendous cheer broke out from the whole house. It was vociferous and prolonged for more than a minute. They stamped, clapped their hands, pounded with their canes, and yelled tremendously. It was a surprise to Old Abe, for he turned quite pale and sunk down in his chair, as much as to say : ' Let me get out of here.' "

The new year (1862) opened with the victories of Grant at Donelson and Shiloh, and the defeat of Price at Pea Ridge, followed by the fall of New Orleans, of Norfolk, of Pulaski, of Memphis, the evacuation of Corinth, the occupation of Chattanooga, and the six days' retreat from before Richmond.<sup>1</sup> Washington was filled with the sick and wounded, and thousands had to be sent to the more Northern cities. " You may theorize about war and its woes," Colfax writes to his paper ; " you may imagine that you

1. On the fall of Donelson Colfax announced it in the House. The scene that ensued defied description. Even the reporters, orderly among the disorderly, echoed the cheers that rose from floor and galleries. " The thick veil that has hidden the rebel States from our eyes suddenly drops," writes Colfax. " Army after army surrenders, and the people welcome the old flag with all the old affection." Everybody believed the rebellion to be tottering to its fall, but not yet for many long, weary months. The Avenger had appeared, but his work was still to do. Donelson was the first sign-manual of Grant, but no eye pierced to his last at Appomattox, and scanned the acres and acres of graves between.

know from overlooking a battle-field what is its cost ; but till you go through the wards of an army hospital you cannot realize the sad havoc of shot and shell." Everybody vied with everybody in attentions to the stricken. The wives and daughters of Congressmen and Cabinet officers became hospital nurses. Under this experience Congress and the people began to see some things in a new light.

Early in the session Mr. Colfax had written to the *Register* that "slavery is at last conceded to be a positive element of strength to the rebellion, and the Republicans in caucus have agreed to strip the rebels of their slaves and all their property." The substance of the Crittenden Resolution of the extra session was introduced again ; Mr. Colfax voted that it lie on the table, and when criticised for his vote, replied that "once making that apology was enough ; and furthermore, I do not regard the confiscation of everything a traitor owns or claims—horses, lands, slaves, goods, money, life, and all—as in conflict with that resolution, and I intend to vote for a bill of that character if wisely framed." This declaration fairly represented the sentiment of the Republicans, and illustrates the nature and extent of the effect of events during the first year of the war.

The President was intent on compensated emancipation, in co-operation with the Border slave States. He was opposed to confiscation, except in a comparatively harmless form. "It is whispered around here that the President will veto the House confiscation bills if they pass the Senate," a Chicago friend writes Mr. Colfax. "If he does, our party will explode, the biggest and best end of it repudiating him as a pro-slavery man." But soon after the battle of Shiloh the President approved an act abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia ; and during the fighting before Richmond, he approved an act forever excluding slavery from the Territories, present and prospective. A new article of war was adopted, dismissing from the service any officer who should thereafter act as a slave-catcher. The two Houses were perfecting a bill to raise a million dollars a day by taxation ; also a bill to confiscate the property of certain classes of rebels, and to

free the slaves of all who should not return to their allegiance upon sixty days' warning.

On confidential terms with Mr. Lincoln, Colfax was the medium through whom Mr. Greeley and other editors and leaders communicated with the President. After the failure of the Peninsular campaign Mr. Medill writes him : " The Union is in awful peril. We have fought for ' Union and slavery ' for sixteen months. The crisis has come at last. One or the other must be given up, both cannot endure. We as a nation have rowed against Niagara's stream, but have drifted steadily toward the chasm, and the roar of the cataract can be heard by all but the wilfully deaf. The Governors have petitioned the President, and he has *consented* to receive three hundred thousand more volunteers. But they will not come. Tell the President he must call louder. He must either touch the popular heart by calling on men to fight for ' Union and Liberty,' or he must resort to conscription, and draft his recruits. Tell him not to be deceived. He needs these recruits *now*. If he adopts the former policy, a million men will obey the summons. But he must give us freedom-loving generals to lead them."

Mr. Greeley writes him on the 20th of March : " When you see Old Abe I wish you would try to ascertain just how and why McClellan is continued in command on the Potomac. I have made many fresh enemies by urging his removal, when I understood the publication of the President's ' war orders ' gave notice that he must go. If their publication did not mean that, what did it mean ? Why that order of the 27th of January to move on the 22d of February should have been published, unless to lay on McClellan the righteous blame of having let the rebels escape, is to me utterly incomprehensible." <sup>1</sup>

1. Mr. Greeley writes him in January, 1862: " As to going into the Cabinet, that depends on who are to be your associates. If it is to be a strong, energetic, driving, fighting Cabinet, go in ! If not, stay out ! I still believe the war can be finished in three calendar months, if it is in the hands of men who mean something ; and if it is not, it cannot be closed too soon. I protest against the appropriation of a dollar for war purposes for the next fiscal year. If the rebels are not whipped by June, they never will be ; and I will justify the European Powers in demanding as well as extending a recognition of their independence. And this Congress must never adjourn until this matter is settled."

Again, November 16th : " Since the President has shown a disposition to go straight ahead, so fast and so far as circumstances will warrant, I want to do all I can to strengthen him with the country. If, then, he should desire the public to be enlightened in any particular direction, or wish Congress not to be pressed in favor of confiscation, or any other measure, I will endeavor, so far as I can, to defer to his judgment. I write this to you that you may speak of it to him if you think best, and he may indicate through you, or any one else, such considerations as he would wish to have presented to the public."

The military successes turned to Dead-Sea apples as the months passed. Bragg was able to threaten Louisville in the autumn, and Lee invaded Maryland. It was a terrible year for the Union cause, closing with the vain sacrifice of thousands at Fredericksburg. With unbounded devotion on the part of the people, there was total incapacity to utilize it. Mr. Colfax stood with one ear to the despairing cry of the country, with the other to the difficulties that beset the President. In those trying times he was to the President's troubled life what bursts of sunshine are to a stormy day. The two men were much together. Through his connection with the press and his wide personal acquaintance, he had unusual facilities for both sounding and influencing public sentiment. His experience, his judgment, the entire weight of his influence, were at Mr. Lincoln's service. Mr. Lincoln had no more trusted or useful friend.

His support was considerate. The President was encompassed with difficulties that impatient handling would have increased instead of diminished. Patience was, perhaps, the quality most essential in the Presidential office, and impatience had become the habit of the great Republican editors. While sympathizing with all his heart in the aspirations and purposes of the radical Republicans, Colfax refrained from criticism or comment that could only embarrass and weaken. " I regret," he said in the House, " that the President modified Fremont's proclamation. But I know Mr. Lincoln to be as honest and con-

scientious and as true-hearted a man as walks the earth, and I know he must have taken this position because he felt, looking over the whole field, that it seemed to be his duty."

Again: "I have endeavored to restrain myself from strictures on any general in the field," he writes to the *Register*; "and while expressing a regret and a solicitude that I cannot conceal, I hope the success of General McClellan's plans will prove that every step that he has taken, and that every step that he has not taken, since last July, has been for the best." He writes Mr. Wheeler privately, April 4th: "For months I have lost confidence in him, but this is the first time I have given it expression. The Administration retain him, fearing to break up the unity of the North by his removal, as the Democrats stand by him almost to a man."

He desired the dismissal of the unwilling or incompetent generals, he desired the emancipation and use of the blacks as soldiers, he desired a sweeping confiscation. On this he spoke in part as follows:

"When I return home I shall miss many a familiar face that has looked on me in past years with the beaming eye of friendship. I shall see those who have come home to linger and die, with constitutions broken down by exposure, by wounds, and disease. I shall see women, clothed now in widows' weeds, whom I have met Sabbath after Sabbath leaning on a beloved husband's arm, as they went to the peaceful sanctuary. I shall see orphans destitute, with no one to train their infant steps in paths of usefulness. I shall see the swelling hillock in the graveyard—where after life's fitful fever we shall all be gathered—betokening that there, prematurely cut off by a rifle-ball aimed at the life of the Republic, a patriot soldier sleeps. I shall see desolate hearthstones and woe and anguish on every side. This suffering and these sacrifices have been entailed on us as part of the fearful cost of saving our country from destruction. Standing here between the living and the dead, we cannot avoid the grave responsibility thrust upon us.

"When we return to them, the people will ask us: 'When our brave soldiers went forth to the battle field, what did you civilians in the halls of Congress do to cripple the power of the rebels whom they confronted at the cannon's mouth? What legislation did you enact to punish those who were responsible, by their perjury and treason, for this suffering, desolation, and death? Did you levy heavy taxes on us to pay the expenses of a war into which we were unwillingly forced, and allow the



men who are the authors of it to go comparatively free? Did you leave the slaves of these rebels to plant, to sow, to till and reap their farms, and thus support their masters in the armies of treason, while they, thus strengthened, met us in the field? Did you require the patriots in the loyal States to give up business, property, home, health, and life for their country, and yet hesitate about using the law-making power of the Republic to subject traitors to the penalties, as to property and possessions, which their crimes deserve?’

“I should feel as if worthy of the severest condemnation for life if I did not mete out to those who are the cause of all this woe and anguish and death, beside which the vast expenses of the war dwindle into insignificance, the sternest penalties of the law, while they still remain in arms in their parricidal endeavor to blot this country from the map of the world.”

After almost infinite discussion a confiscation act was finally placed upon the statute-book, but it had little more than moral effect. Acts of Congress and executive proclamations revived the sinking hopes of the North, by committing the country to the overthrow of slavery and to real as distinguished from sham war; but these were vain against the rebels so long as they could withstand our armies. When they could no longer do that, the object of these measures had been accomplished.

Mr. Colfax had the knack of getting things before the House as well as before the President. He introduced resolutions, instructing committees to bring in bills, or to do so if expedient, with reference to taxation, to the methods of investigating committees, to the punishment of fraudulent contractors, to the modification of the Fugitive-Slave Law, and to various other matters. He protested in vain against referring to conferrees the three hundred and fifteen Senate amendments to the tax bill, contending that conference committees should be veritably a last resort, and especially on so important a bill, and one which they must induce the country to pass, after having passed it themselves. He introduced a bill reducing mileage from forty to twenty cents per mile. The House amended it, so as to abolish all mileage, and then passed it. This assured its rejection by the Senate. He was charged with doing this for “Buncombe,” a cheap impugning of his motives, which did not deter him from correcting the abuse, so far

as it was within his power. Respecting some of these measures, he wrote to his paper as follows :

“ I need scarcely say to my constituents that no supposed necessity can ever induce me to condemn any citizen on the finding of a commission sitting in secret. Unless the person attacked is given the opportunity to confront his accusers, I cannot condemn him, even if he were my bitterest enemy. But men guilty of fraud against the Government should be punished as private robbers. I have been pressing for laws thus to punish them upon public trial and conviction. And if a Cabinet Minister is supposed to have acted fraudulently in his high office, he should, in justice to him and the country, be impeached while he is still in office, and thus given a chance to defend himself if he can. These things seem obvious to me, but they are not by any means the practice.”

His bill to punish fraudulent contractors as felons became a law. They were also subjected to trial by court-martial, under the Articles of War. On a proposition to declare the seceded States Territories, he broke from the Radicals, and voted to lay it on the table. He writes to his paper that he “ holds secession to be a nullity ; that the sovereignty of the State inheres in the loyal people of the State ; that we should, by military occupation and provisional government, preserve the existence of the State in the loyal people, under the clause of the Constitution which requires Congress to guarantee to every State a republican form of government.”

With almost parental solicitude he watched over the interests of his immediate constituents in the army, sparing no personal exertion to serve them, contributing freely to relieve their families in case of distress, and to make the sick, the wounded, and the disabled soldiers comfortable.<sup>1</sup> He induced the President to stop the release of Southern prisoners on parole without a corresponding release of

1. To his wife he writes, in April, 1862 : “ I send you all the money I have in my pocketbook, or will have till May 4th. My printing bill has been very heavy this session, having sent out thirty-five thousand [documents] so far to my district, costing three hundred dollars, and my donations have emptied my pockets. I wish I could send more to you, but I hope this will do till week after next.” “ Besides seven hundred dollars he sent in aid of sick and wounded soldiers before his return home,” says the *La Porte Herald*, “ and the help he is constantly giving the families of soldiers, he has given seven hundred dollars in bounties, and made great personal exertion to rouse people to their duty. No man, except maybe in the Border States, is making more personal sacrifices for carrying on the war than Mr. Colfax.”

Northern prisoners. "I told the President that some of my constituents, captured many months ago, were still held, and that their friends and families could not even hear from them, and I urged the stopping of this one-sided discharge of prisoners."

The tax bill was in Committee of the Whole three weeks, and occupying the Chair constantly, he took little part in its discussion, save to oppose a tax on newspaper advertising, holding it to be both unwise and unjust. With the certainty of universal and extraordinary taxation for years, his committee felt it to be a duty to make the postal service self-sustaining, and thus relieve the Treasury of an annual deficit charge of some three millions. Bills were accordingly brought in to abolish the franking privilege, and to require newspapers carried by mail-trains, in or out of the mail-bags, to pay postage. The bill abolishing the franking privilege provided for the mailing of public matter without prepayment, the recipient paying the postage. Striking out this provision, to make sure of the rejection of the bill by the Senate, the House passed the bill. The Senate had from time to time sent such bills to the House; this was the first bill of the kind the House had ever sent to the Senate. The Senate tinkered it a little, and dropped it. Colfax had done his part in good faith, however, and with one voice the newspapers commended it.

But when the other branch of his proposed reform was reached, they as unanimously denounced it. From the institution of the postal service down to 1845-51, the policy was to make it self-sustaining; and no mailable matter was permitted on mail-trains except in the mail-bags. Cheap postage, regardless of other considerations, was adopted in 1845-51; but the law still prohibited the carrying of letters on mail-trains outside of the mail-bags, and authorized the carrying of newspapers in that manner only as merchandise, like the other stock of a bookstore or news-stand, and to dealers, not to subscribers. The practice had grown up without authority of law, and by analogy against law.

He explained all this, and showed that the payments for mail transportation had increased three hundred per cent in ten years, on the plea that the mail must be carried, no matter how bulky. In these ten years the revenue from letters had nearly doubled, while that from bulky matter had fallen off seventy-five per cent, ten per cent in the last year. The road between Philadelphia and New York was paid three hundred and seventy-five dollars a mile, and every mail-train carried thousands of newspapers side by side with the regular mail, for which nothing was received. He showed that the people, in the towns of the Northwest for example, buying the metropolitan papers of newsdealers, paid ten or fifteen per cent more than they would if they received them by mail. All in vain ; the newspapers would not have it ; the bill was laid on the table.

They were denouncing the Chairman of the House Postal Committee in full cry, when the bill taxing them on their paper, on their dispatches, on their advertising, and, in common with everybody else, on their incomes, was reported from the Committee of Ways and Means. On this they took a new trail. His proposal was the little finger of Solomon, this the loins of Rehoboam. As he had advocated his own proposition from a sense of duty, regardless of the outcry, so he now opposed, though unsuccessfully, the tax on advertising, as one tax too many on the newspapers. "A man is not fit for public life," said he, "if he will not follow his convictions, though the heavens fall."

The railways had superseded the mail-coaches as mail-carriers, and having no competition as to speed, they charged such rates for transportation as they pleased ; refused to contract at all, and sometimes threw out the mails altogether. For twenty years the department had been going to Congress, asking some legislation to regulate this branch of the service. The department and the House Committee having together prepared a bill for this purpose, the Chairman of the Committee carried it through the House. The bill provided that the railroads should enter into contracts to carry the mails on fair terms, mak-

ing the Court of Claims arbiter between them and the department, in case of disagreement, and imposing a penalty for non-acceptance of the verdict of the court. The railroad lawyers in the House complained that this was taking private property for public use. "The roads are common carriers by the common law," he replied. "They are compelled to receive passengers and freight. Congress has exclusive power to establish post-offices and post-routes, and Congress has declared every railroad a post-route. By the law, and in the nature of the case, they must carry the mails. There is the same right to compel them to do it at reasonable rates—which is all the bill proposes—as there is to limit their passenger or freight rates." The argument was unanswerable, and the House passed the bill ; but it failed in the Senate.

Other measures emanating from his committee were a bill to establish a postal money-order system, which failed in the Senate ; a bill requiring dead letters to be opened and returned to the writers, taxing them double or treble postage, according to their value, which passed both Houses ; enlarging the schedule of mailable matter to include everything not explosive or dangerous, which failed in the Senate ; authorizing the establishment of branch post-offices, which became law. By the activity of the Chairman of the House Committee, general interest was awakened in the subject, and a widespread agitation for improvement brought about a reorganization of the service and the department before the close of this Congress.

Besides the acts of this session already mentioned, the issue of three hundred millions of dollars in legal-tender notes, and of five hundred millions of dollars in six per cent bonds, was authorized ; the first Pacific Railroad Act was passed, and an act giving to actual settlers a quarter-section each of the public lands. The session adjourned on the 17th of July.

About the 1st of July the loyal Governors had tendered, and the President had accepted, three hundred thousand more volunteers for the war. Asked for a war editorial on his return home, Mr. Colfax wrote : " It must be brief,

for the armies of the Union are longing for reinforcements to aid them in crushing secession before the autumn leaves fall." He ended the article by offering ten dollars each to the first fifty men enlisting under the new call. The same day he was nominated for re-election to Congress by acclamation. Brought before the convention, he said plainly what he had intimated in a recent speech in Washington, that the attempt to make war without irritating anybody had failed, and that there was to be a change of policy. The President had assured him and others that henceforth the war should be prosecuted with all the earnestness displayed by the rebels. In return, he had promised the President to spend a month in urging enlistment. Afterward he would make his usual canvass.

He set out the next day but one, traversed the district day and night, "his speeches finding the hearts and filling the eyes of his audiences,"<sup>1</sup> and in just three weeks, instead of the one regiment called for, three thousand men had been sworn in from his district, and two regiments left for Indianapolis in the fourth week. "No district has done so well as the Ninth," said the *Indiana State Journal*. Other good men assisted with voice and purse—none of them are named here, because all cannot be—but his was the magic influence that brought the magnificent response. "Mr. Colfax knows full well that every volunteer who goes from the district makes his re-election less probable," said the *La Porte Herald*, "but he prefers his country to party, and would rather sacrifice himself on its altar than succeed at its peril."

In the early days of August the superior forces of the Union in Virginia having been beaten in detail, and the enemy threatening invasion of the North, both East and West, three hundred thousand militia were called out for nine months, and these were to be drafted unless they promptly volunteered. The Government, the States, municipalities, individuals, offered bounties for enlistment. The country was districted, Provost-Marshal appointed, and, so far as the President thought necessary, martial law

1. Correspondence of the *Chicago Times*.

prevailed. An Executive order authorized military use of rebel property and employment of "contrabands" (escaped or abandoned slaves). Paroled prisoners, captured with arms in their hands, were shot. Popular leaders, talking treason, if of enough consequence, were arrested and confined on the warrant of Executive authority. The President was keeping his pledge.

Since the meeting of the last session of Congress the Republican Party had irresistibly drifted toward emancipation. They saw that the issue of Disunion and Slavery, presented by the South, could be met only by pleading Union and Liberty. They had incurred all the additional hostility, South and North, that this bold policy involved, and still had not struck at the root of the evil. The consequent pressure on Mr. Lincoln to do this daily and hourly grew stronger. From the first he had pursued a policy agreeable to the Border slave States. Conscious that emancipation was inevitable, he had procured from Congress an expression in favor of compensated emancipation in such States as would take the initiative. His appeals to the Senators and Representatives of those States, almost pathetic in their earnestness, to take the initiative, and thus relieve him from his dilemma, had been finally rejected.

In reply to an open letter from Mr. Greeley, published in the *New York Tribune*, he, on the 22d day of August, wrote: "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others, I would also do that." A month later, the rebels having been defeated in Maryland by McClellan, he gave warning by a preliminary proclamation, and on the first day of 1863 formally proclaimed the abolition of slavery in the rebellious States. "In giving freedom to the slave we insure freedom to the free," he said in his next message to Congress, "honorable alike in what we give and what we receive." It was full time. There were vacancies in many Northern homes, there must be many more. The public debt was enormous, and growing at the rate of three millions a day. Taxation was come

in unprecedented form and amount. It was plain withal that the war had only begun. The rebel States were being subjected to an even severer strain. What was it all for? What was to be the ultimate outcome?

It is true the fall elections went heavily against the Administration, partly because of a conservative reaction, partly because of a radical reaction, yet more from lack of military success, most of all because the Republican voters were in the field, and only eight of the States permitted their citizen-soldiers to vote. Of the 268,240 votes cast by these in 1863-64, Democratic candidates received but 41,803. The Knights of the Golden Circle were already organized in Indiana, and their convention of the 8th of January, type of all the peace conventions that followed, was eight months past. The Emancipation Proclamation, they said, proved that the war was being waged to abolish slavery. It was a hard charge to turn aside, because there was an element of truth in it; and still it was the absence of Republicans from home, the vacillation of the Administration with respect to slavery, and the absolute failure of our arms, notwithstanding the prodigious sacrifices of unbounded devotion, and not the alleged diversion of the war from its original purpose, that cost the Union party so dearly in the elections of 1862.

Colfax's former competitors for Congress were all in the army or on the stump for the Union ticket. The Democrats nominated Mr. David Turpie, of Monticello, who was understood to favor the war if it could be carried on without injuring slavery; otherwise not. He had begun his canvass, and was attacking the Union candidate with great vigor, while the latter was sending his voters away to the war. Very few of the August recruits would have voted for Turpie. The district had furnished 11,000 volunteers; 8000 of them were voters, 6000 of them were Republicans.<sup>1</sup> Of 2728 men in St. Joseph County fit for military duty, 1128 had enlisted before the first draft.

1. By careful examination of the muster rolls at Indianapolis, it was ascertained that there had enlisted from the district 11,064 men, of whom 8110 were voters; and of these, 6125 were Republicans and 1985 were Democrats.



On the 27th of August Colfax began his canvass, not as a Republican, but as a Union man.<sup>1</sup> He said nothing of party issues or of his competitor. He did not ask for votes, but that the people stand by the Union, and vote only for men who stand by the Union. Great crowds listened with the closest attention to his speeches, often for four hours, said the local papers. Since 1854 the political issue had been the extension or restriction of slavery, involving the triumph or destruction of free institutions. Now, when half of all the able-bodied men were in the field in defence of their principles, politics came as near to every member of the community as in the ancient cities from whose walls one could see the territory of a hostile city. Mr. Colfax's race was watched with solicitude in a hundred Congressional districts besides his own. The Union press, far and near, supported him. "He is probably the most effective member from the Northwest in either House of Congress," said the Newport, R. I., *News*.

He had spoken ten times a week for three weeks, when a series of joint discussions between the candidates was arranged, the first appointment being at South Bend. Mr. Turpie, says the *Register's* report, was sophisticated and abusive, his opponent courteous but exhaustive. The latter contented himself with demonstrating from the record that Turpie's statements were in the main wide of the truth. Mr. Turpie got so worked up at last as to be almost helpless. He could hardly keep his hands off his calm antagonist, and made an ugly motion and threats. There was a commotion, but the peace was not broken. "Turpie was a man of large ability," writes an observer,<sup>2</sup> "with a throat of brass and a voice that never failed. On the stump he was Mr. Colfax's ablest antagonist. But his ability only seemed to rouse Colfax to his best in the pres-

1. "In the month of August, 1862," writes Hon. James N. Tyner, of Indiana, "Mr. Colfax appeared at my house, and roused me from my slumbers, having himself driven twenty miles since nightfall, to tell me how sorely he was pressed in the campaign, how gloomy the outlook was to him, and how much he needed my help for the next six weeks. We talked from midnight till break of day, arranged our plans, and both started out next morning to work as we had never worked before, and probably never have since."

2. The Hon. Jasper Packard, of La Porte, Ind.

entation of facts and argument, arrayed with convincing force. And Colfax was never in happier mood than when parrying the rough blows of this redoubtable Ajax. His calm, even, smiling good temper seemed to increase his opponent's passion, until the latter's words became almost incoherent raving. There was never a man on the stump who could make the closing fifteen minutes so effective as Mr. Colfax, while in general his antagonists had become so angry as to lose almost wholly the closing fifteen minutes."

Mr. Turpie, who ran against Mr. Colfax for Congress three times without success, said of him after his death: "Those people who think he was forced out of politics are not acquainted with his resources; they are terribly mistaken. He was the readiest man I ever met. All that he knew—and his knowledge was wonderful—he could bring forward like a flash. His plausibility of discourse, as well as ability to repel an assault in debate, has rarely been equalled by the public men of the State."

"I squeezed through by 229 majority," he writes his mother—"as good as a million—the bitterest, closest, and costliest campaign I ever passed through. But for my incessant speaking for more than two months, and the joint canvass with Turpie, I would have been beaten." "He has achieved a gallant and glorious victory," said the *Chicago Tribune*; "his election, under the circumstances, is the greatest triumph of his political career." "If I am beaten," he had said to a lady friend,<sup>1</sup> "I will be at the front with a regiment of my own in less than a month."

General John F. Miller, now Senator from California, wrote him from Headquarters Seventh Brigade, then at Nashville, Tenn. :

"I rejoice in your triumph over the common foe. We have been and are co-workers in the same cause. Your victory is fraught with the same happy influences as those achieved on more bloody fields. Let us, therefore, rejoice together as soldiers in the same grand army, battling for the life of our nationality."<sup>2</sup>

1. Mrs. D. F. Spain, of South Bend, Ind.

2. Since this was written Senator Miller has succumbed to the effect of wounds received in battle. He died at his post in the Senate early in 1886.

The Hon. Thaddeus Stevens wrote him :

" I am delighted to hear the sound of your voice again. For some time I held my breath, fearing the rebels had submerged you. How will the next Congress be? I fear on the wrong side. I still think Congress should authorize the soldiers who did not vote to do so. They [Congress] have the power, but the expediency is doubtful. I am a good deal desponding. If Lincoln would change his Cabinet, so as to make it a unit, and go right himself, we might still crush them before the Locos came in. But I fear he has not the inclination to do so, and that final disunion and disgrace will follow. You know I have always doubted the result, because I doubted the management."

Another prominent Republican leader wrote him :

" You had a hard contest, and came out of it with double honors. I rejoice very much over the result in your district, but my joy is mingled with many regrets at the defeat of Dunn and so many of our political friends. Our defeat is a sad chapter in the history of this war, but how much sadder are the military events of the campaign! Think of Bragg organizing at leisure an army within easy striking distance of Buell's magnificent army of double the numbers. Think, then, of his passing Buell at leisure, marching four hundred miles north, taking Munfordsville while Buell was resting; then at leisure robbing and plundering the loyal people of Kentucky of indispensable supplies, and marching away with his immense train without a blow being struck by Buell. The affair at Perryville adds infamy to the record. Think of Gilbert lying idle within one mile, and Buell within two miles with their immense forces, and allowing Bragg to attack and overpower a single corps of our army. Great God, it is terrible to see the noblest cause overthrown by such strategy!

" We must have a radical change or we must stop the war. We must not waste the lives and treasure of our people, unless we can see before us some hope of preserving our Government. I am utterly discouraged unless the President has force of character enough to infuse energy and order into our army, or rather into its officers. You know I have long thought, and, perhaps, too freely expressed the opinion, that our worst calamities have been caused by the want of dignity, energy, and order in the President. I think so now, and unless we can supply them, I tell you, with the soberest conviction, that our cause and our country are ruined; and that we, who elected Lincoln, but have no share in his counsels, will be forever disgraced and dishonored. As the result, we have seen our best friends slaughtered in battle or defeated by the people. Colfax, you and I, and men like us, whose fate is staked upon success in this war, have got to pursue a more definite policy, or the defeat or treachery of Democratic generals, supported and upheld by a Republican President, will destroy us, and dishonor and dismember our country. For one, I will

be no longer responsible where I have no voice to guide. I will not follow where my judgment does not lead the way, and especially those for whom I have no respect."

Mr. Joseph Medill wrote in much the same strain, interesting as a look behind the curtains of those times. He says :

"What a dismal retrospect is the past eighteen months ! That period consists of epaulettes and apathy, imbecility and treachery, idiocy and ignorance, sacrifice on the part of the people, supineness on the part of the Government. McClellan in the field and Seward in the Cabinet have been the evil spirits that have brought our grand cause to the very brink of death. Seward must be got out of the Cabinet. He is Lincoln's evil genius. He has been President *de facto*, and has kept a sponge saturated with chloroform to Uncle Abe's nose all the while, except one or two brief spells, during which rational intervals Lincoln removed Buell, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and discharged McClellan. Smith is a cipher on the right hand of the Seward integer—by himself, nothing but a doughface. Bates is a fossil of the Silurian era—red sandstone, at least—and should never have been quarried out of the rocks in which he was imbedded. Blair was thrown into a retrograde position by the unfortunate quarrel of his brother Frank with Fremont. There must be a reorganization of the Cabinet ; Seward, Smith, and Bates must go out.

"After very careful reflection, I think you had better go into the Cabinet for two years, if the President will give you the Post-Office folio. I would hardly like to advise you to take the Interior. In the former you could institute many useful reforms, besides helping to urge forward the war. If the army wins victories in the field, a Republican can be elected to fill your place. If Stevens is right as to the power of Congress, I esteem it the imperative duty of Congress when it meets to pass a bill forthwith, conferring on the soldiers the power to vote. If that is done, we shall recover twenty-five to thirty seats now lost. The most that our friends can do in Washington this winter is to urge forward the war. Lincoln will be more approachable, more tractable, and will lean more on Republicans for support. The Proclamation must be enforced to the letter ; it is absolutely essential to success."

Mr. Greeley wrote him :

"If we only had a general at the head of our armies, I think we should soon see the end of this war. If such generals as we have would only obey orders, all would go well. But when a peremptory order on the 27th of January to go forward on the 22d of February is not obeyed till the 6th or 8th of March, and then only in time to see that there is no one to fight, what is to be hoped ? I am willing to go slowly, provided I can be sure of going at all. Standing still at the rate of three million dollars a day terrifies me."

The Union-Administration Party was ingloriously defeated in the great central free States, including the President's own State, Illinois. But for New England, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, the Pacific States, and, singularly enough, the Border slave States, a peace-at-any-price House would have been elected in the midst of the war. Of the result in Indiana, the editor of the *Register* said: "The immense preponderance of Union men in the Indiana regiments has given a temporary victory to the 8th-of-January partisans, but it will be a short-lived one. In the War of 1812 State after State was lost by the war party for the same reason. But when the soldiers returned their ballots crushed the party which had taken advantage of their absence to win party victories and embarrass the Administration."

Commenting on the supersedure of Generals McClellan and Buell by Generals Burnside and Rosecrans, he says :

"Time after time the President has ordered McClellan and Buell to advance on the enemy ; again and again, on one pretext or another, they have disobeyed. If there have been inaction and imbecility, if rebel armies have escaped at Bowling Green, at Corinth, at Manassas, at Yorktown, the responsibility is with these generals, whose politics are the same as Fernando Wood's, and not with Abraham Lincoln. Army after army has wasted away under the inexplicable irresolution of McClellan. The public confidence, which crowned him in advance with the laurels which it doubted not he would win, waned month by month till despair brooded over the land. But the President has at last spoken the word which dispels the cloud and awakens new hope and vigor in every heart."

On the 7th of December he writes his mother : "I could have gone into the Cabinet if I had desired to, but told Mr. Lincoln I could not surrender my district to the enemy, which every one wrote me I would do if I resigned." The occasion was the transfer of the Secretary of the Interior, Caleb B. Smith, to a judgeship. In this letter to his mother occurs the following : "I enclose you a letter (to read and destroy) because it is from a person you know. I replied to it to-day, thanking him for his good wishes, but telling him that at the end of my term, in 1865, I intend, after ten years of Congressional life, to retire to the quiet of home, as I do." "Even in the midst of

great undertakings," says Guizot, "domestic affection forms the basis of life, and the most brilliant public career has only superficial and incomplete enjoyments."

Congress met for the short session December 1st. Preamble and resolution in condemnation of arbitrary arrests were at once introduced in the House. Mr. Colfax moved that they lie on the table, saying the preamble asserted what was not true. His motion prevailed by a vote of about 80 to 40. A week later a bill to indemnify the President for his suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* was introduced, read the second time, and put on its passage. Objection was made to "thrusting a measure of this kind through the House without a moment's consideration, as discreditable to the country and to the House." Mr. Colfax said :

"I think a majority of the House are prepared to pass the bill now. Instead of being anything discreditable, I think it would be highly creditable to the House to pass the bill at this early stage of the session. We all understand the whole question. It has been discussed all over the land whether the President should have authorized the suspension of the *habeas corpus* as to persons charged with treason, or with sympathizing with it during this Rebellion, or not. All that has been done has been done by his authority, communicated through his secretaries, and through them to others. I stand ready to pass a bill indemnifying him. We have either to vindicate him, as now proposed, or leave him to be persecuted as soon as he retires from office by those whom he arrested. I rejoice that I have this opportunity of voting for this bill, and I hope it will pass at once."

The bill passed the House, but in its final shape provided that persons arbitrarily arrested should be released if they were not indicted by the grand jury of a United States Court at the first opportunity.

He supported the bill admitting West Virginia, which had been passed by the Senate at the previous session. He said in substance that the machinery of the State Government of Virginia had been abandoned by Governor Letcher and the Legislature which participated with him in his treason. Thus lapsed, the loyal people of West Virginia took possession of it, in order that the State might not be driven into rebellion. At different times, and under varying circumstances, and almost always without protest

from any quarter, the President, Cabinet Ministers, the Senate, and the House had recognized the Governor and Legislature at Wheeling as the rightful authorities of Virginia. In his opinion, there was no constitutional difficulty. The forty-eight counties had area and resources sufficient for a State; they and their people were divided and diverse from Virginia east of the mountains; they had stood by the Union from the first; they had provided for emancipation, and it was the unanimous desire of their people. The bill passed, was approved by the President, and, without any intention of so doing, Virginia, the mother of secession, was by this division of her original territory made a perpetual memorial of that unhappy folly, and of the epoch of national convulsion to which it gave rise.

Early in December the Army of the Potomac was thrown against the heights of Fredericksburg, with a loss of ten thousand killed and wounded men. Mr. Medill wrote Colfax: "Our people all have the 'blues.' The feeling of utter hopelessness is stronger than at any time since the war began. The terrible bloody defeat of our brave army at Fredericksburg leaves us almost without hope." And again:

"The leaders of the Democratic Party are fast swinging that powerful organization into an attitude of serious hostility to the war and the Government. The public discontent waxes greater daily. Failure of the army, weight of taxes, depreciation of money, want of cotton—which affects every family—increasing national debt, deaths in the army, no prospect of success, the continued closure of the Mississippi, exorbitant charges of transportation companies for carrying the farmers' products eastward—all combine to produce the existing state of despondency and desperation. By a common instinct everybody feels that the war is drawing toward a disastrous and disgraceful termination. Money cannot be supplied much longer to a beaten, demoralized, homesick army. Sometimes I think nothing is left now but 'to fight for a boundary.'"

With a million men under arms disaster followed on the heels of disaster. The country was distressed, and the Republican leaders were dissatisfied to the last degree. Under a great pressure for a reorganization of the Cabinet, the President requested the leading members to resign their portfolios. Seward and Chase tendered their resig-

nations ; Stanton and Blair declined to tender theirs, and after waiting a week, Mr. Lincoln desired Seward and Chase to recall their action. The Cabinet was a "political mosaic," in a sense, but the trouble was not in the Cabinet. It was in the lack of generals competent to cope with the Confederate generals and destroy their armies.

The opponents of the war were exceedingly active and bold. Peace meetings were numerous and their demands vociferous. Commissioners were to be sent from the Northwest to Richmond to make peace at any rate. The Legislature of Indiana was full of treasonable schemes. By breaking a quorum, the Republican members of that body defeated the plans of the Copperheads to tie the hands of Governor Morton, whereupon the Legislature adjourned *sine die*, without passing the appropriation bills. Governor Morton carried on the State Government the next two years upon his own resources. Governor Richard Yates had a similar experience with the Legislature of Illinois. They undertook to tie his hands in the same manner, but the Constitution empowering him to do so, he prorogued them, and carried on the government of Illinois upon his own resources the next two years. A great victory, won by the arms of the Confederacy in February, might have changed the course of history. But this agitation for peace received no encouragement from the Confederacy. The Richmond press spurned all overtures in advance, taking care to express their contempt for the men who proposed to tender them. Union meetings, both in the States and at the front, in which citizen and soldier, with equal vigor, denounced the attitude of the Copperheads, somewhat cooled the ardor of the peace party.

Congress answered this "fire in the rear" by the appropriation of eight hundred millions for the prosecution of the war, by the passage of a bill to raise three hundred negro regiments, and by subjecting all able-bodied men between the ages of twenty and forty-five to military duty on call of the President. Various measures were adopted to raise money. Additional taxes were imposed. The



issue of one hundred and fifty millions of legal-tender notes, the sale of nine hundred millions of bonds, the establishment of the national banks, were authorized.

Mr. Colfax advocated the taxation of bank circulation. Since the notes of individuals were taxed, he thought the notes of the banks should be taxed. He said he appreciated the services of the banks to the Government in the crisis of its needs, but against the golden treasures of the banks his constituents had given their living treasures, and his constituents were not exempted from taxation. He had defended before them the principle of the tax bill. He had told them if they struck him down for voting for the tax bill, imperfect as it was, they might do so ; but all inequalities should be removed. He supported the imposition of this tax, not to crush the banks, but as a revenue measure and to equalize taxation. Every person and every business should bear their share of the common burden. "That is the pole-star of duty which guides me in all my votes on these measures," said he.

When the Senate bill codifying the postal laws came to the House, he explained the reforms it embodied, moved the amendments agreed upon by his committee, and when the House got through with the bill, the Senate might well be pardoned for not recognizing it. The second conference committee came to an agreement, the bill passed both Houses and became law. It established uniform rates of letter postage : three cents per half ounce, or fraction thereof, throughout the country. The three hundred different rates on printed matter were reduced to a maximum of twelve. The franking privilege was limited, incidental expenses reduced, and decided improvements made in many other respects. The franking privilege was not abolished, nor postage imposed on newspapers carried by mail-trains outside of the mail-bags, nor the department relieved in its trouble with the railroads, nor a postal money-order system established—reforms and improvements for which he had contended—but a very long stride in advance had been taken. This was his last official connection with postal affairs, but he never lost his interest in

them, or ceased to offer suggestions for making the service a greater convenience to the people. Among his papers, running through all his later years, are acknowledgments of post-office men, from the head of the department down, of the benefit of his suggestions.

His letters during this session were filled with matters of interest to the soldiers. He interested himself to have the army hospitals in Tennessee improved, and Chicago, as well as Cincinnati and St. Louis, made a depository for artificial limbs; he informed the friends of sick and disabled soldiers how to secure their discharge. He noted the successes and promotions of the Indiana troops. He introduced a resolution in the House, which was adopted, inquiring if rebel officers had been released on parole since Mr. Jefferson Davis's refusal to exchange or parole Union officers, and one desiring the Second Auditor of the Treasury to devise some plan by which the hundred dollars bounty should be promptly paid to the families of deceased volunteers. On the 28th of March, 1863, Mr. Alfred Harrison, Treasurer of the Indiana Sanitary Committee, wrote him from Indianapolis: "I was absent when your large and generous donation of six hundred and twenty-nine dollars and thirty-four cents came to hand, or I should have acknowledged it sooner. I assure you, sir, we have not received so liberal a donation from any individual or society since our organization. I have no doubt that in your dying hour you will be fully compensated by the happy reflection that you have contributed so much to the wants of our sick and wounded soldiers in the hospitals and tents."

"The new year ushered in a new era for freedom," he wrote to the *Register*. "Under the war power vested in him, the President struck the blow at slavery for which the world has waited so long. He will be ranked in history among the great liberators of the race—the publishers of glad tidings whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains."

Congress adjourned *sine die* March 4th, 1863. Its proceedings had been inspired by a purpose strong as the love of life to save the nation from dismemberment. Begin-

ning with the intention expressed in the Crittenden Resolution, to restore the disrupted Union without impairing the constitutional rights of the States, it had been forced, by the desperation and strength of the Rebellion, to the position that States in rebellion had no constitutional rights. Congress may, perhaps, be said to have held the radical element of the Union party, and the Administration to have held the conservative element, until both Congress and the Administration, and both elements of the Union party, had substantially come into agreement. The loss of the great central States in 1862, so far from deterring Congress and the Administration from their common purpose, gave to them both a new impetus. When this Congress expired, the Government was irrevocably committed to confiscation, to emancipation, to the arming of the negroes, to fiat money, to universal enrolment for military duty, and to so much of martial law as the President might deem necessary. Nevertheless, or perhaps by reason of this, the spring elections were favorable. The disaster of Chancellorsville was retrieved within two months by the prodigious military triumphs of early July. The elections in the Border States were favorable, the next House was saved. The draft riots were suppressed. Mr. Clement L. Vallandigham, the leader of the Northern Copperheads, arrested by order of General Burnside, and banished to the Confederacy, subsequently nominated for Governor of Ohio by his party, was buried by the people under an unprecedented adverse majority. Thus were the people, the Administration, and Congress proved to be at one. Success was now but a question of time. History must record that people, Congress, and Administration were equally tried, equally true, equally heroic; and that each was worthy of the other.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS.

1863-1865.

DEATH OF MRS. COLFAX.—ELECTED SPEAKER BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF HIS PARTY.—QUALIFICATIONS AND POWER OF THE SPEAKER.—COMPLIMENTARY PRESS BANQUET, EULOGIES.—MOVES THE EXPULSION OF LONG.—THE DEBATE.—PRESENTATION OF SILVER SERVICE, THE "SOLDIERS' FRIEND."—RENOMINATED IN SPITE OF HIS WISHES.—IMPORTANCE OF THE ELECTION.—"STAND BY THE GOVERNMENT."—HIS CANVASS.

He writes his mother July 28th : " Just received your note of yesterday. I do not think I will be able to come for some time. I cannot leave town so long yet. Time seems to increase my troubles instead of assuaging them, and I prefer the solitude of thought. In the busy whirl of fall and winter my mind will be relieved—too much, I fear—and now I wish to live amid the ruins of the past while I can." Twenty years of happy wedded life had ended in the death of his wife.

Detained in Washington after the close of Congress by the increasing feebleness of Mrs. Colfax, for eight years gradually failing in health, he had been able, between her relapses, to speak at the Union League in Philadelphia and at the great Sumter meeting in New York, announcing that " not one rood of ground over which the Stars and Stripes ever waved shall be surrendered to treason. It was not so intended, I verily believe, in the providence of God, nor will it so result in the counsels of men. A civil war is not justifiable when there is open the ballot-box for the redress of grievances. It is for this reason that the blood of American patriots slain in this war will ascend to the judgment bar of God, and there plead against the Cati-

lines of this nefarious Rebellion, who sat in their seats in Congress and plotted the destruction of the Government they were sworn to defend." This was no mere declamation or empty bravado. It was on the eve of the draft riots in New York and elsewhere ; the political complexion of the next House was still in doubt, no impression had yet been made on General Lee's army, the Copperheads of the West had completed a secret military organization, and lacked only the nerve to enkindle civil war in every Northern neighborhood. Nothing but the speedy organization in Union leagues of the Union men not at the front and the July victories prevented it. Even then, it would doubtless have been attempted had Lincoln arrested Vallandigham, the Chief of the Order in the North, as General Sterling Price was in the South, upon his return from the Confederacy through Canada.

The previous year Mr. Colfax had bought a house in South Bend—the same from which he was to be buried—and had written Mrs. Colfax : " You know it is your house, purchased solely on your account, and you must take charge of it." Instead of taking this house this spring, she was to be taken to " the house of many mansions." " We have engaged rooms in a quiet Quakeress's house in the suburbs of Newport," he writes his mother in April, " away from noise, with no church bells near or piano in the house, and shall go about the 1st of June, if she is able to travel. The postmaster at Newport, Mr. Coggeshall, a friend of mine, has made all the arrangements for us, lives near by, and will assist about everything to make her comfortable. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad have quite unexpectedly offered her a special car, with an invalid's bed in it, to take her as far as Philadelphia, whenever she desires to go North, and will get it across the Delaware and take it to Jersey City if they can. Then to Newport is by boat, and if a pleasant night, she will have a journey as little fatiguing as possible." <sup>1</sup>

1. In September, 1881, Colfax ran across a letter of his friend Mrs. Samuel Sinclair, written in April, 1863, which brought back a flood of memories to him. " You speak in it," he writes her, " of the probability that I am to be the Speaker of the next House, and you ' hoped to see me wielding the sceptre of authority over that disorderly body

She was moved as indicated early in June. A month later, in this quiet retreat, she breathed her last. On her monument at South Bend is inscribed, as the legend of her life, "The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Of no one was it ever more true. She was a good woman, such as Admiral Foote, who knew her well, said could ill be spared from Washington. The worldliness inseparable from the place affected her only as the sands of the desert affect the flower that blooms in spite of them. Said the *New York Tribune*: "A very large circle of admiring friends share to some extent the bereavement of her husband and family. Mrs. Colfax, though for years an invalid, and verging toward 'that undiscovered country,' from which the most devoted love and the utmost medical skill could no longer hold her, had spent several winters at Washington, and had formed acquaintanceships which ripened rapidly into friendships, of which none was ever withdrawn from her."

The bereaved husband came out of his gloom characteristically: "I will tell you a secret," he writes his mother on the 1st of October: "Dr. Hendricks and I are going to educate —. I was looking round to see what I could do for some son of a widow, and it struck us both that Mrs. — was worthiest of all we knew; and, as we found, had wanted sadly to do it, but felt too poor. The Doctor pays for his college tuition, books, etc., and I clothe him. He is seventeen, and must have an education now if at all. The Springfield letter Mr. Lincoln read me in manuscript long ago." And to Mr. Matthews, October 5th: "I have a most pressing appeal from Senator Morgan, Ira Harris, Preston King, Thurlow Weed, etc., to speak in New York for at least a week. I can't disregard

of schoolboys; 'about 'the cosey little parlor in the Hotel de Parry, where you were often encircled by wreaths of smoke; 'about the happiness you enjoyed there. It brings back recollections of that winter on C Street, in Washington, where you spent some weeks, and brightened up Evelyn's lonely hours while I was at the Capitol, and cheered up my low spirits as I can never forget. And then, when her ill-health prevented her returning to her Western home in March, at the adjournment—how the past rises before me as I write! Newport, too, that summer, failed to restore the dear invalid, and she died there. The letter referred also to Carpenter's portrait of me, which you didn't like."

it, for if I am to run for Speaker I must recognize political duties, and I know less about the New York delegation—elect—nearly all new—than that of any other State. If I refuse it will hurt. I speak there from next Thursday till the Wednesday after, inclusive, and possibly at New York City the day after.”

The Thirty-eighth Congress met December 7th, 1863. Mr. Washburne, of Illinois, was the “father of the House,” and the only one besides Mr. Colfax spoken of for the Speakership. Mr. Washburne placed Mr. Colfax in nomination, and the nominee received every vote of his party.<sup>1</sup> The Clerk announced the result, the galleries cheered, all faces smiled, and there was a general turning toward him as Messrs. Cox and Dawson, Democrats, approached and escorted him to the Chair. Gracefully he spoke. He thought the present Congress would have to meet and settle the most important questions of the century, since the Rebellion had probably passed its culmination, and was now nearing its collapse. He trusted gentlemen would approach these questions free from acerbity and relying on Divine guidance for support, remembering that “they who rule not in righteousness shall perish from the earth.” Thanking the House for its confidence, and appealing to members for their support and forbearance, he took the oath. His first duty was to repress the applause in the galleries at his installation as Speaker.

The *New York Commercial Advertiser* (Republican) said :

“No man in the present Congress is more eminently fitted than he to fulfil the duties of that responsible position. One of the most experienced members, thoroughly familiar with the rules and proceedings of the House, personally popular with both parties, on account of his courtesy and fairness, and bearing an unblemished reputation for political in-

1. August 22d, 1863, he writes his mother: “Washburne is working very hard for the Speakership. I have lost much of my ambition for it, though it will probably return by November. But it matters little whether I am in or out of the Chair. If it comes to me, well and good. If not, I am satisfied with whatever fate has in store for me the remainder of my public career.”

And, December 5th, to Mrs. Sinclair: “Have written twenty-one letters to-night, closing with one to my dear mother. I hear from the Capitol that I am nominated by acclamation. Caucus still in session. It was a hard fight, but I gained steadily till I got above eighty, leaving Washburne less than twenty, when he gave it up. Mr. B. says it is a magnificent result, second only to the Presidency itself.”

tegrity and devotion to the principles which underlie our Government, he takes his seat with the general acquiescence of the body over which he is called to preside, and of the country at large."

The *Boston Post* (Democratic) said :

"The Speaker, for a wonder, is not a lawyer, but has been several years an able journalist, and is a courteous gentleman of strong radical tendencies, but of decision, energy, and integrity of character, and promises to make an impartial presiding officer. As we cannot have a Democrat for Speaker, we would as soon see Mr. Colfax in the Chair as any Republican in the House. He is an intelligent, active, working man, a good printer, a good citizen, and has discharged his duty conscientiously, we have no doubt, as a public man."

Soon after his election the Speaker received the following letter :

"LA PORTE, IND., December 12, 1863.

"*Hon. Schuyler Colfax.*

"DEAR SIR : At a meeting of your personal friends, called together by Mr. George B. Roberts, at his house on the evening of December 11th, it was the common impulse of all to address to you a letter expressive of their congratulations in view of your elevation to the Speakership of the House of Representatives. We rejoice in this event as reflecting high honor upon yourself, upon your constituency, whom you have faithfully served for many years, and upon your associate legislators. We regard it as the fitting and well-earned reward of your fidelity to every public trust which has been committed to your hands. Especially is the event gratifying to us as assuring us that the new Congress, by elevating you to this post of honor, pledges thus its devotion to the interests of human freedom for the sake of the Union, and to the restoration of the Union for the sake of human freedom.

"We remain very truly your friends, John B. Niles, A. Teegarden, George C. Noyes, W. H. H. Whitehead, James Moore, Stephen P. O'Neill, W. C. Hannah, Edward Vail, K. G. Shryock, John Millikan, James H. Shannon, Luther Brusie, Alfred R. Orton, George B. Roberts, Daniel Dayton, A. Sherman, W. H. Salisbury."

The Speaker replied as follows :

"SPEAKER'S ROOM, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }  
WASHINGTON, D. C., December 16, 1863. }

"MY DEAR FRIENDS : Amid the pressure of multiplied duties, and with large numbers of letters unanswered as yet, for lack of time, upon my table, I seize a few passing moments to reply instantan to your very cordial letter of congratulation which I have just received. The signatures carry my thoughts at a single leap back to the days of my childhood. Nearly twenty-seven years ago, when first entering my teens, I



formed the acquaintance of your honored Mayor at Mr. Hastings's Baptist Church, on Rolling Prairie, which we both attended, I but a lad and he a young man, a few years my senior. Soon after, and still in my boyhood, I became acquainted with Messrs. Vail, Dayton, Shryock, Niles, Teegarden, Millikan, and, I think, Hannah also ; so that about half of the pleasant circle of friends who sent me this welcome greeting have happened to know me for a quarter of a century. I hope it is with all of them as it is with me, that there is no rust on the chain of memory. Amid all the sharp and exciting contests through which I have passed in the stormy life that seems to have been my lot, their friendship, like that of all of you, dear friends, has been as steadfast and unvarying as the immovable hills. May I be allowed to say that this thought gladdens my heart more at this moment, as I read your familiar signatures, than the new but trying honors that my fellow-members have recently devolved upon me. It is the constant unshaken confidence and regard of friends at home that has led to the recent event to which you allude. And if I can only succeed in performing its onerous duties acceptably to the country, to the House, and to my immediate constituency, I shall gladly at the end of my term throw off its honors and its cares, and enjoy at home, in your society and that of other valued friends, a quiet and rest more gratifying and heart-rejoicing because in such striking contrast with the exciting years of public life through which I have passed.

“ With sincere regard, I am truly

“ Your obliged friend,

“ SCHUYLER COLFAX.”

The Speaker made arrangements for rooms and board with a family on  $4\frac{1}{2}$  Street, and his mother, accompanied by her husband and daughter Carrie, went on from Indiana to preside for him. Writing to her old friend, Mrs. Pidge, of New Carlisle, Mrs. Matthews describes their Washington life shortly after her son's first election to the Speakership. She says :

“ I have not felt very well the past few days, but I think it is only fatigue. You can form no idea of what I am daily called on to go through. At first I received Schuyler's friends every day, but it was too wearing on me, and so we appointed a day for callers. We had last Wednesday scores, I might say hundreds, of ladies, besides the cards of many gentlemen. It takes us three days in the week to receive and return calls. But Friday evening is the time ! Had you been here last Friday night you would have seen ‘ Mr. Speaker, ’ his mother, and sister standing in the centre of our drawing-room, and in form receiving a thousand people. They come and go, generally, though some stay from half-past eight to eleven. We have refreshments, coffee, cake, and ice cream, not a drop of wine or liquor. It is the talk of the city that never

Speaker had such receptions. Mrs. Lincoln says she is jealous of them, for they rival hers. With all the fatigue they are pleasant, and until they are over we do not realize the fatigue. It is pleasant for us to be able to assist Schuyler, and especially to be together again as one family. We avoid all the parties we can ; still, etiquette makes it necessary for us to attend some. We were at a dinner party at the Mexican Minister's. There were seventeen courses of meats and fruits. Next Thursday we attend a State dinner at the White House. Thirty-six are to sit down at the table, all but about ten of us members of the Diplomatic Corps. As I have already met one or two counts and barons, I guess I shall not be frightened, particularly if I am seated by Old Abe, as he is called. Mr. Lincoln is the same kind man you have heard me speak of, no more graceful than he used to be, but good, and 'the man for the place.' Day before yesterday we went to Baltimore to the opening of the Maryland Sanitary Fair. We had a special car sent for our party, which was composed of President Lincoln [who went upon Mr. Colfax's invitation], two or three Members of Congress, and ourselves. We had a delightful time. The opening of the fair was splendid. The President made a fine, interesting, and loyal speech, and all were delighted to see him. We returned yesterday, and started to attend the last levee at the White House. The crowd was so great, however, that Mr. Matthews and I and thousands of others did not attempt to enter. Schuyler and Carrie went in, and had a very pleasant time, for, as is always the case, the President and Mrs. Lincoln make us stay until all the guests have left, and then we have a social chat, which the Squire and I missed last night. I was too tired with the great crowd at Baltimore to undergo another and far greater crush."

The qualifications of a Speaker were discriminatingly defined by Sir William Scott, afterward Lord Stowell, in nominating Mr. Speaker Abbott for re-election as Speaker of the House of Commons in 1802. He said :

"To an enlargement of the mind capable of embracing the most comprehensive subjects must be added the faculty of descending to the most minute ; to a tenacious respect for forms, a liberal regard for principles ; to habits of laborious research, powers of instant decision ; to a jealous affection for the privileges of the House, an awful sense of its duties ; to a firmness that can resist solicitation, a suavity of nature that can receive it without impatience ; and to a dignity of public demeanor suited to the quality of great affairs, and commanding the respect that is necessary for conducting them, the urbanity of private manners that can soften the asperities of business and adorn an office of severe labor with the conciliatory elegance of a station of ease."

The Speaker of the National House of Representatives is popularly regarded as the mere administrator of the law

and rules of parliamentary proceeding. He is that and a great deal more. The President ranks higher, and the Presidency, perhaps, affords a broader field for a great politician, but no great politician ever becomes President. Aside from the power of appointment to office, which he must share with the Senate, the President's functions are mainly ministerial, and that he must refrain from direct interference in politics is now a part of the unwritten Constitution. He transmits messages to Congress, giving information and recommending legislation, and he has a qualified negative on legislation. But Congress adopts his suggestions or not, as it chances, and his veto is rarely of material importance. Lincoln said: "I would rather have a full term in the Senate than the Presidency."

The Senator is an ambassador; his selection implies the highest distinction in his State; his long term makes him comparatively independent. The Senate shares executive power with the President. It is, on many accounts, a favorable and conspicuous field for the display of intellectual capacity and personal resource in debate. The Senator of commanding ability achieves renown and acquires far-reaching influence. No position in the United States is more desirable, more dignified and splendid; yet the Senate consults, debates, balances, regulates; it advises and consents rather than originates.

It is the House of Representatives that originates. It is in the House that the political ideas, aspirations, and wishes of the people are given form, consistency, direction, and effect. The Representatives are elected directly by the people, and the House is kept near the people by the brief term of its life. In short, the House is the people's assembly, the keeper of their purse and their sword, the storm-centre of their politics.

The Speaker is not only the autocrat of this popular body, he is himself the practical embodiment of the majority. His functions are not showy; his influence is largely subtle, indirect, judicial; his is no place for the striking qualities of the leader of debate on the floor; but he has more practical power, and can more directly and pro-

foundly influence affairs, particularly in stormy times, than any other officer of the Government. He distributes absolutely the legislative power of the House, which is lodged in committees. He controls the floor, assigning it to what measure he pleases, promoting this, obstructing that, at his pleasure. He appoints conference committees on the part of the House, and as to most important legislation, conference committees ultimately decide what shall or shall not be enacted. He directly affects the career of the Representatives, as he brings them forward or keeps them in the background. Aside from certain rules which he construes for himself, there is no restriction on him save his conscience and his accountability to public opinion. With capacity and character equal to the demands and opportunities of the position, the Speaker's private or personal influence is almost unbounded. To meet the just expectations of public opinion, he must be a very capable and high-minded man. He must organize the committees so as to give full and easy expression and effect to the policy of the country through the House, and his personal influence must be directed to securing unity of thought and purpose. In doing this, he will have made the best and only legitimate use of his political power.

The two successive re-elections of Speaker Colfax attest the general satisfaction he gave in this high office. These were as eventful times as ever chanced in the annals of men, and the actors played their part in a manly way, worthy of their place in the line of generations that has won from the oppressor, maintained, and transmitted liberty. Neither before nor since have there been greater Houses than those which called Schuyler Colfax to be their presiding officer ; at no time in our history were the people and their Congresses in closer sympathy, and this was due in part to the Speaker's faculty of wise and successful political management. The political advantages and power of the position were never used with greater effect or with more sagacity, nor were they ever directed to the accomplishment of nobler ends. After Lincoln's death no man spoke with more authority than Speaker Colfax ; no man

did more, in and out of the House, to initiate, develop, guide, and carry to success the policy that funded in the organic law the costly fruits of the civil war. In writing the life of Thaddeus Stevens, Mr. McPherson found among his papers, as he writes Mr. Colfax, the Speaker's pencilled suggestions, which became, though with considerable modification, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

"Nine tenths of the atrocities born in Washington have taken birth from his inspiration," said the *New York Leader*, in 1868, "although his consummate art has allowed the credit to be received by others. His position as Speaker throughout the Rebellion has given him immense facilities for intrigue." This paper miscalls the doings in Washington, but is near the truth as to much of their inspiration. Colfax spoke of these "atrocities" the same year at New Albany, Ind., as follows :

"You and I shall pass away. In a few years, at most, we shall have been laid beneath the sods of the valley. But what we have accomplished shall live in all future history ; and as age after age rolls away, your children and your children's children will rise up and call you blessed, because, amid the chaos of civil war, you dared to strike down this odious institution, and banished slavery forever from this fair Republic of ours."

The historian, Benson J. Lossing, writes him, December 15th :

"Permit me to express to you my satisfaction because of your election to the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives at this time, when unselfish patriotism, firmness, courtesy, and courage are needed in high places. I have watched with interest and care your course in the National Legislature ever since you entered it, and have rejoiced to see you, on all occasions, honor the names of Schuyler and Colfax—names whose bearers in the holy olden time were specially loved by the inspired Washington. God grant you ability to lead the Representatives of the people wisely, is the prayer of your sincere friend and fellow-citizen."

Mr. Henry J. Raymond, the founder of the *New York Times*, writes him, December 5th :

"Your election, I take it, is a sure thing. No one will rejoice more heartily thereat than I. You deserve the honor. You will distinguish yourself in discharging the duties of the place, and the country will support you heartily in whatever you may do, for it will be wisely done. I

think in your sentiments you are more radical than I am, but I think you know very well (as I certainly do) that statesmanship is a practical matter, not the indulgence of theories or extreme views on any subject. Burke says that if politicians had to deal only with human reason, they would have plain sailing; but they have to deal with human nature, which is a very different thing. I take it Washburne and his friends are running Grant for the Presidency. The anti-slavery men (distinctively, I mean, for we are all that in the main) will run Chase. I think the task of reconstructing the Union will be better performed by Lincoln than by anybody else. It will be one of infinite delicacy and difficulty. Lincoln and Dix would be my ticket. Pardon my boring you. Don't give us committees for the Presidency. Do justice to all shades of opinion, put your heel on the Copperheads remorselessly, and never forget that among those who will rejoice at your successes and wish you well always, is yours, most sincerely, Henry J. Raymond."

Mr. Greeley writes him, December 13th :

"I am right glad to hear, from your letter just received, that you will be able to satisfy yourself with regard to your committees. I regard that as the great point. Hence, the suggestions I made to you I made as testimony with regard to persons whom I happen to know better than you, but nothing more. I never ventured to hint to any one that, if you were Speaker, he would probably or possibly get a good place; and I had no debts of yours, any more than of my own, to saddle upon you. If you have done exactly what is best, you have done all I ask or wish. Now you see that a Speaker who has to pay for his nomination with chairmanships and good places is in a miserable plight."

His election had come spontaneously. His fitness and his desert had been conceded for more than a year past, and after his election at home no doubt existed in the country or among the Representatives-elect of his elevation from the floor to the Chair by common consent. He could and did constitute the committees to his own satisfaction, untrammelled by pledges to persons, but, of course, with the necessary reference to considerations of locality and of the prior positions held by re-elected members. They were substantially the same in the two succeeding Congresses, and that they were judiciously made up is attested by the remarkable unity and harmony which obtained in the House during those critical times, though this was due in part to the fact that the times were critical.

Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means ; Henry L. Dawes, of Massachusetts, of the Committee on Elections ; James F. Wilson, of Iowa, of the Committee on the Judiciary ; Robert C. Schenck, of Ohio, of the Committee on Military Affairs ; Alexander H. Rice, of Massachusetts, of the Committee on Naval Affairs ; Henry Winter Davis, of Maryland, of the Committee on Foreign Affairs ; James M. Ashley, of Ohio, of the Committee on Territories ; James T. Hale, of Pennsylvania, of the Committee on Claims ; Elihu B. Washburne, of Illinois, of the Committee on Commerce ; George W. Julian, of Indiana, of the Committee on Public Lands ; John B. Alley, of Massachusetts, of the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads ; William Windom, of Minnesota, of the Committee on Indian Affairs.

A favorite with the editorial fraternity, and the first of the guild to receive such high honor, the representatives of the press in Washington gave the Speaker a complimentary dinner. Mr. Samuel Wilkeson, of the *New York Times*, presided. On taking the head of the table he made a little speech. Speaking of running over newspaper exchanges in his occupation, he said : " That paper [the *South Bend Register*] I always read for its own sake, for it was wise, it was honest, it was well made, it ever had news. 'Twas one of the few papers in America into which the scissors always went, or which always communicated to a political writer a valuable political impression. And I read the *South Bend Register* for another reason, wholly peculiar to myself."

Then he told of his having been in South Bend eighteen years before ; of walking up and down the street in the winter moonlight while the coach-horses were changed. He saw the sign of the newspaper, and through the window a man in his shirt-sleeves walking about, as if at work. While musing whom it could be, and whether his wife were counting the small hours at home ere his return, a walker joined him. " What sort of man is the late worker in his shirt-sleeves ?" he asked. " He is very good to the poor," was

the reply ; " he works hard, he is sociable with all people, he doesn't drink whisky, he pays his debts, he is a safe adviser, folks depend on him, all this part of Indiana believe in him." " From that day to this," said Mr. Wilkeson, " I have never taken up the *South Bend Register* without thinking of this eulogy, and envying the man who had justly entitled himself to it in the dawn of his early manhood."

Briefly enumerating the swift preferment of Mr. Colfax from trust to trust, he said his hearers might find the secret of this continued regard of a constituency for a citizen, of statesmen for a statesman, in his fidelity to principles, his attention to business, his talents for legislation, his constant and useful devotion to the public good. " But you don't know the secret—I do. I learned it by chance, by an unwilling and unwitting eavesdropping in the parlor of another noble man, John W. Forney. Eighteen years after my midnight watching of that printer in his shirt-sleeves at his solitary labor, I heard him in this city utter this, his philosophy of life : ' I consider that day wasted in which I have not done some good to some human being, or added somewhat to somebody's happiness.' What success could recede from that man's pursuit ? nay, what success would not pursue that man and forcibly crown him with honors and gratitude ? Schuyler Colfax, editor of the *South Bend Register*, Congressman from Indiana, and for eleven years actor of a philosophical life that Socrates might have envied, you cannot escape the love of your fellow-men. We journalists and men of the newspaper press do love you, and claim you as bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Fill your glasses all, in an invocation to the gods for long life, greater success, and ever-increasing happiness to our editorial brother in the Speaker's Chair.'

Mr. Colfax responded with warm thanks, wishing he was more worthy of the eulogy pronounced on him by their distinguished chairman, and also of that from the lips of some too partial friend among those who, from his boyhood, had surrounded him with so much love and affection. " My heart turns warmly to-night toward the



lifelong friends at home, and I feel indeed that there is no man in the American Congress who has a constituency of which he has a greater right to be proud than I have of mine. With a generous forbearance to all my shortcomings, overlooking all deficiencies, they have sustained me ever by the unseen but magnetic power of their hearts and strengthened me with their hands in all the contests and canvasses of the past ; and I shall go back, at the end of this Congress, to the private life to which I expect to retire, to live and die in the midst of those I love so faithfully and so well." He then gave his views as to the profession : " Next to the sacred desk and those who minister in it, there is no profession more responsible than ours." And closed with the toast : " The American Press : if inspired by patriotism, morality, and humanity, it cannot fail to develop a constantly increasing vigor, power, and consequent independence."

" As Speaker, Colfax was the embodiment of the war policy of the Government," writes Colonel Forney. On the 8th of April, 1864, Mr. Alexander Long, of Ohio, a portly, handsome man, new to the House, rose in Committee of the Whole, and made the boldest defence of the Rebellion ever uttered in the House.<sup>1</sup> When the Speaker's hammer fell, Mr. Washburne, of Illinois, saying, " It means the recognition of the Southern Confederacy and peace on terms of disunion," hoped the gentleman would be allowed to finish. By unanimous consent, Long proceeded to finish. " I believe that there are but two alternatives," said he ; " and these are either an acknowledgment of the South as an independent nation or their complete subjugation and extermination as a people ; and of these alternatives, I prefer the former."

Attention had grown more and more fixed to the end of his speech. As he closed, there was a general return to seats, and Mr. Garfield, of Ohio, rose. He was also a new member, fresh from the bloody fields of Tennessee, where he had won a Major-General's stars. Complimenting

1. This account of this debate follows " Agate's" (Whitelaw Reid) letters to the *Cincinnati Gazette*.

Long as a brave and honest man, supposing him to have come under truce from the other side, he dismissed the supposition, and denounced him as a traitor in terrible terms. Picturing the cost and suffering of three years of wide-wasting war, and the Rebellion driven back into a fire-girt corner and about to receive its death-blow : " Now," said he, " in the quiet of this hall, hatched in the lowest depth of a similar dark treason, there rises a Benedict Arnold, and proposes to surrender us all up—body and spirit, the nation and the flag, its genius and its honor, now and forever, to the accursed traitors to our country. And this proposition comes from a citizen of the loyal State of Ohio. I implore you, brethren in this House, not to believe that many births ever gave pangs to my mother State such as she suffered when that traitor was born." He closed with an allusion to the secret military organization existing in the Northwest, in league with the South, its attempts to corrupt the army, its riots, and said that while he feared, he hoped that this was not the uplifted signal of revolt. " If these men do mean to light the torch of war in all our homes, the American people should know it at once, and prepare to meet it." Long replied, maintaining his ground, citing the sayings of noted Abolitionists prior to the war as authority ; as if they were applicable now, or at any time since war had been precipitated by the departing " sisters."

His speech convinced Colfax that the matter merited further notice. The next day, as soon as the Journal was read, he called a member to the Chair, descended to the floor, and offered a resolution expelling Long from the House. He said he offered it from a sense of duty as the Representative of the people of his district, many of whom were now at the front perilling and losing their lives in defence of the Union. He harbored no unfriendliness toward the gentleman from Ohio, and was acting on his own responsibility, without consultation with his party friends. If such sentiments as fell from the lips of the gentleman from Ohio were to pass unrebuked, we had no right to complain of foreign recognition of the Confederacy ; we

should stop shooting deserters from our army ; we should call no more soldiers into the field ; we should not close the doors of this House against members coming even from the conclaves of treason at Richmond ; we should not object to foreign aid in the disruption of our country and the destruction of our liberties. It was mainly with reference to effect abroad that he offered the resolution. None of these traitors and enemies and their possible allies had any reason to expect hostility from this House, if it listened to such sentiments without rebuke.

Hastily consulting, the Democrats put forward Mr. Cox, of Ohio, to gain time. Mr. Cox denied that the Democrats entertained the sentiments expressed by Long. He cited alleged Republican declarations of similar tenor, held the floor, and catechised members, shutting them off whenever it pleased him. He called on the Speaker the second time in vain, and then ventured to taunt him with being as prudent as he was ready to descend from the Chair to persecute a member. Mr. Colfax replied to this that he claimed the floor when he pleased, and that he declined to hold it at the mercy of its present occupant, to be cut off when the latter thought something dangerous was about to be said. The confusion in the hall increased. Members kept passing from seat to seat, discussing, as it continued, the varying phases of the debate. The galleries, inclusive of the reporters' gallery, filled up. Mr. Kelley, of Pennsylvania, denounced Mr. Cox for evading the issue, and challenged the Democrats to repudiate or approve what Long had said. Mr. Harris, a tall Marylander of pleasing presence, got the floor. "I indorse every word the gentleman from Ohio has uttered," he began, and ended : "The South ask you to leave them in peace, but no, you say you will bring them into subjection. That is not done yet, and God Almighty grant that it never may be !" The House was in an uproar, the aisles full.

"I rise to a point of order," said Mr. Tracy, of Pennsylvania.

"The gentleman from Maryland will suspend. Gentle-

men in the aisles will take their seats. The Chair will not recognize any one till order is restored." Members took their seats.

"I rise to a point of order," again by Mr. Tracy.

"The gentleman will state his point of order."

"My point of order is this, sir; what right, sir, has he to pray God Almighty to defeat, sir—to defeat the American armies?" The words struggled out, hot with anger.

"What sort of a point of order is that?" sneered Harris.

"I want to know whether a member has the right to utter treason in this hall?" screamed Tracy above the din.

"I demand that the language of the gentleman from Maryland be taken down at the Clerk's desk, in accordance with the rule," said Mr. Washburne, of Illinois. "Too late!" "Order!" "Go on!" "Never mind!" "Go ahead!" from the Democratic side of the House, which had been making all the noise possible throughout the scene. But Washburne held the floor; the shouting of the whole rebel army would not have made him yield it. The Chair sustained the point of order; the words were taken down.

"That's right! I say that over again," shouted Harris.

"For one, I protest against any man uttering such language in this hall," said Washburne.

"You mean you are afraid of it," said Harris, and he was proceeding, when the Chair ordered him to be seated. Harris subsided, quivering with rage, and, shaking his fist at Washburne, hissed: "You — villain you!" In the confusion this escaped notice.

Mr. Mallory, of Kentucky, obtained the floor, and denounced the silencing of Harris as a gross infraction of constitutional privileges. "The Constitution expressly provides that a member shall not be held responsible for words spoken in debate." General Schenck, of Ohio, brought from a sick-bed "to vote for the expulsion of a traitor," asked: "Is he afraid of the final words—shall not be held responsible for words spoken in debate *in any other place?*" Mr. Mallory collapsed, and Mr. Fernando Wood, of New York City, took the floor and indorsed Mr.

Long. Question arising as to what Long had said, Colfax proposed that the discussion be postponed until the *Globe* appeared with the official report. This cleared the way for a motion, and Washburne moved the expulsion of Harris. In spite of a rattling fire of points of order, motions to adjourn and to lay on the table, the House was soon brought to a vote, 81 to 58, not two thirds—lost. The instant the vote was announced Schenck got the floor, and a page darted down the aisle with a resolution censuring Harris. Democrats appealed to Schenck in vain not to press the resolution, to modify it; he cared not how they voted, he said, but they must now meet the naked issue; they must either sustain or censure treason in the House. Finding they could not prevent a vote, they scattered or left the hall, and the resolution was adopted, 92 to 18. "Well," said Mr. Boutwell, of Massachusetts, "it reminds me that when a boy I used to set my trap for woodchuck and sometimes caught a skunk."

On Monday the debate was resumed, but in a lower key on the Democratic side. Long before the hour set for it there was no unoccupied sitting or standing-room in the galleries, and the floor, by the complaisance of members, was covered with a moving throng. Anticipation was on tiptoe; the ordinary business dragged. Mr. Bliss, of Ohio, opened the discussion, pleading that his colleague had been misunderstood; that he intended to express his belief, not his desire, that the Confederacy should be recognized. Thaddeus Stevens, the iron leader, already historic, suffering from illness, was next recognized. He pronounced the attempt to liken his utterances to Long's a fraud. Stating his own position and that of Long, he concluded: "I protest against being linked with such an infamous purpose. No man can do it [shaking his finger at Cox] who is not a knave, or a fool, or both."

Mr. Fernando Wood, regarded on all sides as the worst man on the floor, yet with an audacity and use of himself which compelled respect, no longer indorsing Harris, proceeded, like Cox, to read ante-war disunion sentiments, attributed—many of them falsely—to prominent Abolition-

ists. General Schenck, square, compact, and muscular, his right hand shattered on a recent battle-field and carried in a sling, rose and undertook to classify the Fernando Wood species of Copperhead. His sentences rattled like volleys of musketry; words can but faintly recall the scene, the peril of the country, which then made it impressive, having now passed away, and many of the actors, who, like knights of old, brought the clang of arms to the stern debate in council, having now mouldered into dust. "Although we may not execute such a man on his appropriate gallows, erected for criminals," said Schenck, "yet, thank God, there is a gibbet of public opinion, where we can hang him high as Haman, and hold him there to the scorn of all the nations of the world." Mr. Wood's head sank on his breast, and for once he seemed a little dashed. Mr. Voorhees, of Indiana, with a fine figure and bearing, a good voice and fluent speech, essayed to answer Schenck. Then Mr. Orth, of Indiana: "If General Jackson had been President, instead of being censured, the traitor would have been sent to the old Capitol Prison."

"You're a liar and a scoundrel and a coward if you don't resent it," cried Harris. Amid great uproar the Chair overruled some one's point of order—"In view of the action of the House, it is not unparliamentary to refer to Harris as a traitor."

"I have no reply to make to the member from Maryland," said Mr. Orth. "Convicted of treason, declared unworthy of membership in this House, the slobberings of such a traitor in such a place fall unnoticed at the feet of honorable men." Mr. Kernan, of New York, endeavored to defend Mr. Long without compromising himself as a War Democrat—with what success may be imagined.

He was followed by Henry Winter Davis, of Maryland, who spoke in his best vein. The question was not, he said, whether Mr. Long, as a citizen, had the right to believe and to say that the dismemberment of the nation ought to be permitted, but whether, as a Representative, sworn to legislate for this Union, he could be permitted to legislate on the avowed desire that the Union should not exist. He

compared the power of public opinion to the sea, "whose tidal waves obey the fickle bidding of the moon, and roll and swell and sway with resistless force, and yet constitute the level from which all height is measured." Like the ocean, said he, public opinion has depths whose eternal stillness is the condition of its stability. "Those depths of opinion are not free." The waves of the ocean were restricted by the rock-bound coast, as public opinion must be when it beats against the sanctions of the Constitution and the national safety. Mr. Davis admitted that "a time may come when the question of recognizing the Southern Confederacy will have to be answered." He continued :

"I admit it. When a Democrat shall darken the White House and the land ; when a Democratic majority here shall proclaim that freedom of speech secures impunity to treason, and declare recognition better than extermination of traitors ; when McClellan and Fitz John Porter shall have again brought the rebel armies within sight of Washington City, and the successor of James Buchanan shall withdraw our armies from the unconstitutional invasion of Virginia to the north of the Potomac ; when exultant rebels shall sweep over the fortifications and their bombshells shall crash against the dome of the Capitol ; when thousands throughout Pennsylvania shall seek refuge on the shores of Lake Erie from the rebel invasion, cheered and welcomed by the opponents of extermination ; . . . when the people, exhausted by taxation, weary of sacrifices, drained of blood, betrayed by their rulers, deluded by demagogues into believing that peace is the way to union, and submission the path of victory, shall throw down their arms before the advancing foe ; when vast chasms across every State shall make apparent to every eye, when too late to remedy it, that division from the South is the inauguration of anarchy at the North, and that peace without union is the end of the Republic—then the independence of the South will be an accomplished fact, and gentlemen may, without treason to the dead Republic, rise in this migratory House, wherever it may then be in America, and declare themselves for recognizing their masters at the South rather than exterminating them ! Until that day, in the name of the American nation ; in the name of every house in the land where there is one dead for the holy cause ; in the name of those who stand before us in the ranks of battle ; in the name of the liberty our ancestors have confided to us, I devote to eternal execration the name of him who shall propose to destroy this blessed land rather than its enemies.

"But until that time arrives, it is the judgment of the American people that there shall be no compromise ; that ruin to ourselves or ruin to the Southern rebels are the only alternatives. It is only by resolutions

of this kind that nations can rise above great dangers and overcome them in crises like this. It was only by turning France into a camp, resolved that Europe might exterminate, but should not subjugate her, that France is the leading empire of Europe to-day. It is by such a resolve that the American people, coercing a reluctant Government to draw the sword and stake the national existence on the integrity of the Republic, are now anything but the fragments of a nation before the world, the scorn and hiss of every petty tyrant. It is because the people of the United States, rising to the height of the occasion, dedicated this generation to the sword, and pouring out the blood of their children as of no account, avowed before high Heaven that there should be no end to this conflict but ruin absolute or absolute triumph, that we now are what we are ; that the banner of the Republic, still pointing onward, floats proudly in the face of the enemy ; that vast regions are reduced to obedience to the laws, and that a great host in armed array now presses with steady step into the dark regions of the Rebellion. It is only by the earnest and abiding resolution of the people that whatever shall be our fate, it shall be grand as the American nation, worthy of that Republic which first trod the path of empire and made no peace but under the banners of victory, that the American people will survive in history."

Mr. Pendleton, of Ohio, maintained that the opinions expressed by his colleague, that the war was unconstitutional, that it ought never to have been begun, that it had been prosecuted without wisdom or success, that it would never restore the Union, that it would destroy free government at the North, that for these reasons it ought to be stopped, were legitimate debate. "The House has power to maintain decorum in debate ; it has power to expel for crime or personal turpitude ; but for the expression of any opinion upon any public question in debate upon it, the House has no power to expel or censure. And it is in time of war that this freedom of discussion is most necessary ; otherwise the state of war would perpetuate itself." Mr. Pendleton continued :

"The gentleman [Mr. Davis] exhorted his friends to accept the issue, absolute victory or absolute ruin ; and then he painted the absolute ruin of this Government. Even he could conceive it possible. He described the home of liberty deserted ; this temple, reared by our fathers, destroyed ; its grace and symmetry and beauty gone ; its pillars fallen ; its walls thrown down ; and amid 'this chaos of ruin' those who accept this issue brave, determined, tearful, sorrowing, overwhelmed with it in a common fate. He exhorted his friends in this House and in the country—he



expressly excluded you, my fellow-Democrats, and your constituents—to accept this alternative. Do it, he exclaimed, and let the world know that this age has produced heroic children upon whom Heaven has visited the sins of their fathers.

“ Sir, I trust in God the catastrophe may never come. I trust that the ages, as they roll on, will not thus be called to pass judgment on the men of these days. But if it must be so, my imagination pictures another scene. When your work shall be accomplished, when your mission shall be executed, when our Constitution is dead, when our liberties are gone, when our Government is destroyed, when these States—no longer held secure in their proper position by the power of our matchless Constitution, so that they emulate in accordant action the stars, as by the divine decree they encircle in their mysterious courses the footstool of the eternal throne, and extract from the harmony of conflicting elements the true music of the spheres—shall have given place to ‘ States discordant, dissevered, belligerent, to a land rent with civil feuds and drenched in fraternal blood,’ history will hold its dread inquest, and in the presence of appalled humanity render judgment that base and degenerate children, deserting the teachings of their fathers, deserting the teachings of the past, departing from the ways of pleasantness and peace, rebelling against the wisdom and beneficence of the Almighty, with hearts filled with pride and souls stained with fanaticism, struck the matricidal blow, and at the same moment indignant and outraged Heaven wreaked upon them the just retribution of their terrible and nameless crime.”

On Wednesday, it being apparent that the Democrats would not vote for the resolution of expulsion, Mr. Colfax accepted the amendment of Mr. Broomall, of Pennsylvania, in effect substituting censure for expulsion, and upon this he demanded the previous question, “ with the understanding that, although I have the right, after the previous question shall be sustained, to close the debate, the gentleman from Ohio shall have an hour to reply to me.” The previous question having been seconded, and the main question ordered to be now put, Mr. Colfax addressed the House. He began :

“ ‘ Where are we ? ’ was the emphatic question propounded by the eloquent gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Pendleton] on Tuesday last. I answer him, we are in the Capitol of our nation. We are in the Hall where assembles the Congress of this Republic, which, thank God, in spite of conspiracy and treason, still lives ; in spite of enemies open and covert, within and without our lines, with and without arms in their hands, still lives, and which, thanks to our gallant defenders in the field,

will live as long as time shall last. 'Where are we?' said he. I will answer him in the language of his colleague [Mr. Long], whose speech is under review :

"From the day on which the conflict began up to the present hour the Confederate army has not been forced beyond the sound of their guns from the dome of the Capitol in which we are assembled. The city of Washington is to-day, as it has been for three years, guarded by Federal troops in all the forts and fortifications with which it is surrounded, to prevent an attack from the enemy.'

"And yet, sir, while we are thus placed 'in this fearful hour of the country's peril,' as the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Long] says in the opening paragraph of his speech ; while the scales of national life and death are trembling in the balance ; while our veterans are in the front, seeking to save the life of the country, and willing to seal their fidelity, if need be, with their hearts' blood ; with the enemy almost at the very gates of your Capital—at such a time as this the gentleman from the Second District of Ohio rises in his seat and declares that our Government is dead ; nay, more, that it is destroyed ; and then, having thus consigned it to death and destruction, he avows boldly that he prefers to recognize the nationality of the Confederacy of the traitors, which has caused this alleged death of the Republic, to any other alternative that remains.

"It was on that account that I felt it my duty to bring this resolution before the House. The gentleman from Ohio would lower the banner of beauty and glory that floats above us to-day, betokening that the Congress of the United States is in session ; he would pluck from the brilliant galaxy that glitters in its azure field eleven of its stars ; he would allow in that diplomatic gallery some Mason, some Wigfall, or Beauregard as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary from a foreign nation planted over the graves of our murdered sons and brothers, upon soil that belongs to the United States ; nay, more than that, he would allow the heights of Arlington to frown with hostile batteries, menacing our deliberations as we sit here in the Capitol.

"The gentleman's colleague from the Columbus district [Mr. Cox], on Saturday last, said my course was 'extraordinary,' and that remark seemed to be the keynote of most of the speeches that followed from that side of the House. But there is a parallel and a justification. I call the gentleman from Ohio to the stand. On last Saturday he rose in his place and said, alluding to his colleague [Mr. Long] :

"He did not speak for his Democratic colleagues. They met this morning in caucus, for the purpose of disavowing any such sentiments as those which are attributed to him. They have authorized me so to declare to this House, in justice to them and their constituencies.'

"Sir, it was 'extraordinary' when a speech had been delivered here—nay, it was unprecedented—for the colleagues of the gentleman who delivered it, of his own political faith, to regard it as their duty to their party to hold a caucus and authorize one of their number solemnly to

disavow and repudiate it on this floor. If that can be done for the interests of party, should I be criticised for asking this House to condemn it solemnly to save the country and the country's cause from its deleterious effects? Is the country to be cared for less than the interests of party?

"The gentlemen on the other side, every one, indeed, who have referred to it at all, have been kind enough to speak of my impartiality as the presiding officer of this House. I thank them for this testimonial, which I have endeavored to deserve. But, at the same time, most of them have expressed 'regret' that I left the Speaker's Chair and came down upon the floor of the House. I have, however, no regret; not even denunciations of the press or the strictures of members upon this floor, to which I have listened in respectful silence, without interrupting them, have caused me a moment's regret. I did it in the performance of what seemed to me an imperative duty, from conscientious conviction, and from no personal unkindness toward the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Long]. I have no personal unkindness toward him or any human being who lives upon the earth. And if it had been understood when, as a Representative from the Ninth Congressional District of Indiana, your kindness and confidence placed me in the Speaker's Chair, I was to go there fettered and tongue-tied, and to leave the people of that district disfranchised, that for all time to come during this Congress I should not speak for my country, I should have thanked you for your election, but would have rejected and spurned the commission.

"I stand upon this floor to-day by no 'condescension' from that responsible position. No, sir. In that Chair I am the servant of the House to administer its rules, but on this floor the equal of any other member—no more, no less.

"Duty is often unpleasant, sometimes distasteful and repulsive; but, sir, the man who will not fearlessly discharge his duty is not fit to be in public life. If my brother, under the solemnity of the stringent oath taken by members of this Congress for the first time since its enactment, had made this speech which now lies before me, I would have done the same toward him as toward the gentleman from Ohio; not that I loved him less, but my country more. As I stated in the opening of this debate, if the House did not rebuke and condemn this sentiment, you would have no right to complain of foreign countries recognizing this rebel Confederacy, which the gentleman from Ohio was willing to recognize; nay, more, if this was the support which you gave to the soldiers whom you have sent to the field, if this was the aid and comfort you gave them, they would have the right to turn on us and say: 'You called us forth to fight the battles of the Union, while you in the Capitol allow men to make speeches which will be quoted with joy in the Confederate Congress, which will strengthen the arms and sinews of the men we have to meet in battle array, while they paralyze and discourage us.'"

Briefly replying to several gentlemen who had spoken

against the resolution, he took up Long's speech, and pointed out wherein it was calculated "to give aid and comfort to the enemies of the United States," the constitutional definition of treason. "That cause, steeped in shame and scarred with crime, floating a flag black with treason and red with blood, the most wicked cause that ever outraged the justice of God or stained the annals of men, has had no such vindication before as it has now in the speech of the gentleman from Ohio."

In the midst of his review his hour expired, and a single objection sufficing to prevent its extension, Mr. Chanler, of New York, objected. Mr. Long replied, reiterating his former inculpation of others in mitigation of the censure proposed to be visited on him. The resolution, which declared Long "an unworthy member of this House," was then adopted by nearly a strict party vote—80 to 70. Harris had been censured by a vote of 93 to 18 for indorsing Long, but by the time the vote was taken on censuring Long himself, the Democrats had recovered from their panic.

Union papers had come to their assistance. The *New York Times* spoke of the attempt to expel Long as "a disgrace and an outrage." "I say to that paper and to this House," replied Mr. Colfax, "that if my course is a disgrace, you can fix the brand on my forehead, and I will wear it through life; nor do I want any prouder epitaph on my tombstone than that I dared fearlessly to stand up here and do my duty according to my convictions." [Great applause.]

"Mr. Speaker," said Mr. Colfax, "I desire that the rules of the House forbidding applause should be obeyed. Gentlemen on the other side have been displeased with the galleries during the last few days. It is unseemly in this House for the galleries to indulge in applause or censure of what occurs upon the floor; and I would rather have the 'God bless you' of some poor soldier's widow who had seen in her desolate home that I stood up for the cause for which her husband fell, or the 'God bless you' of the soldier on his dangerous picket duty in front of our army,

guarding the sleeping host with his own life, than the applause of these galleries, crowded as they are with talent, heroism, and beauty.”

He did not fail to receive the appreciation he preferred. Private John M. Duddy, of Company H., Sixty-first Pennsylvania Volunteers, writes him :

“ We might, indeed, despair of our country, despite our best efforts in the field, were it not for the noble band of patriotic statesmen who have given their hearts and talents to her support. May I be allowed, sir, without incurring the charge of flattery, but from the grateful and sincere effusion of a soldier’s heart, to place your name at the head of this list. We owe you a debt of gratitude, as does the whole country, which it will be difficult to repay. Deep down in the heart of every American soldier your name will live enshrined for the matchless eloquence with which you have defended our noble Government from the lying aspersions that rebel sympathizers have sought to heap upon it. Your burning words of patriotism encourage us. We feel that our country is safe while possessed of such patriots. We go forth to the coming dread conflict renewed, and should we fall, the name of the Hon. Schuyler Colfax will ascend to heaven in the prayers of thousands of dying soldiers, that you may long be preserved, with increased wisdom, to defend the sacred cause of our beloved country. Pardon me, sir, for my prolixity. My feelings are too strong to have allowed me to say less, or even properly express on paper what I have said. I have but uttered the sentiments of ninety-nine in every hundred soldiers in this [Potomac] army.”

He received many letters of similar tenor from the soldiers in the different armies. “ I had counted the cost,” he said, “ and was willing to be made the target of attack for the sake of my country, and for the sake of thousands of my constituents, now the target of attack on the battlefield.” It would have been exceedingly strange if the soldiers had not appreciated it. His action was generally sustained and commended by the genuine Union men and by the Union press. Whatever may be thought of the question raised, there was no lack of Democratic precedent. Democratic Houses had censured freedom of debate from Adams to Giddings and Sumner, and always when exercised in behalf of justice and liberty, and in time of peace. Mr. Colfax proposed to expel for the utterance of treason in the House under cover of freedom of debate, in a time of imminent national peril. As to its wisdom, considered

practically, it cowed the open and outrageous expression of treasonable sentiments and electrified Union men, citizen and soldier, as Mr. Blaine's action in the House twelve years later (January, 1876) electrified Republicans.<sup>1</sup>

On the 7th day of May, 1864, the citizens of Indiana residing in Washington, with their wives and daughters, met at the Speaker's house and presented him with a magnificent set of silver, largely on account of his bearing on this occasion. On the salver was engraved :

"Presented to Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the Thirty-eighth Congress, now and for many years a faithful Representative of the Ninth Congressional District of Indiana, eminent in the councils of his country, her able and patriotic defender, and the soldier's friend. From citizens of his own State, who recognize in him all that is generous and just, and unwavering devotion to principle and duty, May 7th, 1864."

The Hon. Hugh McCulloch, of the Treasury Department, made the presentation speech, closing thus : "During the war we shall hear your voice in the halls of legislation and before the people, rebuking treason, strengthening the faint-hearted and inspiring the loyal at home, and sending words of cheer to our gallant soldiers in the field ; and when peace is restored to us you will be, what you have been in the past, a tribune of the people, a champion of popular rights and of constitutional liberty."

The Speaker responded, thanking them very heartily, and then he allowed his words to follow his thoughts and heart out to the Wilderness, where hundreds of good men were falling every hour.<sup>2</sup> "All the long hours of

1. In his attack on the Democratic proposition to amnesty all the ex-rebels, inclusive of Mr. Jefferson Davis, still under ban of political disability.

2. Of those days Mr. Garfield said in Toledo, in 1866 : "I remember one occasion, after Grant went into the darkness of the Spottsylvania Wilderness, when for six mortal days the telegraph wires were cut off behind him, and for six terrible days the nation was on its knees, praying to the God of battles for victory, and mothers were quaking for fear the loved ones might be lost. At last, after six days of agony, a messenger entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, hurried up to the Speaker's desk with a despatch in his hand that our forces had captured six thousand rebels and sixty cannon ; and with an impulse that no one could resist, every loyal member sprang to his feet. Men shed tears like children, and the galleries leaped to their feet and shouted glory and honor and joy ! But those seventy men sat across the aisle, without one word of applause or one look of exultation." These were the seventy men who defended Mr. Long.

"After the Union army had been whipped," ran a story attributed to Mr. Blaine, "two old Cops would meet to talk about it. One would say to the other that it was very

this day, and through the twilight into night, my heart has been with our brave soldiers at the front. To-night they may be gathered round their camp-fires ; they may be in the sharp conflict, pursuing or retreating ; they may be lying dead on the field. May Providence 'cover their heads' in the day of battle, and give them victory which shall turn back the tide of rebel success and restore peace and unity to a distracted land. I feel an honorable pride in your remark that my most critical friends have seen no act of my life which they could wish had been unperformed. But more gratifying is the title of 'Soldier's Friend' you have inscribed on the plate. I value it more than honors or offices, and would rather be bound to their hearts and yours 'with hooks of steel,' as Shakespeare writes, or, rather, with the unseen but no less potential heartstrings of affection, than to enjoy any earthly distinction or fame." A dinner and social festivities concluded the evening.

June 26th, he writes his mother :

"The Squire has been writing you this morning. I let him read your letter yesterday, and he handed it back, saying : 'What a good letter your mother writes !' Quite singularly, while all of us feel rather depressed at the military and financial 'situation,' he is sanguine, hopeful, enthusiastic ; says we can raise a million more men 'just as easy !' The weather has been terribly hot—ninety degrees in the Hall—and exciting sessions, keeping me very busy in trying to preserve order. The perspiration poured off me in streams, and once I had a slight premonition of vertigo ; but as it would not do to faint in the Chair, as it would interrupt business and make a sensation, I bathed my forehead in cool water, and it passed off. I am quite well considering the labor, but am anxious for adjournment and home. Last evening it was so sultry (I had no sleep the night before, with the hot hours and the mosquitoes) I came up to the Capitol as soon as dinner was over, and as there was no night session worked in my little den down-stairs till eleven, and then lay down on a sofa in the Speaker's room, which was cool, and had a glorious night's sleep in the Capitol all by myself."

This exhibits the man beneath the official. The "den" he speaks of was a little closet in a dark entry under the hall hard by a private staircase. The glazed door, one of

sad. The other would reply, very sorrowfully, that it was indeed a very sad business. Then they would both burst out laughing and go round the corner and take a drink for joy."

the few in the Capitol not marked, was screened by green baize. Inside a piece of carpet partly covered the floor. The single window was cheaply screened. There was room for a table, a lounge, and two or three chairs. If the page at the door knew the caller, he could pass in without a card. Here he did his work. Unless hid in some such place, his time would have run entirely to waste, so many people wanted to see him. Since he found and appropriated this little hole-in-the-wall, probably as much of the real business of governing has been done in it, successive Speakers having used it, as in any other room in the country.

In accordance with a previously expressed determination, he had published a card declining a renomination, but the people of his district would not have it so, and he had to stand for the Thirty-ninth Congress.<sup>1</sup> It was the most important election ever contested in this or any country. In perhaps the darkest hour of the war, with the popular branch of Congress trembling in the balance between them and their political foes, the Union men had unconditionally committed themselves to the overthrow of slavery, that golden calf of American politics, by the issue of the Emancipation Proclamation. To give it effect, they must destroy the Confederate armies and carry a Constitutional Amendment abolishing slavery, which required a two-thirds vote of Congress to propose and three fourths of the States to ratify. Two years had passed, the Southern people were united, and their armies still presented a brazen front, while nearly half of the Northern voters were in full sympathy with them, and the military outlook was as gloomy as ever.

1. To the Hon. Horace P. Biddle he writes, 15th April, 1864: "From the saddening death of my wife up to a recent period, I had determined, as I supposed fixedly, not to be again a candidate, and so said and wrote to all who alluded to it. When, however, at the State Convention, the delegates from the Ninth District unanimously expressed their desire that I should again be a candidate, and many who were present wrote me urgently on the subject, I reflected on it for several weeks in the light of duty, and finally, yielding to the appeals and the expressed wishes of so many fellow-members and of the President, who insisted that this was not the time for me to retire, I wrote last month the card that has been published in the papers. In view of the numerous letters, resolutions of county committees, and appeals from those I have supposed would be candidates, which I have received, I could not, in justice to them, refuse to be a candidate once more, as I now am."



Our successes in the field were seemingly in inverse ratio to our sacrifices, and these were only less than infinite. The early laurels of Rosecrans had withered at Chickamauga, leaving the Union army beleaguered at Chattanooga. After the capture of Vicksburg, freeing the Mississippi, Grant had repaired to Chattanooga and driven the enemy from our front in a great battle. His splendid career from Donelson to Vicksburg and Chattanooga convinced the people that he was the man for whom they had long been praying.

The Eastern army had never struck Lee in Virginia but to recoil for repairs, and this experience, repeated again and again, had made all but the stoutest-hearted doubtful of ultimate victory. When Grant was made Lieutenant-General, and fixed his headquarters with General Meade, the people of Washington and the loyal North experienced as much relief as they would if the Army of the Potomac had been doubled in numbers. When, with his magnificent army, he plunged into the Wilderness, withstood Lee's fiercest onslaught for three days, and instead of recrossing the Rapidan for repairs, moved out by the left flank and renewed the combat at Spottsylvania Court House, swooping up sixty cannon and six thousand prisoners one morning, millions in the North breathed freely for the first time since the first Bull Run.

But when he had forced Lee back into the intrenchments of Richmond, and established a fortified line in their front extending to Petersburg, along which there were attack and repulse at various points and with varying success, and when Lee seemed able to hold his own, to protect his railroad communications with the far South, give General Sheridan occupation in the Valley of Virginia, and even to seriously threaten Washington, the new-fledged hopes of the Northern people sank almost lower than ever. In the West General William Tecumseh Sherman had concentrated the Union armies and driven the enemy from Chattanooga to Atlanta in an all but continuous fight of ninety days. There he was still confronted by Hood, and, it seemed, to better advantage than farther north. The

National Democratic Convention saw nothing in the military prospect to deter it from pronouncing the war a failure and demanding the opening of negotiations for peace. To the ordinary observer the military situation had not materially improved in October and November. Grant and Lee were at most holding each other at bay. Sherman had shattered General Hood's forces about Atlanta and struck for the sea, but Hood was able to appear with about his old strength before Nashville.

At the same time the President called for three hundred thousand men nearly every other month, and from the depreciation of the currency, the Government was borrowing money at fifty to sixty cents on the dollar and pouring it out like water.

July 22d, Colfax writes his mother :

"I reached home this morning at 1.30, having been to La Porte, Plymouth, Argos, Rochester, Perrysburg, Mexico, and Peru, during my three days' absence, and seen and *tried* to stir up our friends in each. They are all listless and the Cops active. Turpie you have heard is nominated for Congress, and they intend to make a bitter fight on me. Well, some of these days I may find my ideal of quiet and happiness as an offset to this life of unrest and excitement. But the honest truth is I cannot work myself up to enthusiasm this year. I was glad to get the Squire's hopeful letter, and read part of it to all the desponding circles at La Porte and Peru.<sup>1</sup> Isn't it odd that he should be the sanguine one instead of me?"

1. Squire Matthews wrote from Terre Coupee, July 17th, that he found a very good and healthy sentiment prevailing, "although, like yourself, some are fearful that we shall never take Richmond, that the people will weary of the war, and we be beaten at the fall elections. Things don't look so to me. The ladies over the Prairie had a festival [for the benefit of the soldiers] yesterday afternoon, and although not largely attended, by reason of the pressure on farmers to get in their grain, yet they received over one hundred and twenty-five dollars clear profit from their little picnic, and I was gratified to see the bitterest Copperheads in the township taking a leading part. If it is all hypocrisy, it shows that public sentiment is so strong in favor of sustaining our soldiers that they dare not make a show of opposition. The reason of this state of feeling is in consequence of Democrats in the army, who exercise a large influence over their friends and relatives at home. Now, if it were possible to get a furlough for several of our regiments and scatter them through the district, besides their own vote their moral force would be equal to double their vote.

"As an example, Henry Deacon, Elias's [Elias George Matthews, Squire Matthews's son] particular friend, who left here a strong Democrat, writes Elias to 'tell his friends, and Copperheads in particular, that he is for Lincoln, and claims to be a Democrat still; that he will meet any or all of them in the schoolhouse or grove and discuss the matter, or with the pen; that the army are just as anxious to whip Copperheads behind them as traitors before them.' This is the universal feeling in the army, and

But however gloomy the prospect, the Union men could not falter. The Disunionists had nominated General McClellan for the Presidency on a peace platform, the Unionists had renominated Lincoln on his own platform. "There is a prevailing idea among the people," Mr. Tyner had written Mr. Colfax in February, "that the Lord has chosen Old Abe to lead them out of the wilderness of sorrow and affliction. With all the enthusiasm of religious followers, they have determined to follow him as the 'cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.'" Had the Administration party been defeated, instead of Union, liberty, and peace, we should now have peace, if at all, only at the cost of disunion and slavery. Never hung such vast and pregnant issues on the ballots dropped in the voting urns, and it is impossible not to admire the courage and stanchness of the war party, rising to absolute heroism, although we are still too near those times to see what they did in its true proportions.

Mr. Colfax opened his canvass at Peru August 20th. His speech, the first one of the canvass by a man of national reputation, was a trumpet-call to honor and duty. It was stenographically reported for the Cincinnati and Chicago papers, and is doubtless the earliest one of his

I shall write to Defrees to-day and tell him inasmuch as our soldiers cannot vote [in the field], some arrangement must be made by which a great number of them may be permitted to return on furlough. I think Old Abe will be able to see the point as well as any one else. *Before the election comes off*, my impression is, they can be spared without serious jeopardy to the interest of the country.

"My confidence in the speedy overthrow of the Rebellion is not the least impaired by the apparently unfavorable aspect at the present time. In fact, I look upon the last raid [on Washington] as a desperate attempt to relieve themselves from the death-grasp which Grant has fastened upon the throat of the Confederacy—it will end in disappointment and defeat."

A month later Colfax had recovered his hopefulness. The Hon. Henry J. Raymond writes him, September 23d: "I have just received yours of the 20th. I am glad you are so hopeful. You have everything to fight against, and, like all the rest of us, get no help from the Administration. I have spent the best part of four weeks at Washington, trying to get the Government to help elect itself, in the matters you mention and others, but to no purpose. However, it is no use growling. We must put the thing through. You must be elected if it is a possible thing. Defrees will give you five hundred dollars on our account for your own disbursement if you desire it; and if you want five hundred dollars more for the final pull write me at once, or draw on me for it, and you shall have it. Your 'scalp' sha'n't adorn the rebel wigwag if we can help it. I write in haste. Everything looks well. We shall have Richmond by the date of your election, *I think*. If we do, we can dismiss all apprehension about the result."

hundreds of political speeches that is on record. It would make forty pages of this book.

At a dinner in his honor in Philadelphia after the election, he said :

“ We won the victory in Indiana with but one watchword—‘ Stand by the Government in its hour of trial.’ Our opponents had sufficient arms to crush out any opposition in other times. We had but one motto—Devotion to our land. They held up high taxes, the draft, and everything to influence the unthinking mind. We had but one weapon—our Country. It is well for us to consider what has been decided by this great manifestation of the popular will. Abraham Lincoln is to remain in the Presidential chair till every rebel bows in allegiance to the Union. It decides that the war is not a failure, and that it shall be carried on until our flag floats over our entire country. It decides the fate of rebellion, secession, and slavery. We shall declare in Congress, week after next, that hereafter slavery shall be impossible in the American Union. Within eleven votes, it was decided at the last session. Forty-one votes we have gained at the late election, and that more than assures it.”

Mr. Colfax missed hardly a secular day in the canvass, speaking all over the district and in several States besides his own. In their platform the Democrats of the Ninth District charged him with having endeavored to suppress free discussion in Congress, with supporting the suspension of the *habeas corpus*, the arbitrary arrest of unoffending citizens, the emancipation and arming of the slaves, and the confiscation of rebel property—all involving the draft of army after army and no end of taxes. Truly a weighty arraignment !

He defended the war policy of his party, in whole and in part, with all the vigor he possessed ; proved from the documents that the war was forced on the North ; declared that the Union armies had shut the rebels up between Richmond and Atlanta, and would have beaten them altogether long ago but for division at home. “ We all long for peace,” said he, “ and none more so than the Administration and its supporters. I am opposed to all wars except defensive wars, and I would not have asked any father here to give his son to the present war if it had not been a war to save a great nation from death, with all its glorious past and still brighter future.” Everything indicated, he

said, that the bearers of the Niagara peace propositions were spies. The war was not waged to destroy slavery except as it was one of the strongest resources of the rebels. The war was denounced as bitterly before as after the Proclamation of Freedom.

“ They say they are for the Union as it was. I, too, am for the Union as it was. I will not consent that a single star shall be plucked from the azure blue of our national heavens. If you want any of them plucked out, and our flag trampled under foot, you should elect some other man for your Representative, for I never—no, never, shall consent to it. A Union as it was before the outbreak of the Rebellion, with every star on our flag representing a State, and with the right of free speech in fact, and not that miserable pretence—lawless speech in favor of treason—I am in favor of to the last beat of my heart. There is no cause for despair. You may feel dispirited, but as for me, God helping me, I will never consent to the destruction or disintegration of this Union. If we cannot live in peace as one nation, we cannot as two; and when you acknowledge the Confederacy you acknowledge the right of secession, and there will be no end to division. It will be like picking the stones from under this building, which would cause it to fall into a shapeless mass of ruins.”

Assuming then the offensive, he charged that while “ our opponents are crying ‘ Peace ! ’ ‘ Peace ! ’ they have secretly organized throughout the North-west to inaugurate a universal neighborhood war. And I tell you to-day that had it not been for the organization of Union Leagues for counsel and concert in action, they would long ago have risen against us. What was it that enabled the South to precipitate this Rebellion? It was the Order of the Knights of the Golden Circle. The members of that Order are as much the sworn soldiers of Jeff Davis as those in uniform and following the flag of the traitorous Confederacy.” He demonstrated from statistics of the rapid growth of our population and wealth that there was nothing in the increasing national debt to be alarmed about. His peroration ran as follows :

“ We have but one path of duty in which to walk. It is to press on until every Malakoff in the South shall fall, and every suffering Lucknow shall hear the slogan of deliverance. If you are willing to yield, you are not worthy of those who have gone forth from homes happy with the sunlight of love, from wives and children precious to them as the apple of their eye, to lay down their lives for you. If you are willing that the graves of the loved and lost shall, until the morning of the resurrection, be under a rebellious flag and on hostile soil, where no friend can shed a tear of sympathy unless by permission of Jeff Davis, you are not worthy of the Revolutionary fathers who bequeathed to us the most priceless liberty that was ever bequeathed from sire to son. I know you will not do it. Whether travelling in the valley of humiliation and disaster, or keeping my eye fixed on the heavens, I believe that God reigns. I cannot believe His blessings will fall on the Confederacy. God’s ways are sometimes dark, but ‘ sooner or later they touch the shining hills of day.’ . . . Our domain is shaped by the geography of the continent ; it is bolted and riveted by mountain, river, valley, and plain. It is to be one country if we are faithful to our fathers’ trust ; with one Constitution if we are faithful to the sainted dead ; one destiny if we are faithful to our gallant soldiers now manfully beating back the enemy. I appeal to you so to act and so to vote that your conduct shall thrill the hearts of your soldiers, giving them fresh resolution to press on in the path they now so nobly tread, fresh heroism in their conflicts with the enemy. Show them that you are guarding their sacred cause, and that as for you and your children you are determined that there shall be but one nation, one flag, one Constitution ; then the historic page of the future will shine with a brighter glory as it records the history of this war, standing side by side with that great struggle out of which the nation was born.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS (CONTINUED).

1863-1865.

CONGRESS PROPOSES CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ABOLISHING SLAVERY.—COLLAPSE OF THE REBELLION.—ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN.—COLFAX AS SPEAKER.—DISPOSES OF HIS INTEREST IN THE *Register*.—VISITS LINCOLN AND RECEIVES HIS LAST GOOD-BY.—HIS TRIBUTE TO LINCOLN.—PUBLIC INTEREST IN HIS OVERLAND JOURNEY.—HIS STORY OF THE TRIP.—HIS RECEPTION, BEARING, SPEECHES, ON THE PACIFIC COAST, AND PEN-PICTURE, BY SAM BOWLES.—ANXIETY IN THE COUNTRY WITH RESPECT TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S COURSE.—"ACROSS THE CONTINENT" LECTURE.—THE PACIFIC RAILROAD.

THE people voted right. Many Democrats condemned the policy of the Disunion faction that had controlled their National Convention. The war had proved an efficient though a terrible educator. Hundreds of thousands of men had been at the front, and the front was a good place to cure what was called conservatism. Men capable of learning saw that there was but one way to the end, whether near or far, and that no chance must be left of their ever having to travel the dreadful road again. Happily, there were enough such to save the day. To her eternal glory, Indiana gave the Union ticket 20,000 majority. Abraham Lincoln was re-elected President, and a Lincoln House was returned. Colfax beat Turpie by 1680 in a total poll of 31,636. Hon. James G. Blaine writes him 20th October :

" Please accept my most cordial and sincere congratulations upon your triumphant election to the post you have so long honored. Your return insures to us an able and impartial Speaker for the Thirty-Ninth Congress unless you should meanwhile be invited to ' go up higher,' though in my estimation a Cabinet position is not higher than the Speakership of

the House. The latter is the better place for achieving a reputation that is at once permanent and grateful. . . . The Speakership requires far more absolute ability than a Cabinet portfolio. In the latter a man may shirk duty and conceal deficiencies. In the former that is impossible. A hundred watchful eyes at once detect and expose the slightest shortcoming. But not one fault, either of head or heart, has yet been laid at your door as presiding officer. My earnest desire to have you preside over the next House induces me to write thus freely."

The result of the election morally ended the struggle. True, the year of battles went on to its bloody close, but no one longer doubted how it would close. The vast resources of the North were at last being used, thanks mainly to the pluck of Elihu B. Washburne, in getting at the head of the Union armies a commanding general worthy of them. The citizen-soldiers had become veterans, and the steady waste of battle and disease was more than made good by a steady stream of recruits. Everywhere the wasted forces of the Confederacy were outnumbered, as they ought to have been from the very first. December was notable for the capture of Savannah, taken in rear by General Sherman's advance from Atlanta; the masterly overthrow of Hood before Nashville by General George H. Thomas, a draft of three hundred thousand men, and the meeting of Congress.

In his message to Congress, the President recommended the adoption by the House of Representatives of the Joint Resolution proposing to the States a Constitutional Amendment abolishing slavery. This had been reported from the Judiciary Committee of the Senate by Senator Trumbull, of Illinois, on the 10th of February, 1864, and adopted by the Senate, 38 to 6, April 8th. Coming up in the House June 15th, it failed for want of a two-thirds vote. "Although the present is the same Congress," said the President, "and nearly the same members, and without questioning the wisdom or patriotism of those who stood in opposition [at the preceding session], I venture to recommend the reconsideration and passage of the measure at the present session." The President thought the intervening election worthy of some deference in such a crisis, although it did not change the question. The election



made it certain that the amendment would be proposed to the States by the next Congress, and that being so, might we not all agree that the sooner it was proposed the better? On the 31st of January, 1865, Mr. Ashley, of Ohio, called up his motion of the 15th of June previous to reconsider. A motion to lay the motion to reconsider on the table was voted down, 111 to 57, 14 not voting. The motion to reconsider was then agreed to, 112 to 57, 13 not voting, and the Joint Resolution passed, 119 to 56, 8 not voting, 10 Democrats voting aye. The Speaker said: "The constitutional majority of two thirds having voted in the affirmative, the Joint Resolution is passed." The *Globe* said:

"The announcement was received by the House and the spectators with an outburst of enthusiasm. The members on the Republican side of the House instantly sprang to their feet, and, regardless of parliamentary rules, applauded with cheers and clapping of hands. The example was followed by the male spectators in the galleries, which were crowded to excess, who waved their hats and cheered loud and long; while the ladies, hundreds of whom were present, rose in their seats and waved their handkerchiefs, participating in and adding to the general excitement and intense interest of the scene. This lasted for several minutes."

It was the greatest day the House had ever seen, nor is it likely ever to see a greater.

The Speaker voted Aye as member from his district, and signed the Joint Resolution, when enrolled, as Speaker of the House. Fourteen years before, among a mere handful of kindred spirits in the Constitutional Convention of his State, he had said: "Wherever, within my sphere, be it narrow or wide, oppression treads its iron heel on human rights, I will raise my voice in earnest protest." He had kept his word, and well earned his share in the triumph.<sup>1</sup>

1. One day in August, 1870, he spent an hour in his parlor contemplating the familiar faces in Powell's engraving of the historical group of one hundred and fifty-seven who voted this resolution, and the result was an article from his pen, published in the *New York Independent*, noting the changes and promotions five years had brought, briefly eulogizing the twelve who had already passed away—Abraham Lincoln, Jacob Collamer, William Pitt Fessenden, Solomon Foot, James H. Lane, Henry Winter Davis, Thaddeus Stevens, Thomas D. Eliot, Portus Baxter, James T. Hale, John B. Steele, and Moses F. Odell. Of Odell he says: "Elected from a close district as a Democrat, for every war measure he gave his cordial vote. When this amendment was first voted on in the House, he was the only Democrat who voted Aye; and when it was finally carried, it was by his active

At once, as if awaiting this consummation, the Union armies were everywhere in motion. Grant threw the left of his line forward to Hatcher's Run. Sherman moved north from Savannah through the Carolinas—Generals Hampton, Wheeler, Hoke, Hardee, Cheatham, Bragg, and Johnston offering ineffectual resistance. Generals Schofield and Terry, after capturing Wilmington, N. C., effected a junction with Sherman at Goldsboro, giving Sherman a new base on the sea. Sherman's movement forced the abandonment by the enemy of the entire coast from Savannah to Newbern, with forts, gunboats, dockyards, everything. His passage left a broken-up gap of fifty to a hundred miles in all the railroads that crossed his course. Columbia and Charleston, S. C., were burned by the retreating rebel forces.

In conjunction with a naval force General Canby began operations against Mobile. Generals Wilson and Stoneman led heavy bands of horsemen from Nashville and Knoxville through Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and Virginia at will, blowing up arsenals, tearing up railroads, destroying stores. Sheridan swept up the last of General Early's forces in the Valley of Virginia, and with ten thousand cavalry described a circle of devastation about the Confederate Capital, destroying in detail the James River Canal, one of the most important feeders of Richmond. Sheridan's orders contemplated his ultimately joining Sherman in North Carolina, but they left him a large discretion. He returned to City Point near the end

efforts more than all others that ten Democratic members were induced to yield to the decision of the people, and submit this great guarantee of liberty to the States for ratification. There are three veterans in this contest, which was at last crowned with success, whom I could wish had lived to be in this gallery of portraits—John Quincy Adams, Joshua R. Giddings, and Owen Lovejoy. But, though they 'waited long and died without the sight,' they can never be forgotten in any reminiscences of the destroyers of American slavery."

He notices those who had found the straight but narrow way from the Representatives' Hall to the Senate Chamber; those who had been called into the Cabinet, elected Speakers of the House, elected Governors of their States, sent abroad as Ministers, and in general commends the Republicans of those times, "who against the bitterest opposition, heedless of the basest invective, amid a storm of denunciation never exceeded, with a united South and a divided North, with a prolonged war and increasing debt, determined to risk their political existence on the destruction of slavery, and who, by two years of faithful labor, triumphed."

of March, having captured despatches indicating that the end was at hand in Richmond. A furious attack by General Gordon on the Union Fort Steadman resulted in its capture, but the rebels were unable to hold it. It was supposed that the object of this assault was to cover the evacuation of Richmond. Grant did not propose that his eleven months' campaign against Richmond should end in the escape of the foe.

Sheridan, in command of the left or loose end of Grant's line, drew it around in the rear of Petersburg past Dinwiddie Court House to Five Forks, the key of General Lee's last railroad. Five Forks won by a hard fight, Grant ordered a general assault. Lee called General Longstreet from over the James, and the citizens of Richmond were roused from their beds to man the intrenchments. At daybreak the Ninth Corps carried four forts by assault. Generals Wright, Ord, and Sheridan moved in, sweeping up the rebel works, taken in flank and rear. With the capture of Forts Mahone and Gregg, immediately south of Petersburg, Lee's line was broken in the middle, and Petersburg and Richmond had to be abandoned. As Davis fled from his capital Lincoln visited it, and was hailed by the poor people, especially the blacks, as a veritable savior. Lee endeavored to retire south, but Sheridan was too fast and too many for him. Within a week he was surrounded, and forced to surrender to General Grant. The defences of Mobile were carried by assault, and Canby's forces marched into Mobile. Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington, and Vice-President Andrew Johnson became President. Selma, Montgomery, Raleigh, Lynchburg, Columbus, and Macon fell. General Johnston surrendered. The assassin Booth was hunted down and shot by a private soldier. General Taylor surrendered. Jefferson Davis was captured, General Kirby Smith surrendered, amnesty was proclaimed, the blockade rescinded, commercial restrictions were removed, the rebel prisoners paroled, the Grand Army returned to the Capital for review and muster out, and there was peace.

The last forty days of the struggle might be likened to the convulsion that closes a geological period. The whole world, as it were, wore a different face when the tumult and carnage ceased. It was when these bolts of war were striking in every direction that the Thirty-eighth Congress expired. In adjourning the House the Speaker alluded to the approaching end, saying : " We mingle our congratulations with those of the free men we represent over the victories for the Union that have made the winter just closing so warm with joy and hope." Referring to the soldiers, living and dead, in moving terms, " May I not remind you," he said, " that the widow and the fatherless, the maimed and the wounded, the diseased and the suffering, whose anguish springs from this great contest, have claims on all of us, heightened immeasurably by the sacredness of the cause for which they have given so much?"

Moving the customary resolution of thanks to the Speaker, Mr. Cox, the leader of the opposition, called special attention to the stormy character of the times and to the courtesy, kindness, and fairness with which the Speaker had discharged his duties, and proposed without formality and with earnestness " to tender him our thanks and good-will. I trust, sir, that in the future the same moderation and benignity may radiate in this House which has radiated from the Chair during the present Congress." Mr. Dawson, also a Democrat, spoke in the same strain, saying that " the Speaker, in his political action toward friends and foes, has uniformly observed the same high urbanity, frankness, and liberality."

Mr. Benjamin Franklin Taylor, of the *Chicago Evening Journal*, wrote of the Speaker at this time :

" Master of parliamentary law, acute, accurate, patient, he keeps the legislative desk cleared for action, and the good ship steadily under way. He may bring an unruly member's sentence to the hammer and pound it to pieces, but he does not strike off his own patience with the same blow ; his abiding good temper is never ' going, going, gone ! ' A matter may be cumbered with all manner of parliamentary hedges and ditches, but it all seems clear to him as the king's highway. I did not marvel at his rigid impartiality, but his wonderful readiness challenged my admiration. No matter what question in unexpected places might be sprung upon him,

it was no sooner asked than answered, as if it was just a part of a play and this was the rehearsal. Endurance more than brilliance is an essential quality of a presiding officer. A man of common nerve will bear a five hours' strain, perhaps, for a single day ; but when you add to that a three hours' night-watch at the wheel, and then repeat that eked-out day till the log runs out to months, and the months make half a year, and if there is no twang to the strings then, no abatement of the natural force, no confusion or impatience, you may conclude that he is not an 'iron man,' as some would say, but of far better material ; as much better as splendid brain and nerves, warmed up with mental life, are than the iron turned and twisted in the blacksmith's fire. Admirably adapted for the delicate and difficult duties of the third officer of the Government, he has nobly discharged them, no matter whom you remember as having occupied that Chair before him."

He arrived home, March 11th, worked down, but there was no rest for him. The Rev. Thomas N. Eddy, of Chicago, desired him to deliver the address at the April meeting of the North-western Freedmen's Aid Commission, and Mr. Green Clay Smith, of Kentucky, insisted that he should come to Covington in May and give him a send-off for Congress. Mr. Greeley wanted him to take editorial charge of the *New York Tribune*, and urged him to purchase stock with that in view. His friends advised him to decline this. Joseph Medill writes him : "Your true policy is to remain a citizen of Indiana. Indiana is your fulcrum. Don't part with it. No man rises and stays up unless his State backs him ; and if a great State heartily backs any man he is sure to prosper and succeed." Again : "If you don't go to the Senate two years hence you can be Governor of the State, and Senator afterward. You ought to visit Indianapolis and 'stick some stakes.' Don't be modest about it. I presume Illinois will furnish the next President, Grant, and Ohio the next, Sherman. You can be Vice ditto with either." Mr. Boutwell writes him of reconstruction ; he believes the blacks must have the suffrage, and fears the North is not prepared for it. "We are living in glorious times," writes John A. Griswold, of Troy, N. Y. ; "what will our metallic [Copperhead] friends have to fall back on for comfort ? Are we to have an extra session ?"

On the 29th he spoke before the New Carlisle (Indiana)

Collegiate Institute, and upon the fall of Richmond fitly closed his connection with the *Register* by an editorial announcing "that with the heart of treason paralyzed, there can be no vitality in its extremities." He noted the military moves on the gigantic chess-board of battle "which cover the Lieutenant-General with glory." He emphasized, as always, "that we owe the victory to our heroic defenders in the field. Let us rejoice with our President-elect that, in spite of all, he at last sees the salvation of the Republic committed to his charge, and is recognized to-day as President at Richmond and Charleston, as at New York and Washington. Let us rejoice that, emerging from the red sea of civil war, we have a land without a rebel or a slave within its borders." What a remarkable twenty years were his editorial life! Beginning with the Mexican war for the upbuilding of slavery, and ending with the complete overthrow of slavery by the war for the indivisibility of the Union.

He had disposed of his entire interest in the *Register* shortly after his election as Speaker, as appears from the following letter :

" WASHINGTON CITY, December 22, 1864.

" FRIEND WHEELER : We have just adjourned over the holidays, having finished up all the public bills on our calendar, and I start to-morrow to speak at Wilmington, Del., and am to lecture before the Young Men's Christian Association at Newport, R. I., and at Philadelphia before the reassembling of Congress. I consider my three fourths of the *Register* sold to you, and am willing to have it date back to November 1st, as you propose, you paying the interest on the thirty-seven hundred and fifty dollars' purchase-money from that date, and of course receiving the earnings that would be coming to me after that time. I should like three thousand dollars down, and the seven hundred and fifty dollars can remain on interest, half in six months, half in twelve months, as you propose ; but I will not accept any security from you, as you offer, for the deferred payments, but just your note. I need scarcely tell you that after my long and pleasant acquaintance and partnership with you I would trust you with uncounted gold. I have felt such an abiding confidence in your rigid and exact honesty, which is better than the general honesty of the world, that I have not looked over the books for years, but took your balance-sheets as you made them out, confident that they were as near right as the mixed-up accounts of a printing-office could be. I want you to keep on collecting the arrearages just as you have hitherto.

As my rent accounts are on the *Register* books, I would like to have them stay there, and you take the general oversight of them and of my insurance still I settle down, if I ever do, just as you have hitherto. I expect to go to California and the Pacific Coast next summer, and if I get out of public life, to Europe some of these days ; and I would rather have you act as my agent in these things than any one else, as you know more of them. Of course I shall pay you what you think right for your trouble.

" Get some one at South Bend to make out a bill of sale that will be according to our law, and I will sign and acknowledge it here. But if I should die in the mean time, feel perfectly safe. My mother is my main heir, and you need only show her this letter, if accident should happen to me, for her to carry it out to the letter. You need not send the money till I send the bill of sale, signed, but I should like it within a very few days after New Year's, as I desire to invest it. If I keep it about me I should be sure to give half of it away. I wish you would collect my rent of Hanauer. I called to see him twice before I left, but he was in New York. My expenses are fearful, twenty-two hundred dollars for house and board for self and family three months, besides a variety of other expenses. Leaving the paper I have built up and worked so many years on in the past is a little painful, Wheeler, but I transfer it to good hands, and I am glad to say to those not strangers to its subscribers. I wish for you and Hall the most abundant prosperity and success ; and I predict, after the war, better times for papers than now. Better not publish the dissolution till after the papers are perfected and my valedictory ready.

" Yours very truly,

" SCHUYLER COLFAX."

It was during the last session of the Thirty-sixth Congress that his thoughts first turned toward an overland trip to the Pacific. In carrying through the establishment of a daily overland mail, he was brought into association with the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific States, and familiarized with their interests. He had determined to go over in the first daily mail-coach in June, 1861, but this was prevented by the breaking out of war. Before he could execute his intention, through what travail what deeds were to be done, changing the course of history ! Now the war-cloud had broken, its terrors had exhausted themselves ; " Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," had been made things instead of signs for things, and he determined to make his deferred overland journey. Congress had offered liberal inducements

for the construction of a railroad to the Pacific, and the enterprise was then struggling in its incipient stages. He wished to ascertain from personal observation the capabilities of the West, with the view of encouraging the investment of money in the construction of the railroad. He invited Messrs. John B. Alley, William B. Allison, James A. Garfield, and other gentlemen to accompany him. None of them were able to go. The party, as at last made up—namely, of the Speaker, ex-Lieutenant-Governor William Bross, of the *Chicago Tribune*, A. D. Richardson, of the *New York Tribune*, and Sam Bowles, of the Springfield, Mass., *Republican*—was not finally agreed upon until within a week or so of setting out.

Upon the surrender of General Lee, Mr. Colfax made what was intended to be a hurried visit to Washington, to learn from the President his views with respect to an extra session of Congress, arriving on the evening of April 13th. The city was celebrating the downfall of the Rebellion, and Mr. Lincoln had been on the streets, enjoying the brilliant spectacle. Calling on the President early the next morning, Lincoln said to him: "You are going to California, I hear. How I would rejoice to make that trip! But public duties chain me down here, and I can only envy you its pleasures. Now, I have been thinking over a speech I want you to make for me to the miners you may find on the journey." (This speech, widely published at the time, had reference to the importance the President attached to gold and silver mining, and to the encouragement he deemed it wise for the Government to extend to the business.) He then changed the subject, and talked long over the cessation of war and the course he had been contemplating with regard to the prostrate States. While Mr. Lincoln left the room to get some papers, William A. Howard, of Michigan, was by the President's direction admitted to audience. Returning, the President explained his instructions to General Wetzel to allow the Virginia Legislature to convene again in Richmond, saying he was not sure that it was wise, but that his idea was to have that Legislature formally recall the Virginia troops from the service of the



tottering Confederacy, and thus save life. Since Lee's army had surrendered this had become needless.

He next read a memorandum of the well-known terms offered at the Hampton Roads Conference, and said he had reiterated them in substance while he was in Richmond at an interview sought by Judge Campbell. Since that Judge Campbell had written him, suggesting the pardon of leading rebels as essential to pacification. He characterized this as a breach of faith, and said that upon receiving it he at once revoked the authority for the reassembling of the Legislature. He believed there could be no restoration of peace or order with the leading rebels in the country, and proposed to have our generals "skeer" them out by intimating to them that they would not be pursued, but would be punished for their crimes if they remained. "Then we can be magnanimous to the rest, and have peace and quiet in the whole land." He spoke with great impressiveness of his determination to secure liberty and justice to all, with full protection for the humblest, and to re-establish on a sure foundation the unity of the Republic after the sacrifices made for its preservation.

He invited Mr. Colfax to go with him to the theatre that evening, adding: "General Grant promised to go, but has gone North to visit his wife, and I suppose I must go, that the people may not be disappointed." Colfax told him he expected to return home the next morning, and had business with two Cabinet ministers that afternoon and evening. He made an appointment to call again at 7.30 in the evening; and at that hour he and Mr. Ashmun, of Massachusetts, chairman of the Convention that first nominated Lincoln, had a last audience with the President. In the course of conversation, the President made some remark which displeased Mr. Ashmun. Noticing this, he frankly apologized. At ten minutes past eight Mr. Lincoln rose and said: "Mother, I suppose it's time to go, though I would rather stay;" and after a few words about the play, *Our American Cousin*, they all proceeded to the door of the White House. Turning there, the President said to Mr. Ashmun: "I gave Colfax this morning a

message to the miners whom he will meet on the trip, and I will tell you the points in it, to see if you concur with me," which he did; and then, referring to his promise of the morning to let Mr. Colfax know at San Francisco his final conclusion as to the time for an extra session, if one were to be convened, he grasped the Speaker's hand, and said: "Pleasant journey to you; I'll telegraph you at San Francisco; good-by;" "and that," says Mr. Colfax, whose original minutes this account of this interview follows, "was his last good-by on earth."

Returning from his other interviews to his lodgings, he heard on Pennsylvania Avenue of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln. The President had been shot in the back of the head by John Wilkes Booth ten minutes before. He repaired immediately to the White House, and thence to the room where the President lay unconscious, and with other gentlemen remained at his bedside till five o'clock the next morning. The Surgeon-General saying that he thought Lincoln might not die till noon, his strong constitution giving way so slowly, the Speaker, with Secretary McCulloch and others in waiting, left, intending to return at eight, but on their way back learned that the President had died a few minutes previously. He had been unconscious from the firing of the shot.

It does not fall within our province to attempt a description of the mingled consternation, grief, and rage of the people at this bereavement, or of the solemn funeral procession to the President's prairie home. No man was ever so widely loved and mourned before; and none since, except Garfield, stricken down in the same way, and eighty days dying. Aside from the kith and kin of the President, no one felt the "deep damnation of his taking off" more keenly than Schuyler Colfax. On his return home from the funeral, he hastily prepared an estimate of Lincoln's life and character, at the request of his South Bend friends, and delivered it to his townspeople. It was bound up, with those of George Bancroft, Henry Ward Beecher, Bishop Simpson, Dr. Gurley, and General Walbridge, in a "Life of Lincoln," brought out almost imme-

diately by Peterson Brothers, of Philadelphia. The Speaker repeated it in Chicago, in Denver, at Salt Lake City, and in other places, at that time, and hundreds of times years afterward, in a revised form. The "Life of Lincoln" referred to was prepared by J. Brainerd Williamson, of the Philadelphia and Washington press. Introducing Colfax's tribute, the author says :

"No one knew the lamented dead better than he. There was a unity of heart between the two, and Mr. Lincoln rarely took any step affecting the interests of the nation without making known his intentions to and consulting with Mr. Colfax, in whose judgment he placed the utmost confidence. A strong affection existed between them, each admiring and respecting the other for the honesty, integrity, and firmness of character which have made the names of Abraham Lincoln and Schuyler Colfax household words throughout the land."

"How much I loved him personally," said Mr. Colfax, "I cannot express to you. Honored always by his confidence ; treated ever by him with affectionate regard ; sitting often with him familiarly at his table ; his last visitor on that terrible night ; receiving his last message, full of interest to the toiling miners of the distant West ; walking by his side from his parlor to his door, as he took his last steps in that Executive Mansion he had honored ; receiving the last grasp of that generous and loving hand and his last good-by ; declining his last kind invitation to join him in those hours of relaxation which incessant care and anxiety seemed to render so desirable ; my mind has since been tortured by regrets that I had not accompanied him." He thought he might possibly have averted or caught the fatal blow himself. "The willingness of any man to endanger his life for another's is so much doubted, that I can scarcely dare to say how willingly I would have risked my own to preserve his, of such priceless value to us all."

Andrew Johnson was now acting President. Mr. Colfax consulted him as to the probability of an extra session of Congress. Mr. Johnson said he was too distracted to have given it any thought, and Colfax arranged with Secretary Stanton to telegraph him at San Francisco if one was

to be called. After reaching the coast, he so timed his movements that he could take any semi-monthly steamer home.

Many things contributed to fix public attention on this overland trip. The hostility of the South, attested on a thousand battle-fields, intensified fraternal feeling for the West. It was regarded as an imperative necessity that the West should be bound to the East by a railroad. It was an unknown country ; its gold-digging and its silver-mining ; its deserts, its mountains, and its salt seas ; its Indians and Mormons and Orientals, were novelties differentiating it from the homogeneous commonplace East. The war had but slightly affected the Pacific Coast. The extreme West had but a very small share in the experience of sacrifice and suffering in which the rest of the country was so rich. In a word, the West was a half brother, which it was not only desirable but a "military necessity" to bring into the family as a full son and heir.

The question of reconstruction was troubling the minds of thoughtful men, and since the tragic end of Lincoln Mr. Colfax ranked with the most trusted national leaders. His name was, in truth, a household word. His utterances had the weight of oracles. They were practical, sagacious, timely, and they had character behind them. Many were the solicitous queries of friends—who valued him both as a man and a leader—as to the prudence of his undertaking such a jaunt, largely in a hostile Indian country. On the other hand, the West, cut off from the home-land, and full of his personal friends, many of them his old constituents, felt very kindly toward this gentleman, high in office, and his travelling companions, trained newspaper men, braving the dangers and hardships of such a journey, "simply to see the country, to study its resources, to learn its people and their wants," in order that they might the more intelligently acquit themselves in their public duties. Not more interest attached in the public mind of Hellas to the voyage of Argo than in the public mind of this country to the Speaker's overland trip in 1865. As a quasi-public mission, sanctioned as such by the last words of Lincoln,

Thirty-eight

Congress of the United States of America, at the second session, begun and held at the City of Washington, on Monday the fifth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four.

A Resolution

submitting to the Legislatures of the several States a proposition to amend the Constitution of the United States,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of both Houses concurring) That the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said Legislatures, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as a part of the said Constitution, to-wit:

Article XIII.

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

John Hugh Conway  
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Certify that this Resolution  
originated in the Senate  
W. P. Fessenden  
Secretary

W. G. Sumner  
Vice President of the United States,  
and President of the Senate.

Approved February 1, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln



it was followed by millions with a solicitude half patriotic, half personal, as its varying stages were detailed in the widely-published letters of his companions. He himself kept a diary, he preserved a volume of contemporary press notices, he wrote almost daily letters to his mother, or to some one of his friends. The story is best summarized in two of his letters to a favorite cousin, Mrs. Woodhull, of Camden, N. J., to wit :

“ ON STEAMER PETALUMA, BETWEEN SAN FRANCISCO AND }  
 PETALUMA (40 miles North), July 5, 1865. }

‘ MY DEAR COUSIN CARRIE : Just as I was starting from the Occidental Hotel for a steamboat sail to Petaluma to try and find Elias M. Matthews and family, my stepfather’s brother, my mail was brought from the post-office, and there was a dear, good, long letter from Cousin Carrie, which I determined to answer right off on the steamer ; for between sight-seeing, dinners, and suppers, and incessant calls at my parlor at the hotel, I have not a moment of time to write there from breakfast till midnight. What a delightful trip you must have had to Freehold, New York, and Dobb’s Ferry, and how I would like to have been with you ! But, alas ! as you know, when I am in the States, as they call it here, my time is so absorbed by the exactions of public life and public duties, that I have scarcely time to visit the dearest and best-loved friends I have in the world. Some of these days I will be beaten for Congress ; and then, in private life, for which I have so often longed, I will have more time. You wondered where I was on the 1st of June. I was at Denver, Col. Terr. ; came down that morning from a hundred-mile ramble through the Rocky Mountains, and delivered a eulogy there on our martyred President to an immense audience, which wept, as I did, even while speaking, at the recollection thus freshened to our minds of our great loss.

“ We had a delightful though wearying and dangerous trip across the continent. When I return to Frisco, as San Francisco is called here for short, I will send you a paper with some allusions to the last part of it by one of the local reporters who was with us when we crossed the Sierra Nevada. (The boat joggles, and you must excuse the chirography, which, however, is about as good as my normal handwriting, or yours !) The Indians are on the war-path all through from Atchison to Salt Lake, or rather to Fort Bridger, one hundred and twenty-five miles east of the city of the Saints. Just before we left the Missouri River they killed some soldiers and chased two stages ; and between Denver and Fort Bridger they struck the road three times within one day of us, and once within an hour killing emigrants, stealing stock, and murdering at Sage Creek the guard of soldiers we had talked with the evening before. But we were all armed, and at all points of the route where it was sup-

posed to be dangerous had military escorts of half a dozen cavalry, provided by the kindness of Secretary Stanton. This probably saved our lives ; but we should have fought the red devils to the last if they had attacked us rather than allow them to dance around our scalps in their wigwams.

" The road from Atchison to Denver, some six hundred miles, is a splendid natural road over the boundless plains bordering on the Platte. We travelled it in five days lacking two hours, including all stops for meals—one of the quickest trips on record. We had all through the whole journey a special stage to ourselves, and the drivers rivalled each other in the rapid time they made. Everywhere we were received with joy and cordiality, and had the best living possible in a region where for hundreds of miles there were no houses at all except the station houses, and many of them burned and robbed three times in a year by the hostile Indians. We spent a week in Denver and the Rocky Mountains, among the snow-capped peaks, and down in the mines, and visiting the quartz-crushing mills ; and I stayed of course with Sister Clara, who, with her husband, Mr. Witter, and Brother Elias, is keeping house at Denver.<sup>1</sup> From Denver to Salt Lake the road is more rugged, but we made good time over it, having, however, to lie over two nights, and once twenty-four hours, on account of Indians. For forty-five miles at one point they had stolen the stock of the Overland Company three times in two weeks, and stole the new stock just bought the day after we passed over it.

" We stayed a week in Utah Territory, five days of it at Salt Lake City, and were treated with great hospitality by the Mormons and Gentiles too. Brigham Young exacts the first call from all Gentiles who visit there, but I declined flatly, and he came down to the hotel, with his apostles and bishops, and made a two hours' call on all of us—the first time he ever made the first call there. We returned his call, at his own house, and after a general talk of an hour, he asked me what I thought of polygamy, and what we intended to do about it. I answered him that it was about time for him to have a new revelation stopping it ; and we then had a general conversation about it, a square, plain, Anglo-Saxon expression of our opinion—the plainest talk, one of the Mormons said who was with us, that had ever been heard in his house. But I have no deceit about me, and could not conceal my opinions when asked. We went to the Great Salt Lake, twenty-one miles from the city, and bathed there ; and though I cannot swim, the water is so dense (five barrels of it make one barrel of salt) I could not sink. It seemed odd at Mormon houses where we were invited to dinner to be introduced to two Mrs.

1. In a letter to his mother from Denver he says : " Clara is living very comfortably and pleasantly here, but the cost is fearful. Think of twenty cents a pound for potatoes now ; eggs last winter two dollars and a half a dozen, now one dollar and a quarter ; flour, twenty to twenty-five dollars a hundred ; molasses, five dollars a gallon ; butter, two dollars a pound last winter, one dollar now ; coal-oil, four dollars a gallon, and so on, all through."



Jennings's, for instance, one after the other, and to see them both waiting on the table. We saw one house where a man, quite poor, had three wives and but two rooms in the house, one to cook and eat in, and the other with two beds in. You can imagine, without my enlarging on it, what a man who has no wife at all thinks of such a system.

“ The Saturday night before we left they had a special performance at their theatre in our honor. It is the largest theatre west of the Alleghanies except the two opera-houses in Chicago and Cincinnati, and was crowded. Between the two plays I went down with an old friend, Captain Hooper, their delegate in the Thirty-sixth Congress, who, though a Mormon, has but one wife, into the parquette, which is reserved for families. I saw fourteen of Brigham Young's wives there and about a dozen of Heber C. Kimball's, the second in authority. Brigham's were fair-looking, though not very beautiful, and Heber's quite ordinary. Brigham came down from his private box and took me up to it, introducing me there to his first wife, a matronly and fine-looking old lady of about sixty years. But he did not introduce me to the younger ones. He has fifty children and a school for them within his enclosure. I saw half a dozen of the grown-up daughters, all good-looking. One of his sons-in-law has two of them for wives ! I made two speeches to Mormon audiences at Salt Lake, and told them that the Government had the right to demand of them obedience to the laws ; and that when they lived up to that allegiance they had a right to demand the amplest protection. I think they liked my frankness, for they treated me very cordially indeed, and invited me to repeat my eulogy on Lincoln in their Tabernacle Sunday evening, which I did to an audience of six thousand, one thousand more than Brigham himself had at his preaching in the afternoon, they giving up all their ward meetings that everybody might come. Salt Lake is a beautiful city, a perfect Palmyra of the desert, charming gardens, fine houses, and the streams that irrigate the gardens running down every street, singing in their pebbly beds.

“ From Salt Lake to Virginia City, Nev., we dashed through six hundred miles in seventy-three hours, including six hours for meals, over mountain and plain, up steep grades and down rocky ravines, the most rapid stage-coaching on such roads known on the continent, I suspect, and the quickest trip ever made. The whole was arranged for, horses harnessed and ready at every station, and we changed six-horse teams, and were off again in two minutes and a half. We had no accident whatever, and I rode most of the time outside with the driver, to enjoy the novel and ever-changing scenery. There are thirteen ranges of mountains between Salt Lake City and Virginia City, lying north and south, like the lakes in Western New York ; two of them we passed, through gates, a natural level road cut out of the range. We spent a week in all in Nevada, looking through their silver mines, going down all kinds of shafts, four hundred and as far as five hundred and fifty feet underground. And then we crossed the Sierra Nevada into California. On

the route we had a sail on Lake Tahoe, or Bigler, sixty-five hundred feet above the sea, and the highest place in the world, I suspect, on which a steamboat sails. It is twenty-one miles by ten, embosomed in the mountains, and the water so crystal clear you can see one hundred feet down.

“ And then we almost flew down the Sierra to Placerville, the horses on the fastest possible gallop, often fifteen miles per hour, with high mountains on one side and deep chasms on the other, and the graded road cut out of the hill-side like a railroad grade on the New York and Erie. We had drivers who knew every foot of the road, and never had an accident, and they whirled us through and between and around the long lines of ten-mule freight wagons we met, going on the run, and within a foot of the edge often, with a splendid skill in driving I had never seen equalled. It was exhilarating, and sitting by the driver I felt no danger whatever. As we passed teams or stations on the keen jump, with flags on our horses' heads and on the stage, we were cheered vociferously ; my hat had to be off a great deal of the time, acknowledging the compliment. I have not time to tell you of the many compliments our party have received, but the most touching was, as we were riding in the Fourth of July procession at San Francisco, to have a thousand school children cheer us all at once as we passed them and then break out into a national air. After the oration I spoke about fifteen minutes, and such cheering I never heard, even at home.

“ Now, you can't scold me for too short a letter, for this hurriedly-written one is equal to sixteen pages of note-paper, and I have given up looking at the scenery of the bay and river to write it, as you said you would be so glad to hear from Cousin Schuyler. My love to Cousin George and all the dear children ; I send kisses to them all from this far-off Pacific shore, thirty-five hundred miles away, where we don't get up till three or four hours after you do, down East ; and along with them goes, in this envelope, the affectionate and sincere love of your roaming cousin,

“ SCHUYLER.”

The *Alta California* of the 20th of August said : “ They return to the East on the steamer of Saturday next, carrying with them the hearty good wishes of everybody on the Pacific Coast and the warm friendship of every man, woman, and child who has had the good fortune to make their acquaintance. The visit has been productive of pleasure, both to them and to our citizens generally, and we have every reason to believe that the interests of the Pacific Coast will be greatly promoted by it.”

*Second Letter.*

“ STEAMER NEW YORK, ATLANTIC OCEAN,  
800 miles from Aspinwall, 1100 from New York, }  
September 19, 1865. }

“ MY DEAR COUSIN CARRIE : I was reading over again just now the more than welcome letter I received from you at San Francisco ; and I thought, as we were approaching the end of our long journey, I would answer it again, even if hurriedly, so that you would be sure, amid the exciting and interesting scenes of travel of the last four months, I had not forgotten you and yours. We left San Francisco for a thousand miles’ journey overland up the Pacific Coast to Vancouver’s Island in Her Majesty’s dominions, visiting various points of interest *en route*. We first took a flying trip across the Sierra Nevada by the route of the Central Pacific Railroad to Donner Lake. The Sierras, by the way, are not a single mountain, but a billowy succession of mountains sixty to a hundred miles from east to west. We then visited a town named for me on the railroad, and were met there by Mr. Delano, an ‘old friend, who drove us over to Grass Valley and Nevada, the most extensive quartz-mining region in California. Here I had to make two speeches in one afternoon, but that was my experience everywhere, for I spoke not less than fifty times on the Pacific Coast, and had to kiss eight blooming girls in my friend’s parlor. You can imagine what heroism and self-sacrifice this required of me, but I went through it bravely.

“ We then travelled by stage night and day, north *via* Marysville, Oroville, Chico, Shasta, Yreka, Jacksonville, Eugene City, etc., to Portland, the last part of the route—from Salem to Portland—on a steamer provided for us. At Portland, when we reached the wharf the whole population were out to welcome us, the city radiant with flags and the cannon roaring their greeting. After supper Governor Bross and I addressed the largest audience ever assembled there, which came together without handbill or notice. During our stay in Oregon we went up the Columbia River, more magnificent than the Hudson, and by their railroads around the Cascades and the Dalles, having three different steamers for the trip, and speaking, of course, along the route. At the Dalles the river dashes through a gorge fifty-nine yards wide, while one hundred and fifty miles below it is a mile and a half wide. We then crossed through Washington Territory to Olympia, at the foot of Puget’s Sound ; and after being received there, speaking, etc., had a splendid sail on that magnificent inland sea to Victoria, on Vancouver’s Island. When we reached it, the city was covered with flags, about half British and half American, and crowds at the wharf. We stopped there thirty hours, having all kinds of attention, and then started back by steamer, my first experience on an ocean. You have heard of the sad loss of the steamer Brother Jonathan, with nearly all her passengers. We passed the reef on which she was wrecked only two hours before she struck ; but it was misty, and we failed to meet her, as we expected.

"On our return to California we visited the Yosemite Valley, the Geysers, Big Trees, and other points of interest, the first of which would repay any one in its wonderful scenery, peerless in all the world, for a journey across the continent. Of banquets, dinners, receptions, salutes, etc., there seemed no end; but the finest was the farewell banquet given to us by the bankers, merchants, and manufacturers of San Francisco the evening before we left, when life-size pictures of all of us adorned the walls, with pictures of all the places we had visited as far as possible; tickets, twenty-five dollars, and crowded at that. On the 2d instant we bade good-by to hosts of new friends on the wharf, and left San Francisco for home, after the most delightful journey of my life. We could not pay any bills anywhere; even our hotel bills at San Francisco, which should have been, from the parlors, etc., we had, several hundred dollars each, were all paid for us.

"We came down the Pacific Coast in a mammoth steamer, thirty-six hundred tons burden; stopped at Acapulco in Mexico several hours, during which we roamed through the old Mexican town three hundred years old, with narrow streets, which no wheeled vehicle ever rolled over; and after passing close to the coast of Guatemala, San Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, reached Panama in New Grenada Saturday morning last. We went ashore in one of the steamer's boats three hours ahead of the passengers, looked through the old city—the first walled city I ever was in—shopped some, bought linen-lawn dresses for mother and you and Sister Carrie. These are all the rage with passengers; being a free port they don't cost half as much as in New York; but they are bought more to let friends know they were remembered so far away, and to have a dress bought in such a distant land. We crossed the Isthmus by the railroad, which cost eight millions for its fifty miles, enjoying the rank tropical luxuriance on either side and the sight of the natives, who do not believe in wearing-apparel for their children. At Aspinwall we embarked on this beautiful steamer, which is a perfect gem, and is making her first trip.

"I shall go home in a day or two after I reach New York, being anxious to see that dear mother of mine, and hoping to find there a letter from you. But I shall send the dress down to you by express. Give my love to your good husband and all the dear children; and hoping to see you this fall some time in my journeyings, I am with sincerest affection, your loving cousin,

SCHUYLER.

"P. S.—23d, 10 A.M. Just arrived; time from Aspinwall six days, eleven hours, twenty minutes; nine hours and forty minutes the quickest time ever made."

"Thus," says Bowles, "we closed our tour of the American continent: from longitude one degree to longitude thirty-four degrees; from latitude fifty to latitude seven; journeying some twelve thousand miles, half by sea

and half by stage, crossing the great mountain ranges of the continent ; exploring the forests, the mines, the commerce of a new world ; seeing and learning the field of a new empire ; enjoying the most generous hospitality in every possible form ; and came back to our homes in a trifle more than four months from the day of leaving them. All without the accident of a finger's scratch ; all without breaking for a moment the harmony of our personal circle. We part here ; we lay off the robes of honored guests, that were so unexpectedly laid upon us, and so richly endowed through all our long journey ; we return to our accustomed lives ; but we come back with fuller measure of the American Republic, and larger faith in its destiny."

Mr. Bowles continues :

" The Speaker's public visit, or perhaps more properly his public reception by the people of the Pacific States, has been a very remarkable one for its generosity and universality and spontaneity ; altogether unexpected by him, and so still more flattering ; and greatly creditable to the hospitality and genuine patriotism of the people of these States. . . . No man ever had such a popular welcome on these shores before. From his arrival at Austin, Nev., where we first struck the spreading tide of Pacific civilization and population, through that State, through California to this city, and again northerly through the State, through Oregon and Washington, and into the British possessions, up to this time [return from the North to San Francisco]—a period of six weeks—his progress through the country has been a continuous popular ovation. Everywhere the same welcome from authorities and citizens, the same unstinted proffer of every facility for the journey, for seeing all parts of the country, all shades of its development ; special coaches, special trains, and extra steamboats have been at his service ; welcome everywhere to confidence, to fullest fact from most intelligent sources ; welcome everywhere by brass band, cannon, military escort, public addresses ; and everywhere, even to smallest village and tavern collection of neighboring rancheros, the same eager desire to hear the distinguished visitor speak, and eke then for big and little orations from his less distinguished companions.

" Chief among the causes of this hearty welcome are his conspicuous public position, and the fact that he is the first man high in State who has ever visited the Pacific States for the simple and sole reason of studying their resources and interests, so as the better to serve them in the Government ; his early and steady friendship and leadership in important legislation at Washington in behalf of all this region ; his wide personal popularity among public men who have ever known him, and the

magnetic spread of this popularity along his journey from his intercourse with the people and his speeches to them.

“Mr. Colfax has freely gratified the popular desire everywhere to listen to his voice ; no place on his route was too small, no gathering too insignificant, to be turned off with indifference, when such hearty greeting appealed for attention ; and he has spoken, long and short, an average of at least once a day since he left the Missouri River—some days his speeches number four or five. Never much studied, they were rarely alike in form ; never greatly elaborated, they always reached a high level of popular eloquence. The average quality of excellence in all his efforts has surprised me ; I doubt if any other public man could speak so often and so much, and on such various occasions, and succeed so well in all. The characteristics of his speaking have been practical wisdom or good sense, entire frankness in utterance of opinion, a charming simplicity in his style of oratory, coupled with a ready, clear expression and a steady, natural enthusiasm, which have kept his hearers in constant sympathy with his individuality. The staple subjects he has treated have been the war and the questions growing out of it, the resources of the Pacific States and their development, mining and the taxation of its results, the Mexican question and the Monroe Doctrine, the future destiny of the Republic, Mr. Lincoln and his character, the Pacific Railroad, and such local and personal matters as the place and hour suggested.”

Samples of his treatment of these themes are given in Supplementary Papers, “Bowles’s Across the Continent, 1866.” In pen-picturing this little band of Argonauts, Mr. Bowles says of the Speaker :

“As a public man everybody knows about Mr. Colfax : how prominent and useful he has been through six terms of Congress, and how, by virtue of his experience, ability, and popularity, he has come to be Speaker, and stands before the country one of its best and most promising statesmen. But this is not all, nor the best of the man. He is not one of those to whom distance lends enchantment ; he grows near to you as you get near to him ; and it is indeed by his personal qualities of character, by his simplicity, frankness, genuine good nature, and entire devotedness to what he considers right, that he has principally gained and holds so large a place in the esteem of the nation and on the public arena. . . . There are no rough points about him ; kindness is the law of his nature ; while he is never backward about differing from others nor in sustaining his views by argument and votes, he never is personally harsh in utterance nor unkind in feeling ; and he can have no enemies but those of politics, and most of these find it impossible to cherish any personal animosity to him. In tact he is unbounded, and with him it is a gift of nature, not a studied art ; and this is, perhaps, one of the chief secrets of his success in life. His industry is equally exhaustless ; he is

always at work, reading, writing, talking, seeing, studying ; I can't conceive of a single unprogressive, unimproved hour in all his life. . . . He is one of the men to be tenaciously kept in public life, and I have no doubt he will be. Some people talk of him for President ; Mr. Lincoln used to tell him he would be his successor ; but his own ambition is wisely tempered by the purpose to perform present duties well. He certainly makes friends more rapidly and holds them more closely than any public man I ever knew ; wherever he goes the women love him and men cordially respect him ; and he is pretty sure to be always a personal favorite, as now, with the people at large."

He found abundant occupation at home catching up with business accumulated in his absence, and in receiving his friends. Letters began to pour in upon him. One from Secretary Stanton reads : "With great pleasure I welcome your return home. Your long journey and friendly words by the way were observed with much interest, and with many thanks for your kind offices. Your tour will not only be productive of good to yourself, but cannot fail to be useful to the country. In respect to the next Congress, the opinion that you are to be Speaker is universal. I have heard of no combination, or even wish to the contrary, in any quarter. The next session will be one of deep interest and fraught with great consequences to this Government. It will gratify me very much to meet and welcome you in Washington."

The Hon. Godlove S. Orth, of Indiana, writes him : "By the way, I fully concur with the Tennessee Legislature in their 'indorsement' of the President. Too many pardons, too much restoring of property, too much leniency to suit loyal men. Treason is not rendered odious and intelligent traitors are not punished. The soldiers in my district swear about these things almost equal to the army in Flanders." Again : "I much fear, from present indications, that we may lose all the benefits of the war to which we as conquerors are justly entitled, and that rebels will soon stand in the position they would have occupied had Grant surrendered to Lee." The Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, of Brooklyn, N. Y., writes him : "May God direct you and your fellow-legislators in the most important sessions of the approaching Congress ! That devil of

slavery 'goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' " Mr. Edward McPherson writes him : " I watched your journey with interest and with pleasure, marked the heartiness and enthusiasm of your receptions, and the handsome style in which you maintained the honors of your position, and filled the expectations of your friends." Mr. John D. Defrees writes him : " A few men who pretend to be in the confidence of the President say that he means to have his policy tested in the election of Speaker, but I don't believe it. If he has the common-sense that I think he has, he will have nothing to do with any such test. It is not worth your while, however, to commit yourself on any question. You are strong enough to stand upon your own ground." The Hon. Charles Upson, of Michigan, writes him : " Rebel stock has risen rapidly within a few weeks, and now its holders begin to demand things as their rights, when just before they would have been willing to accept such terms as the general Government might dictate. Congress should provide for reconstruction, and the loyal citizens should be allowed to participate in the reorganization of loyal governments there."

He received scores of such letters as these, many of them expressing uneasiness and dissatisfaction with the tendency of political affairs. It was as if the body politic felt the symptoms of approaching illness, and hastened to consult the family physician. He diagnosed the patient's case very well, as will be seen later. In November he writes Mrs. Woodhull from South Bend : " I am beset on every hand to lecture on my overland trip, and have accepted about a dozen invitations—all I have time for—declining scores of them, though they offered one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars a night. I spoke Tuesday night to an immense crowd at Indianapolis ; to-morrow night I speak at Valparaiso ; Saturday at the Michigan College at Hillsdale ; Monday at Mishawaka ; Tuesday here ; Wednesday at Niles ; Thursday at Milwaukee ; Friday at Chicago. Start Monday, the 13th, for the East ; speak at Pittsburg the 14th ; at Wheeling the 15th ; and then to Washington, to look out that I am not voted out



of the Speakership, which don't seem dangerous, but will bear watching. In my own district I speak to my constituents without charge—my rule always. But outside I shall receive seven or eight hundred dollars, besides the pleasure of visiting. The lecture is very long, nearly two hours, but at Indianapolis those who got in—though the building holds two thousand, hundreds didn't—stuck it out till the last, the theme being a novel one. I had to decline invitations at Germantown, Westchester, etc., which would have brought me near you; but the time—ah! why can't we make the time when we need it?" He delivered this lecture, whenever he could find time, for two years, making hosts of new friends, and clearing twelve thousand dollars by the work. "Don't quit," his friends wrote him; "you are carrying on a campaign." The money was an object to him. He was born poor; all the property he possessed he had made dollar by dollar; his station necessitated considerable expense, though he lived modestly; he was obliged to earn money.

Since it exhibits his feelings on another subject, the following is taken from the same letter to Mrs. Woodhull: "There isn't any 'fair charmer' at Blank, or elsewhere; so you guessed wrongly. People marry me to every lady I am respectfully polite to; but though I know I ought to marry, situated as I am, and mother would like me to do so, yet I have not the faintest idea of it. I have no vows against it; but it will never come till I meet some one whom I can love and who will love me like the dear wife who is in heaven, and I see no probability of that. I expect to get out of this public life and travel, and read books at home. That is my ideal of life—smoking included, of course. My love to Cousin George and the children, especially that mischievous Schuyler boy, whom I hope loves his mother as much as does her affectionate cousin,

SCHUYLER."

In this lecture upon his journey across the continent, he dwelt with great earnestness upon the importance of the Pacific Railroad, as a national, a political, a military,

a commercial necessity. This part of the lecture ended as follows :

“ You cannot realize here in what endearing language the settlers of that distant coast speak of the States they have left. Where they were born ; where father and mother still live to send them blessings, which it takes a month for the mail to convey ; where kith and kin lie buried in the village churchyard—that, and not California, is their home. It is this recollection of home which binds that remote part of the Union so closely to us. It was this which crushed out the ambitious suggestions of disloyal men, who once dominated in California, in favor of a Pacific Republic. It was this which, in the hour of our country’s need, poured princely contributions into the coffers of the sanitary and Christian commissions, those twin-angels of mercy. It was this which, in the darkest hour of the struggle, kept all that coast so true and devoted to the national cause.

“ It is for such a people, who have already sent us a thousand millions, extracted from sterile mountains and broken ravines, for whom I plead when I urge the speediest possible construction of the Pacific Railroad, and not as a boon to them alone, for its increase of our national wealth will speedily pay back to the Treasury far more than the bonus which now aids in its construction. But I plead for it, too, for our own national development and grandeur. Already I see in the swift-coming future—not weak and sparsely settled Territories upon its route, but rich and growing States, with the iron horse speeding his way through all the valleys and over the mountains of the interior ; not vast untilled and unimproved plains, but irrigation and artesian wells combining to make the desert blossom as the rose ; not scores of millions per year from the gold and silver-bearing rocks the Creator has reserved for ages for our own times, but hundreds of millions. And our Republic, bound together then as never before, firmly as the eternal hills over which this great road will run—already with its vast agricultural resources the granary of the world ; with these increased facilities ; with cheaper transportation ; with illimitable mineral fields ; with ability to develop their teeming wealth ; with improved processes of mining ; with the gigantic unfolding and disclosure of our yet unimproved capacities—shall thus become indeed, as our beloved but martyred President predicted to me, on that last day, when having lived for us so faithfully he was about to die for us, the *Treasury of the World !*”

## CHAPTER IX.

### THIRTY-NINTH CONGRESS.

1865-1867.

SERENADE SPEECH AT WASHINGTON.—POINTS OUT THE TRUE RECONSTRUCTION POLICY.—RE-ELECTED SPEAKER.—LECTURING.—DECLINES THE EDITORSHIP OF THE *New York Tribune*.—LAST MEETING OF THE UNITED STATES CHRISTIAN COMMISSION.—ANTAGONISM BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT.—CORRESPONDENCE AND SERENADE SPEECHES. — HIS POLICY. — FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY CONGRESS.—PARLIAMENTARY RULING, ROUSSEAU AND GRINNELL.—RECEPTION AT HOME.—CANVASS.—COLFAX AND THE IRISH.—ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PRESIDENCY.—ESTIMATES OF THE SPEAKER.

MR. COLFAX arrived at the National Capital about the middle of November. The one subject of solicitude among the people, North and South, was the restoration of the late insurgent States to their original status in the Union. Absolutely ostracizing Union men, and substantially re-enslaving the freed men, the ex-rebel States had conceded just enough to secure President Johnson's recognition. They had repudiated the ordinances of secession and the Confederate debt, and had ratified the (thirteenth) Constitutional Amendment abolishing slavery. They had elected their quota of pardoned Confederates to Congress. Backed by the President, these pseudo-Representatives demanded their old seats in Congress, without delay or parley. The immediate and pressing question was, whether Congressmen, in obedience to their States, could withdraw from the National Capital, levy war to dismember the nation, prosecute it until they were exhausted, and, upon being beaten in the field, return to the Capital as the Representatives of their States, and resume their seats in Congress as if only the ordinary vacation had occurred.

The Northern people narrowly escaped the idiocy of allowing them to do this. The Northern people narrowly escaped the ineffable meanness of leaving their faithful allies in the South, black and white, in the absolute power of a class whose tender mercies in that connection were cruelties.

Saturday evening, November 18th, Colfax was serenaded. In response, he declared in substance that the reconstruction of the late Confederate States must precede their restoration to their original standing in the Union. This was the platform upon which he challenged the Representatives of the people, soon to assemble to elect him Speaker, or to repudiate him, and upon which he also challenged the approval or disapproval of the people themselves. Following is the important part of the speech :

“ It is auspicious that the ablest Congress that ever sat during my knowledge of public affairs meets next month, to face and settle the momentous questions which will be brought before it. It will not be governed by any spirit of revenge, but solely by duty to the country. I have no right to anticipate its action, nor do I confine myself to any inflexible, unalterable policy, but these ideas occur to me, and I speak them with the frankness with which we should always express our views. Last March, when Congress adjourned, the States lately in rebellion were represented in a hostile Congress and Cabinet, devising ways and means for the destruction of the country. It may not be generally known, but it has been represented to me, on the testimony of members of the so-called Confederate Congress, that General Lee, the military head of the Rebellion, declared last February, in his official character, that the contest was utterly hopeless ; but their Congress and Cabinet determined to continue the struggle, and after that time twenty thousand men fell on both sides in the battles around Petersburg and Richmond and elsewhere. Since the adjournment of the United States Congress not a single rebellious State surrendered, not an army laid down its weapons, not a regiment abandoned their falling cause ; but the Union armies conquered a peace not by any promise or voluntary submission, but by the force of arms. Some of these members of the so-called Confederate Congress, who, at our late adjournment last March, were struggling to blot this nation from the map of the world, propose, I understand, to enter Congress on the opening day at its session next month, and resume their former business of governing the country they struggled so earnestly to ruin. They say they have lost no rights. It seems as if burning the ships of our commerce on the ocean, starving our prisoners on the land, and raising armies to destroy the nation would impair some of these

rights until their new governments were recognized by Congress. The Constitution, which seems framed for every emergency, gives to each House the exclusive right to judge of the qualifications and of the election returns of its members, and I apprehend they will exercise the right.

“ Congress having passed no law on reconstruction, President Johnson prescribed certain action for these States, which he deemed indispensable to their restoration to their former relation to the Government, which I think eminently wise and patriotic. *First*, That their conventions should declare the various ordinances of secession null and void ; not as some have done, merely repealing them, but absolutely without any force and effect. *Secondly*, That their Legislatures should ratify the constitutional amendment extinguishing slavery, that the cause of disension and rebellion might be utterly extirpated. *Thirdly*, That the whole United States repudiate the rebel debt, though by its terms it will be a long while before it falls due, as it was made payable six months after the recognition of the Confederacy by the United States.

“ But there are other terms upon which I think there is no division among the loyal men of the Union, to wit :

“ 1. That the Declaration of Independence must be recognized as the law of the land, and every man, alien and native, white and black, protected in the inalienable and God-given rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Mr. Lincoln, in that Emancipation Proclamation which is the proudest wreath in his chaplet of fame, not only gave freedom to the slave, but declared that the Government would maintain that freedom. We cannot abandon them and leave them defenceless at the mercy of their former owners. They must be protected in their rights of person and property. These free men must have the right to sue in courts of justice for all just claims, and to testify also, so as to have security against outrage and wrong. I call them free men, not freed men. The last phrase might have answered before their freedom was fully secured, but they should be regarded now as free men of the Republic.

“ 2. The amendments to their State constitutions, which have been adopted by many of their State conventions so reluctantly, under the pressure of dispatches from the President and the Secretary of State, should be ratified by a majority of their people. We all know that but a very small portion of their voters participated in the election of delegates to these conventions ; and nearly, if not all, the conventions have declared them [the constitutions] in force, without any ratification by the people. When the crisis is passed, can they not turn around and say that these were adopted under duress, by delegates elected by a meagre vote under provisional governors and military authorities, and never ratified by a popular vote ? and could they not turn the anti-Lecompton argument against us, and insist, as we did, that a constitution not ratified by the people may have legal effect, but no moral effect whatever ?

“ 3. The President has on all occasions insisted that they should elect Congressmen who could take the oath prescribed by the act of 1862 ; but

in defiance of this, and insulting to the President and the country, they have, in a large majority of instances, voted down mercilessly Union men who could take the oath, and elected those who boasted that they could not, would not, and would feel disgraced if they could. Without mentioning names, one gentleman elected in Alabama by a large majority declared in his address to the people before the election, 'that the iron pen of history would record the Emancipation Act as the most monstrous deed of cruelty that ever darkened the annals of any nation ;' and another one, who avowed that he gave all possible aid and comfort to the Rebellion, denounced the Congress of 1862 as guilty in enacting such an oath. The South is filled with men who can take the oath which declares, 'I have not voluntarily taken part in the Rebellion.' Every conscript in the Southern army can take the oath, because he was forced into the ranks by their conscription act ; and every man who stayed at home and refused to accept civil or military positions can take the oath. But these were not the choice of the States lately in rebellion.

"4. While it must be expected that a minority of these States will cherish, for years perhaps, their feelings of disloyalty, the country has a right to expect that before their members are admitted to share in the government of this country, a clear majority of the people of each of these States should give evidence of their earnest and cheerful loyalty. The danger now is in too much precipitation. Let us rather make haste slowly, and we can then hope that the foundations of our Government, when thus reconstructed on the basis of indisputable loyalty, will be as eternal as the stars."

The orator ended by expressing his confidence in the President. The *National Intelligencer* criticised "this disclosure of a national programme in advance of the President's Message," by a man in Mr. Colfax's position, as "a remarkable violation of precedent, and 'not in the highest taste.'" It disapproved of the matter still more than of the manner of the speech. "President Johnson," said Mr. Colfax afterward, "always denounced this speech as the initiation of the Congressional policy that antagonized with his." It was not so much a stealing of the President's thunder as it was a taking up of his discarded thunder. How it struck the people may be seen in the following extracts from papers and letters.

The *Chicago Republican* of November 21st, 1865, said :

"It has been the fortune of Mr. Colfax on several remarkable occasions to declare the universal sentiment of the people, but he never spoke more exactly to the purpose than in the address of Saturday evening at Washington, which appeared in yesterday's *Republican*. He gives

notice that none of the rebel States will be admitted to representation in Congress at present ; and he lays down the conditions on which the work of reconstruction ought to proceed. There is not one of these conditions which the people of the loyal States do not ardently approve and insist upon. A righteous and a timely word is the end of much controversy and doubt."

The *Indianapolis Journal* of November 24th, 1865, said :

"The speech of Mr. Colfax, in response to a serenade a few nights ago, was evidently carefully prepared, in substance if not in verbiage. He knew that what he said would be accepted on all hands as an expression of the purpose of the Union men in Congress in regard to the rehabilitation of the rebel States, and he would have been culpably careless not to have digested his subject well. We have no doubt he spoke the sentiments of ninety-nine out of every hundred of his party, both in and out of Congress. He certainly spoke ours. And we can heartily indorse all he said, and not less heartily what he avoided saying. He was equally wise in his silence as in his utterance. Disputed points which are not party issues, and should never be, he who for the time is regarded as representing a party has no right to interpolate in his authorized declarations."

The *New York Times* said :

"Let no man who cares anything for what is likely to happen the coming winter in Congress fail to read carefully the speech of Schuyler Colfax, the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the last Congress, and who will unquestionably be re-elected to the same position in the next Congress next month. No public declaration has been made by any man this season which has so much significance as this speech of Mr. Colfax. It was evidently made deliberately and with the design that the country should gather from it the probable course of Congress at the coming session. We most heartily indorse all its positions. They are sound, patriotic, and safe."

Bishop E. R. Ames, of the Methodist-Episcopal Church, wrote him :

"I thank you most heartily for the speech delivered by you in Washington a few evenings since. Stand by the sentiments there expressed, and depend upon it the country will stand by you. Those short sentences now are worth volumes hereafter. Some acts of the President have rather staggered the faith of loyal men, but they do not give him up or cast him off. I congratulate you on the prospect of your re-election, and on what lies beyond."

Mrs. Kate R. Kilburn, of Elkhart, Ind., wrote him :

"It is the first statesman-like, earnest, and clear view that has emanated from any high political source. It is thoroughly moral, Christian-

ized, and refined. It is the emanation of a noble and brave heart, far above the political 'trimming' of the time. You have never said anything so acceptable to the people, so American and progressive in its sentiment, without the least smack of fanaticism. When you and I are dead and mouldered into dust, that speech will be placed in the archives of history and devoutly read by those who can appreciate the labor and trial through which America passed, even while the first halo of peace was upon her, in order that she, above all nations, should establish the supremacy of right over wrong."

The Hon. James G. Blaine, of Maine, wrote him :

"You have spoken 'the word in season' most fitly. Your speech is admirably received, throughout New England at least, and I doubt not in all the loyal States. I congratulate you on having given a good keynote for the rallying of our party, and for the policy of Congress with reference to the great question of reconstruction."

The Hon. Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts, wrote him :

"You will see by the papers that you have 'hit between wind and water.' The public has been longing to find some way of escape from this Presidential 'experiment.' I contented myself with requiring 'irreversible guarantees.' These were essential. It was madness not to require them at the beginning. Think of seven months given up to chaos and anarchy, with license to rebels! All this has been lost to the productive energies of the nation and to that peace which we all so much desire; and the Secretary of the Treasury, the guardian of our national finances, has been one of the vehement godfathers of this fatal policy, so costly to the country. Reviewing history, I can call to mind no instance of such a terrible, far-reaching blunder. Congress must do what it can to repair the damage. The newspapers say that the New York Custom House killed Preston King. This is a mistake. It was his participation in this destructive policy. When I saw him in October, this weight was then on his mind—heavier than twenty-five pounds of shot on his body. I sorrow for him, but am not surprised."

Of these things he wrote his mother: "My speech has made quite a sensation. I understand the President don't like it, but I have scores of congratulatory letters. It puts up the fence higher than he desires, but it is the right doctrine. As grandmother used to say, 'I feel it in my bones.'"

Without a competent leader for their armies, the devotion, the resources, and the energies of the Northern people would not have availed to save the Union. Without a



competent leader for their Representatives and their voters, their just objections to the foiled Confederate States immediately taking their old places in the Union would not have availed to prevent it. The President whom they had elected having practically gone over to the Confederate side, leadership naturally devolved on the Speaker of the popular House of Congress. Fortunately, Schuyler Colfax was equal to the occasion. Competent to ascertain and wisely express the wishes of the Northern people, and brave enough to take the responsibility of doing so, the Speaker and the country had the satisfaction of seeing those wishes instantly become purposes. Between his speech of the 18th of November and the assembling of Congress there was such a response from every organ of loyal opinion in the North as effectually deterred Mr. Johnson or his Southern Representatives from seriously attempting to carry out their theories of immediate restoration, by insisting on taking part in the organization of the House. The critical point in the momentous work of reconstruction was thus passed in safety, and the matter left where it properly belonged—in the hands of Congress.

An exciting time in organizing the House was nevertheless expected, and long before the hour of meeting the halls, galleries, and corridors were choked with anxious throngs. Mr. Colfax had been nominated for Speaker in caucus without dissent. Mr. Edward McPherson, Clerk of the preceding House, excluded the Southern claimants from the roll, and twice in succession declined to recognize Mr. Maynard, of Tennessee, before he uttered the decisive words: "The Clerk cannot recognize as entitled to the floor any gentleman whose name is not on this roll." Some discussion ensued, but it wore itself out ineffectually. A ballot was taken for Speaker, Colfax receiving 139 votes, and Mr. Brooks, of New York, 36. Mr. McPherson, having enjoyed the felicity of rendering his country an important service in a crisis, announced the result, and stepped aside.

"In the place thus made vacant appeared the man but a moment before elected to the position by the largest political majority ever given to

a Speaker of the House. A well-proportioned figure of medium size, a pleasing countenance, often radiant with smiles, were characteristic of him upon whom all eyes were turned. In the past a printer and editor in Indiana, now in Congress for the sixth term, and elected Speaker the second time, Schuyler Colfax stood to take the oath of office and enter upon the discharge of most difficult and responsible duties."<sup>1</sup>

The old-new Speaker briefly referred to the coming of peace and the duties it had brought. He said, in part :

“ The Rebellion having overthrown constitutional State Government in many States, it is yours to mature and enact legislation which, with the concurrence of the Executive, shall establish them anew on such a basis of enduring justice as will guarantee all necessary safeguards to the people, and afford what our Magna Charta—the Declaration of Independence—proclaims is the chief object of government—protection to all men in their inalienable rights. The world should witness, in this great work, the most inflexible fidelity, the most earnest devotion to the principles of liberty and humanity, the truest patriotism, and the wisest statesmanship.

“ Heroic men by hundreds of thousands have died that the Republic might live. The emblems of mourning have darkened White House and cabin alike ; but the fires of civil war have melted every fetter in the land, and proved the funeral pyre of slavery. It is for you, Representatives, to do your work as faithfully and well as have the fearless saviors of the Union in their more dangerous field of duty. Then we may hope to see the vacant and once abandoned seats around us gradually filling up, until this hall shall contain Representatives from every State and district, their hearts devoted to the Union for which they are to legislate, jealous of its honor, proud of its glory, watchful of its rights, and hostile to its enemies. And the stars on our banner, that paled when the States they represented arrayed themselves in arms against the nation, will shine with a more brilliant light of loyalty than ever before.”

A week later the committees were announced by the Speaker. Two new committees—on Appropriations and on Banking and Currency—had been authorized in order to relieve the Ways and Means Committee of part of its work. Justin S. Morrill, of Vermont, was appointed Chairman of Ways and Means, relieving Thaddeus Stevens, who went to the head of the Committee on Appropriations. Theodore M. Pomeroy, of New York, was made Chairman of the Committee on Banking and Currency ; Hiram Price, of Iowa, Chairman of the Pacific Railroad Committee ; N. P. Banks, of Massachusetts, Chairman of the For-

1. History of the Thirty-ninth Congress, W. H. Barnes, 1868.

eign Affairs Committee, vice Henry Winter Davis, at this moment dying (he died December 30th); Columbus Delano, of Ohio, Chairman of the Committee on Claims. The chairmen of the other important committees were the same as in the last Congress. "Notwithstanding all the errors which were unavoidable elements in the work," says Mr. Barnes, "committees were never better constituted than those of the Thirty-ninth Congress."

A joint committee of fifteen on reconstruction having been agreed upon by the two Houses, the Speaker announced, on the 14th of December, the members on the part of the House—Thaddeus Stevens, Elihu B. Washburne, Justin S. Morrill, Henry Grider, John A. Bingham, Roscoe Conkling, George S. Boutwell, Henry T. Blow, Andrew J. Rogers. On the 21st of December William Pitt Fessenden, James W. Grimes, Ira Harris, Jacob M. Howard, Reverdy Johnson, and George H. Williams were announced as the members of the Reconstruction Committee on the part of the Senate. These were strong men, and although there was impatience at the deliberateness with which they felt their way, they commanded the confidence of the people, and ultimately justified the wisdom of their selection.<sup>1</sup>

During the holiday recess the Speaker repeated his lecture "Across the Continent" at several places, the citizens giving him a complimentary banquet in Baltimore, and Mayor-elect Hoffman presiding for him at Cooper Institute, New York. At Albany, the Assembly being in session, he was waited on by a committee of the House, invited to a seat on the floor, and welcomed by the Hon. Lyman Tremain, "not only as the third officer in the Government, but as a statesman whose name has been honorably identified with its history during the most trying days of the Republic." An allusion to "our lamented President" opened the way for Colfax, after speaking of his interest in his native State, to pay an eloquent tribute to Lincoln, and from that to appeal for support for those

1. "The party will cheerfully acquiesce in letting in the seceded States," Medill writes Colfax, "when they are willing to accept the terms this committee will prescribe."

who remain. "God buries his workmen, but the work goes on." Somewhat later he repeated the lecture the last time for the season, having declined one hundred and seventy-three invitations to deliver it in as many cities.

At a reception given him at Lockport, N. Y., on the 4th of January, 1866, he alluded hopefully to the prospective action of the Executive and of Congress on the question of reconstruction. He believed the President to be honest and patriotic; that he would faithfully discharge the duties devolved on him as Chief Magistrate; and that he would also recognize the duties and obligations devolved upon Congress, a separate and independent branch of the Federal Government. He had faith that the clouds which now seemed to cast a gloom over the political horizon would disappear, and that harmony and good feeling would prevail between the different branches of the Government.

The Republicans parted with the President whom they had elected, and from whom they had expected so much, and with everything yet at stake, with the greatest reluctance, and only when he left them absolutely no other alternative.

Requested by Greeley, Sinclair, and others connected with the *New York Tribune* to take editorial charge of that paper during the summer, "because," wrote Mr. Sinclair, "Mr. Greeley sadly needs rest and relaxation, and thinks you better capable than any one else of judging of the political situation, and of the various questions and measures as they shall come up," he replied:

"If there were no canvass impending, and if this were the short session, Mr. Greeley's complimentary request and your determination would tempt me to try it, doubtful as I should regard my success. But now it is absolutely impossible unless I abandon my district, and I don't think of that. Our earnest friends there would not risk a new candidate. And if we are to go down by our President and his patronage and all he can influence warring on us, I ought to stand by to the last."<sup>1</sup>

1. At this time a man who had built up one of the great newspapers of the country proposed to join him (and furnish two thirds of the money) in purchasing a controlling interest in the *New York Tribune*, which, it was understood, could be had for three hundred and six thousand dollars. He need not have removed from South Bend or have retired from Congressional life. He was to negotiate the purchase, because he was on the

He had a Fourth of July oration engaged and a dozen repetitions of his lecture "for the benefit of our Indiana Soldiers' Home, which I wish to help;" and "if a candidate, and my health and strength hold out, I shall make seventy to a hundred speeches this fall."

February 11th (1866) the United States Christian Commission held its fourth and last anniversary in the Hall of the House of Representatives. The assemblage was of the choicest spirits in the land. On taking the Chair, after the opening exercises, Mr. Colfax spoke briefly of the trials and losses, the sacrifices and sufferings of the war, the happy return of peace, and passed a feeling encomium on the noble work of the Commission. The meeting was long and interesting. The Christian and the Sanitary Commissions, the fairest flowers of our civilization, were the inspiration of piety, humanity, and patriotism. The citizens gave them money and supplies and delicacies for the soldiers to the value of more than twenty millions, and they sent thousands of delegates to the camps, the battle-fields, and hospitals, bearing the gifts of both human and divine sympathy and support. Upon news of battle, the most skilful surgeons went to the front, and women left homes of ease and luxury to act as nurses. Not only was the soldier's physical comfort looked after, his heart was made strong by proofs that his heroism was appreciated at home. The moral effect on the citizen of this care for the soldier was hardly less beneficent. All distinctions had vanished in view of the common peril, but citizen and soldier were physically far apart, and these organizations brought them and kept them together.

"We have in the Chair our honored Speaker," said Bishop Simpson, "who presides over the House of Representatives, and who has shown a deep interest in our work." Alluding to the place "where the nation meets,

"inside." His connection with the paper, however, beyond the use of his name, was to be as perfunctory as he chose to have it. "When you come to be run for Vice-President, withdraw your name if you think best, and sell out when you run for President eight or ten years hence, for I am confident you will be President after Grant gets his turn." He did not accept this tempting proposal. Either it could not be done or he did not desire to do it.

through its chosen ones," and the presence, inclusive of the highest and best in the land, the Bishop thought it a fit place and presence for the Commission "to pass gently away. It has led a noble life. It was baptized in prayer, worked amid suffering and affliction, leaned on the affections of the wise and the pure, received aid from all classes, and ministered to multiplied thousands. Its dying moment has come, and it breathes its last breath sweetly and gently, as the fabled notes of the dying swan. The nation draws near, utters its benediction, and buries it with honor."

February 22d memorial services were held in the House in honor of Henry Winter Davis, lately deceased. All the insignia of mourning were displayed in the Hall. The Senators, Judges of the Supreme Court, army and navy officers, members of the legations and of the Cabinet, were in attendance. Introducing Mr. Creswell, friend and colleague of the dead statesman, the Speaker laid his own wreath on the bier. Said he :

"The world honors courage—the courage of the martyr, of the patriot soldier, of the pest-house nurse. But there is the courage of the statesman as well, nobly illustrated by him whose national services we commemorate to-day. Inflexibly hostile to oppression, the champion ever of the helpless and the down-trodden, fearless and eloquent, he is mourned all over the continent ; and from Patapsco to the Gulf the blessings of 'them that had been ready to perish' follow him to his tomb. It is fitting that the nation pay him marked honors in this Hall, though he died in private station."

Speaking at a fair in Washington for the benefit of the orphans of the war, June 18th, 1866, he said :

"War always smites with a heavy hand. It deranges business, desolates vast tracts of country, loads the people with debt and taxes, crowds graveyards, causes anguish to many a home circle, and fills the land with maimed and diseased. But sad as all this is, it makes orphans, too, in every direction. The bullet or cannon-ball which robs a soldier of life, and his wife of joy and hope, often consigns a helpless family to orphanage and destitution. The Treasury relieves their most pressing need by pensions, but cannot provide educational culture, guidance, and protection. It is fitting, therefore, that the humane should constitute themselves guardians of this sacred trust. These orphans are children of the State—children of the land their fathers died to save. One of the most tender

titles of the Creator in the sacred record is the Father of the fatherless. Let us strive, though as far removed from Him as the finite from the infinite, to emulate this privilege and duty. And may this work, so auspiciously begun here, spread till all within our ocean-bounded Republic have the opportunity of aiding in this interesting and holy work."

Having been asked to introduce Colonel Roberts, President of the Fenian Brotherhood, the Speaker prefaced the introduction with the following remarks :

" Wherever there is a people throughout the world struggling for liberty and self-government, we are, as a nation, in a great degree responsible for their aspirations. Our fathers established on this continent a Republic which has become the greatest and freest on the globe. On each recurring anniversary of independence our orators proclaim that in our republican institutions—which form the soul of our national life—we are an exemplar for all others to follow, a model for others to imitate, a beacon-light whose rays are destined to light up many lands now under the thralldom of tyranny. While I feel the restraints of international law upon me as a citizen, I cannot repress the sympathy I feel for all who seek to enjoy the institutions which have made us so powerful and so free. There are two rules of action in the world : one, the golden rule, which teaches us, as individuals, to do unto others as we would have them do unto us ; the other is the silver rule, to do unto others as they have done unto us, which is the general rule among nations. And if we had treated nations exactly as they have treated us during our recent struggle for existence, no country in the civilized world could reproach us.

" But, without further remarks, I will close by saying, that while I would not step beyond the law, I will not deny that I have sympathized with the Hungarians in their endeavors for liberty, in the uprising of the Neapolitans against the tyranny of the Bourbon Bomba, in the stern resolve of the Italians to be free from the Alps to the Adriatic, in the heroic struggles of the Republicans in Mexico against the Imperial tyranny forced on them by foreign bayonets, and in the longings of the Irish for a larger liberty and wiser government in that green isle of the sea. If we are faithful to the dead of the Revolution, and if we believe in the excellence of free institutions, we cannot and should not deny or repudiate these sympathies for those who desire to walk in our footsteps and to follow our example."

The difference between Congress and the President grew rapidly distinct and irreconcilable. February 19th he vetoed the Freedmen's Bureau Bill, and on the 22d he made his " dead duck" speech in front of the White House. New life stirred in the adherents of the South. Papers like the *Chicago Times* called upon the President to arrest Sum-

ner, Stevens, Phillips, and their confederates, and close Congress if the Southern Representatives and Senators were not at once admitted. Senator Garret Davis, of Kentucky, in his place in the Senate, defined the position of the Confederate party as follows :

“ It is the President's right, it is his constitutional function, to ascertain who constitute the two Houses of Congress. The members of the Senate who are in favor of the admission of the Southern Senators could get into a conclave with those Southern Senators any day, and they would constitute a majority of the Senate. The President of the United States has the constitutional option—it is his function, it is his power, it is his right—and I would advise him to exercise it, to ascertain, where there are two different bodies of men both claiming to be the Senate, which is the true Senate. If the Southern members and those who are in favor of admitting them to their seats constitute a majority of the whole Senate, the President has a right—and, by the Eternal ! he ought to exercise that right, forthwith, to-morrow, or any day—to recognize the opposition in this body and the Southern members, the majority of the whole body, as the true Senate.”

Seeing that all was yet in peril, the Union men began holding meetings, and soon gave the tide of public sentiment a decided set in favor of Congress. The Senate recovered sufficient tone by the 9th of April to pass the Civil Rights Bill over the disingenuous veto of the President, and the House passed it the same day. The Speaker voted for it, and after the vote made the following announcement :

“ The yeas are 122, and the nays 41. Two thirds of the House having, upon this reconsideration, agreed to the passage of the bill, and it being certified officially that a similar majority of the Senate, in which the bill originated, also agreed to its passage, I do, therefore, by the authority of the Constitution of the United States, declare that this bill, entitled ‘ An act to protect all persons in the United States in their civil rights, and furnish the means of their vindication, ’ has become a law.”

The next day the Speaker, Senator Henry S. Lane, and others were serenaded. In responding, Colfax ranked the Civil Rights Bill with the Emancipation Proclamation and with the Constitutional Amendment abolishing slavery. He said he wished that Congress had been called together in April last (1865). He believed that in that case a policy of reconstruction would have been jointly agreed upon in



which the South would have acquiesced. Alluding to complaints of delay, he said it was only within one month that Congress had been able to obtain official knowledge of the situation. But it long ago indicated its will, and Congress was the law-making power, in the test oath and in its instructions to the Vice-President not to count the votes of the rebel States for President in 1865. "Unless we are false to ourselves," he ended, "false to our country, false to the brave men who left happy homes to die for the Union, we shall proclaim and enact that loyal men shall govern a preserved Republic." Whereupon Senator Chandler, of Michigan, said to him: "You got it all into one sentence."

Having been taken to task for favoring the admission of Tennessee, he wrote, January 25th, to his friend, the Rev. Dr. Eddy:

"I have been for the admission of Tennessee since last October, publicly so here, before my election as Speaker. You *can* answer the question, why, if Maynard [Representative-elect from Tennessee] is excluded from Congress, don't you exclude Johnson from the White House? But it would mislead hundreds of thousands; and the difference between the issue on the other States and the issue on Tennessee—which would be the one we would have to fight out if we exclude Tennessee—would be, by the difference in doubtful votes, just the difference between carrying the next Congress, and losing it. Hence, as Tennessee abolished slavery herself, voluntarily, disfranchised her rebels, had large portions [of her people] loyal and true all through the war, is more loyal to-day than Kentucky, has a Radical Governor, elected a Congressional delegation, all of whom can take the oath, two of whom fought through the war with us, I am in favor of making her an exception, recognizing her government as loyal by joint resolution—thus giving Congressional sanction to it—and then admitting her members on the oath of 1862. If a rupture is to come—which I hope may not—I don't want the President to have any such excuse as that we kept his State out and treated him as an alien."

Having made the Civil Rights Bill a law in spite of the Presidential veto, the two Houses busied themselves in placing the Freedmen's Bureau Bill on the statute-book. It was designed to protect the helpless and friendless freedmen, and the bill became a law about the middle of July. The Reconstruction Committee reported, January 22d, a joint resolution proposing a constitutional amendment,

basing Representatives and direct taxes on actual voters, instead of population. On the last day of January it was adopted by the House, 120 to 46, sixteen not voting. It was discussed in the Senate, off and on, till the 9th of March, and upon a vote it was lost, five Radical and six Conservative, or Johnson, Senators joining with the regular Democratic strength, from various motives, to defeat it. In his unfortunate speech of February 22d, the President denied the right of Congress to pass upon the question of reconstruction. Congress answered by the passage of a concurrent resolution, to the effect that "no Senator or Representative shall be admitted into either branch of Congress from any of the said [insurrectionary] States, until Congress shall have declared such State entitled to representation."

On the 5th of May the Reconstruction Committee again reported a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution, which ultimately became, between the two Houses, the Fourteenth Amendment. It was adopted by the House May 10th, and in the course of a letter to Mr. Sinclair, Colfax writes :

"I wish the *Tribune* was more cordial in its indorsement of Congress. I know, with the difficulties around us, we can't quite reach its standard of choice as to legislation and terms ; but I think the firmness and inflexibility and compactness of our members, with all their patronage hazarded and lost, indeed, by their devotion to principle, worthy of high praise. We cannot go further than we can command a two-thirds vote in both Houses. On Owens's plan, we should have lost a majority of the New York and Indiana Congressmen, and with that all hopes of a two-thirds vote, and gone from here into the canvass, warring within our own ranks, to a certain defeat. We should have lost New Jersey and Connecticut, probably the Pacific States and Pennsylvania, besides New York and Indiana. So we agreed on the best we could do, and passed it by a magnificent and inspiring vote in the House—just as John Bright takes what he can get in Parliament, not what he wants."

In reply to Judge Turner, a constituent and friend at Crown Point, Ind., who wrote him "there is an impression in the district that you sympathize with Johnson," he writes :

"Mr. Luther wrote me about it, and I replied, expressing my chagrin that any one should doubt me at home, when here the President charges

me with being the main cause of the inflexibility of the House, by my serenade speech of last November, the Radical committees I appointed invariably, and my personal influence. If constituents, on a flying rumor, doubt one whose whole public life has been faithful to principle, it is only proof that he has lived in vain. The Southern rebels charge that my serenade speech of last November locked the door of Congress against them, and I guess they know. My only desire now is that Congress will agree on some plan which, obtaining the needed security for the future from the rebel States, shall not take on any loads of popular prejudice that can be avoided ; so that it will be hailed as wiser and more popular than the President's policy, and on which we can carry all the doubtful districts and hold the next Congress as firmly as this."

The Union Convention of the Ninth Congressional District of Indiana met at Westville, July 10th. The county conventions, as held, from the beginning of the year, had indorsed the sitting member in flattering terms. The Hon. Charles W. Cathcart, six years before Mr. Colfax's competitor for Congress, introduced a resolution, February 22d, in the La Porte County Convention, which was adopted, to wit :

"That the continued service of our Representative in Congress has only proved in an eminent degree his increased fitness for the position ; that we most cordially reciprocate that kindly regard for his present constituency which induced him to express a preference for our service, rather than for a removal to the Senate of the United States ; and that we respectfully protest against any arrangement which would deprive us of his services as our Representative, excepting only a call from the whole people of the United States to the highest office in their gift—a position which we are confident his eminent abilities, his high moral attributes, and his wonderful industry would enable him to fill with singular advantage to our beloved country."

This may stand for numbers of similar expressions of conventions, newspapers, and admirers from that day onward. The Union Convention of Porter County having nominated him for President in 1868, the *South Bend Register* criticised the action as premature. The *Valparaiso Republic* replied : "Oh, no ; he may be wanted to run with Grant, so that if Grant is killed, as they kill all our Presidents, the Government won't be Tylerized."

At the district convention a letter from him was read. "Last winter," said the writer, "when I was suggested by many papers of the State for Senator, I published a card,

saying I was not and never had been a candidate for that distinguished position ; that I preferred service in the House ; but if any considerable part of the convention desire to bring forward another candidate, I will not stand in the way. In that event I want the St. Joseph County delegation to withdraw my name, and pledge me to the support of the nominee, whoever he may be." Of politics he wrote, in part, as follows :

" The issue now is as vital as in 1862 or in 1864. It is, ' Which shall govern in the councils of the nation, loyalty or disloyalty ? ' The power to carry on war implies the power to prescribe the terms of peace. The President has recognized this. Congress deems that he did not go far enough. He required the ratification of the amendment abolishing slavery. Congress requires the ratification of another [the fourteenth]. Nearly four fifths of Congress agree to it. The Union party stand upon it. I am willing to stand or fall with it. Rebels must not return to increased power over the Union men they have slain. Never did a nation offer more lenient terms—that representation shall be based upon those admitted to political rights ; that the civil rights of all persons shall be maintained ; that the national debt and the pension list shall be preserved inviolate ; the rebel debt and compensation for slaves be repudiated and barred ; that men who have once broken faith with the nation in high office shall be excluded from office. Our fathers sternly disfranchised and expatriated the Tories of the Revolution. We seek not revenge, only defence ; and the necessity of our action is proved by the unanimity with which all the clans, North and South, who have opposed us from the first, do so now. The rebel hope in 1864 was in the Northern voters rather than in the Southern soldiers. Their last hope is to win at the polls this time. Stand by your colors again, and the Fortieth Congress will be complete, and with loyal Representatives and Senators, and the Union will enter on a new career of progress, prosperity, and power."

After the reading of the letter the Speaker was re-nominated without dissent. Upon this the *Washington Chronicle* commented as follows :

" Of all our statesmen, none has been more useful than Speaker Colfax to the Republic during the war, and especially in the present Congress, when upon the unity and sagacity of the majority in the two Houses depend our liberties and the blessings secured by the bravery of our lamented dead and illustrious living. His counsel has been always wise, clear, and firm ; his suggestions replete with a shrewd and original philosophy ; and his work and bearing in and out of Congress at once an example to others and a proof that he is worthy of the high trust conferred upon him. To him is the country indebted for those early intima-

tions which, while pointing out the path of duty to public men, anticipated and guarded against what was then conceived to be only a possible departure from rectitude in the Executive."

The Senate materially changed the Fourteenth Amendment as it came from the House, and adopted it on the 7th of June. The House concurred in the Senate amendments June 20th, and the President washed his hands of it. July 7th Governor Brownlow wrote the Speaker that "the Johnson faction in the [Tennessee] Legislature is bolting, on advice from the White House, to prevent the ratification of the amendment, but will ratify it nevertheless," which they did, and July 24th Congress admitted Tennessee by joint resolution, President Johnson signing the resolution perfunctorily, saying he did not approve of it. The firing of one hundred guns in the grounds south of the White House announced the reinstatement of the first rebel State, and the Union men could not have been in better shape to go to the country.

An unpleasant incident in the House raised the question of the proper exercise of the Speaker's functions in certain contingencies, and the construction of certain rules. A war of words between General Rousseau, of Kentucky, and Mr. Grinnell, of Iowa, grew from bad to worse, until Rousseau personally assaulted Grinnell in the Capitol, striking him several times with a rattan, while three of Rousseau's friends stood by armed, presumably to assist him if necessary.

The House ordered an inquiry, and intrusted the select committee appointed to make it to recommend suitable action in their report. A majority of the committee recommended, first, the expulsion of Rousseau; secondly, the censure of Grinnell; thirdly, the arraignment of the three witnesses for examination by the House. The minority recommended the reprimanding of Rousseau by the Speaker at the bar of the House, instead of expulsion, agreeing in other respects with the majority.

The report of the committee having been read, Mr. Wilson, of Iowa, entered a point of order that, under the rules, the House was barred from censuring Grinnell, be-

cause it declined to take notice of his language at the time, and permitted him to proceed. The Speaker overruled the point of order, holding that "calling to order is excepting to words spoken in debate;" and that this was done at the time by several gentlemen, and finally, against usage, by the Speaker himself; upon which Grinnell remarked that he was through. The question, he said, had also been settled by the resolution ordering the inquiry; which gave the committee full jurisdiction in the case, with power to report whatever they deemed necessary to vindicate the privileges of the House and protect its members.

Every one could see, after the assault, that Grinnell should have been silenced, as well as called to order. As if anticipating criticism, the Speaker held that in cases of "personal explanation," his duty was confined to ruling on points of order raised by members. "The Speaker cannot compel a member to stop his speech, while any single member on the floor can, by demanding that he shall not proceed further, unless by consent of the House;" the presumption being that if none of the members does this, the House consents that the speech shall be continued.

There was a long and interesting debate, with a political tinge, Rousseau, a gallant Union general, being an adherent of Johnson, and Grinnell a Congressional Radical. Mr. Spalding and Mr. Raymond were disposed to criticise the Speaker for not having silenced Grinnell on his own initiative. The House should have protected Rousseau, Mr. Raymond said. His assailant was called to order, but not silenced, which he held should have been done by the Speaker.

Mr. Garfield contended, on the contrary, that the House gave General Rousseau all the protection he or his friends asked for. "The course of the Speaker in cases of 'personal explanation' is, in my judgment, the correct one," said he, "and the only one which, under the spirit and genius of our Government, can be or ought to be tolerated." If the House consents to personalities, Mr. Garfield continued in substance, the Speaker is overruled, he being the agent and not the principal. He is not, as in

some countries, part of the Administration, with power to control debate as he chooses. He is the executive officer of the House, bound by its rules. If members fail to call down a disorderly member, the inference is that the House desires him to proceed.

Mr. Banks wrote the Speaker: "I have never listened to a parliamentary decision so clearly and so perfectly stated as yours of to-day;" and in the debate Banks said: "In my judgment, it was as just as any decision ever made in any parliamentary body. Any other conclusion would have assailed the records of the House and degraded the parliamentary law of the country."

The House refused to expel Rousseau, refused to censure Grinnell, refused to arraign the witnesses, and simply ordered Rousseau to be reprimanded by the Speaker at the bar of the House. Rousseau appearing, the Speaker said:

"General Rousseau, the House of Representatives has declared you guilty of a violation of its rights and privileges in a premeditated personal assault upon a member for words spoken in debate. This condemnation it has placed on its journal, and has ordered that you shall be publicly reprimanded by the Speaker at the bar of the House. No words of mine can add to the force of the order, in obedience to which I now pronounce upon you its reprimand."

The *New York Tribune*, recalling the affrays in preceding Congresses, said: "This Congress will not suffer [in the matter of personalities] by comparison with any of its predecessors of the last quarter of a century." This trouble ended, the Speaker writes his mother: "A very trying day yesterday for me, deciding points of order, questions of privilege, answering questions, etc., all day, and wearied out at the close. How did you like my reprimand of Rousseau?" Subsequently he was twice called on to administer the censure of the House, but always, as in this case, he did it simply and without ostentation.

The session adjourned July 28th. A press dispatch gives a glimpse of the closing scene. "The hall and the galleries were crowded with spectators watching with interest the closing moments of a session that will be memorable in history. The Speaker's valedictory was listened to

in deep silence, and as he spoke the last words, there was an outburst of applause, Mr. Stroud, a Democrat, crying vehemently : ' Three cheers for our noble Speaker ! ' The call was heartily responded to. Occupying a station full of the most perplexing difficulties, he has filled it with such rare wisdom and felicity as to challenge the outspoken and warmest admiration of his political adversaries."

Following is a notice of the Speaker's receptions, written about the middle of March, 1866 :

" On account of the commencement of the night sessions in Congress, Mr. Colfax has given his last reception for the season. As usual, the house was crowded to suffocation. No other receptions could be missed as much as these ; for while they were frequented by people the most distinguished and of the highest position, so, too, they held open wide doors to the humble and unknown. Here the wise met to converse, the curious to see, the gay to dance and have a ' good time,' each alike sure of a kindly greeting from the Speaker and his most amiable mother and sister. Mrs. Matthews possesses in an eminent degree the perfect kindness and sincerity of heart which she has transmitted to her son. Her duties as hostess in her son's house have been most onerous. Yet no lady in Washington has discharged the same with greater acceptance to the public. She exemplifies the secret of all true politeness—kindness. No transitory honor, no exaltation of place, makes her other than she was—bright, genial, and gentle, a Christian woman, with the milk of human kindness in her heart and words of kindness always upon her lips."

Mr. Colfax arrived home August 1st, crowds in waiting—“ old patriarchs who always knew ' our boy Schuyler,' middle-aged men whom he had gracefully distanced in the race of life, and wondering children, to whom this was a holiday, attending carriages, wagons, nondescript vehicles of all sorts, flags, banners, and bands playing ' Home, Sweet Home '—all in waiting to honor the return of a distinguished but simple-hearted citizen. Descending from the railway platform, he was almost literally carried in their arms to an adjoining rostrum, where, in intense silence, the formal yet sincere and touching welcome was pronounced by Colonel A. B. Wade, formerly of the Seventy-third Indiana Infantry, who, during the war, had been delivered by the personal exertions of Mr. Colfax



from squalid horrors and actual impending death in Libby Prison." <sup>1</sup>

Colonel Wade said in part :

"We who know you best delight to point to your private life, and there we find no spot to dim its brightness, but, on the contrary, everything calculated to adorn the character of a Christian gentleman. Would time permit, I might mention a thousand instances of disinterested acts of kindness which circumstances have enabled you to perform, knitting the hearts of thousands to you in bonds that cannot be broken. As the soldiers' friend, your words of encouragement nerved the heart of many a soldier on the battle-field. You have cheered the sick and wounded in many a hospital, and your generous bounty and influence have solaced and relieved many of the inmates of rebel prisons. Nor have your efforts in their behalf ceased with the return of peace. The wounded and the maimed, the bereaved and the stricken ones, and the orphans of those who fell in their country's cause find in you their warmest friend and most powerful advocate."

He then thanked Mr. Colfax in the name of his fellow-citizens for the honors he in his public life had won for them ; they and all loyal citizens felt that he was a prominent part of the trustworthy bulwark that shielded them from public enemies. Says Mr. Edwards :

"The orator closed, and for a moment we trembled for the silver-tongued statesman, who hitherto had gracefully addressed Presidents and Senators, but whose owner's heart seemed just then more ready to sit down and weep on the threshold of its bereaved home than to dictate the words it were far easier to feel. But soon the ringing sentences began to flow and the returning guest to feel literally at home. Then the shouts and the procession through the streets, whose doors and windows fairly shone with nodding heads and bright faces. For once in our life, amid this unostentatious, spontaneous excitement of that pure inland town, we discovered a prophet having honor and enjoying love 'in his own country.' We would rather have that honor and that love than the Speakership. Twice happy the man who enjoys both at the hands of the American people!" <sup>2</sup>

1. The Rev. Dr. Arthur Edwards, of the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*.

2. "The speeches and proceedings of the day were reported by leading daily newspapers, but none except an observer caught the real spirit and beautiful motive in the event. Plain, hearty, honest farmers by hundreds and hundreds sat with smiling faces while they listened, and all seemed to take pride in the central personage, as if he were a son just graduating from college in that lovely grove. The scene lingers in our memory as one of the most unstudied, sincere, heartfelt instances of personal and loving homage ever paid to an honored fellow-citizen and neighbor."—*Dr. Edwards after Mr. Colfax's Death*.

Mr. Turpie had been renominated for Congress against him. That afternoon he opened his canvass in a speech of two hours to five thousand people. He began :

“ If there is any voter of this district here assembled who is anxious that his Representative should favor the unconditional admission into the counsels of the nation of the men who have been the murderers of your brothers, your sons, and your friends, who plunged this country into all the anarchy, the bloodshed, and desolation of civil war, that man ought not to vote for me for Representative.”

Of Congress, he said :

“ I come before you to-day to vindicate the Congress of the United States from the aspersions to which it has been subjected ; and in taking up this subject, I will say that I have been there as your Representative for eleven years, and in all that time have never sat in a council of men so imbued with the spirit of patriotism, so unselfish in their views, so anxious to devise the best measures for the good of our country, as that body of men recently adjourned. It is the ablest Congress I have ever seen assembled in our National Capital. It has been taunted by its enemies with the charge of excessive deliberation. It was deliberate in its action. We, they say, debated for months. It was a time when we should. We knew that we were laying foundations which were to last for ages—endeavoring to reconstruct the Union on a basis as eternal as the stars ; and, therefore, we made haste slowly. It is a Congress moderate in its demands ; there is not one demand in the constitutional amendment which we submitted for ratification that should not be approved by every man in the land. It is a Congress firm in its determination as the eternal granite. Not all the appeals of the *Chicago Times*, and other papers in sympathy with rebels, to drive them from the Capital with the bayonet ; not all the vilification poured out on their heads by traitors and friends of traitors, caused them to flinch for a moment ; but they stood firmly for the right.”

Of the policy of Congress he said :

“ We come now with the same old flag, the same principles, the same devotion to the country, that we exhibited as an organization in the dark hours of the war. Then we wrote on that banner as our watchword, ‘ Liberty to all men,’ and it sounded round the world. God blessed that motto, and gave us victory ; and now we have written another motto under the former one, which is also to be sanctioned by popular approval ; it is, ‘ Justice to all men.’ Then, indeed, shall we have a nation of whose character and purposes we may be justly proud. Administrations, Congresses, and Presidents die, but the deeds of the Union party will live in history forever, brightening under the eye of posterity as age after age rolls away, becoming more and more glorious as their mighty influence

for the good of humanity and the prosperity of our country is learned and appreciated by experience."

He gave his audience a detailed account of the principal measures of the late session—the resolution against the payment of Southern claims arising from war losses; the aid voted to complete the unfinished improvements of lake and river harbors; the abolition of the fisheries bounties; the increase of pensions and the equalization of soldiers' bounties; the reduction of taxation by one hundred millions a year; the relief of Union officers and soldiers from harassing suits brought against them in the South; the restoration to Southern Union men of their property confiscated by the Confederacy; the resolutions favoring the Fenians; the modification of the neutrality laws to something like the practice of Great Britain and other nations; the Civil Rights and the Freedmen's Bureau bills; and lastly, the (fourteenth) constitutional amendment, which he analyzed, section by section, and defended as both absolutely just and absolutely necessary. Such was the burden of his argument in this canvass.

Into his district money and orators were poured by the opposition with reckless profusion. As Speaker, and as a conspicuous representative of the Congressional policy of reconstruction, bold, earnest, firm, he was an object of special hatred to Mr. Johnson, who himself spoke on the border of Colfax's district in his famous journey to Chicago, "swinging round the circle to leave the Constitution in the hands of the people." But it availed nothing. Mr. Colfax was returned by a majority of 2148 in a total poll of 40,000. He made ninety-one speeches in twenty-two Congressional districts, many of them joint discussions with Turpie.<sup>1</sup> The elections gave the Union men as strong a

1. His mother writes her daughter Carrie: "This is a great campaign in this district. Schuyler speaks to vast crowds. Where he formerly spoke to a hundred he now has a thousand, and where he had a thousand he now has five or six thousand—processions two miles long. Andy Johnson is disgracing his station and the people by his electioneering tour, but we think he is aiding the Republican cause. Poor Grant and Farragut must feel disgraced by being with him, although they get all the cheers. I guess Mr. Andy wishes he had left them at home. To-night [September 10th] the party are at Indianapolis, and the Cops had delegates appointed from each of the districts to receive him. General Logan spoke to a crowd of fifteen thousand here last Saturday. There was a soldiers' picnic in the Fair Ground, and it was the gathering of the campaign, so far.

majority in the Fortieth Congress as they had in the Thirty-ninth. Commenting on the Speaker's election to Congress for the seventh time by so large a majority, the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* said :

" Mr. Colfax could doubtless change from the House to the Senate, as Mr. Morrill is about to do ; for the Indiana Legislature just chosen has a Senator to elect in place of Mr. Lane, who chooses to retire at the close of his present term, next March ; and the State has no man more fit for the position, no man more likely to be proffered it by the Legislature, acting in obedience to the voice of the country and the State, than the popular Speaker of the House. But having accepted a new term in the House from his district, and sure there of a third term in the Speaker's Chair, if he desires it, he will most likely be averse to any change. The Senatorship is no advance from the Speakership ; that is the third office in rank in our political organization ; the former is only of longer continuance ; and that is nothing to a man of the popularity and efficiency in public life of Mr. Colfax. He will hardly ever go out of high office, except of his own free choice. The Senate will always be open to him. The Cabinet will naturally claim him by and by. And he would add strength and faith before the people to any Presidential ticket, even if so popular a man as General Grant should head it."

Messrs. Dennison, Speed, and Harlan resigned from the Cabinet. Hannibal Hamlin resigned the Boston Collectorship, and Mr. Arnold, of Chicago, the post of Sixth Auditor of the Treasury. The fusion convention of ex-rebels, Copperheads, and Johnson men assembled at Philadelphia, August 14th ; but it utterly failed in its purpose, and its effect was more than neutralized by the convention of Southern loyalists, which, warned out of the South by the New Orleans massacre, met likewise in Philadelphia on the 3d of September. After Henry J. Raymond, Henry Ward Beecher was the most considerable Republican defection. The eccentric divine achieved a sudden and wide notoriety by censuring Congress. Said Mr. Greeley's paper : " In the conception of every blackleg, duellist, negro-killer, and rowdy, from St. John to the Rio Grande, he has all at once ceased to be a fanatic, a bigot, a disunionist, and become an enlightened patriot and states-

Schuyler and Turpie have only spoken once together. They begin their joint canvass on the 18th at Valparaiso, and will speak here on the 20th. Turpie is more abusive than usual, and there will be a great time here."

man. But there is sadness in many hearts where the eloquent pastor of Plymouth Church has been loved and honored—a mournful consciousness that they have trusted too confidently and loved unwisely. ‘Little children, keep your hearts from idols.’”<sup>1</sup>

The people did not follow the renegade Republican leaders. Audiences everywhere punctuated their halting speeches with, “Three cheers for Congress!” General John A. Logan, of Illinois, addressed a great gathering of soldiers at South Bend, and it was said that he converted even the Copperheads within hearing; that they could not resist his battle tones.

Mr. Colfax attended a Chicago Fenian picnic in August, and expressed his warm sympathy with the wrongs of Ireland, maintaining that an Irish Legislature for Irish affairs on Dublin Green was the true and only remedy. General Banks had reported a bill at the late session, which became law, reforming the neutrality laws, making international obligations reciprocal. “Neither Colfax nor Banks,” wrote an observer, “should ever want a friend while an Irishman lives. Colfax was unflagging in his efforts for the bill. One could see his nervous anxiety during the discussion, and when the vote was taken, he desired his name to be called, so as to record his vote in its favor.” Mr. Colfax had presented resolutions in the House favorable to the Fenians, “to which, undoubtedly,” said the Fenian President Roberts, “General O’Neill and his comrades were indebted for their release from prosecution in the United States courts.” The tenderness of the Speaker and of Congress for the Fenian invaders of Canada was largely inspired by the remembrance, still very fresh, of the peculiar neutrality of Great Britain during the war. But also the leading Fenians had resolved to place their organization in

1. Mr. Greeley’s paper made a splendid fight against the Johnson movement, solitary and alone of the New York journals. When that had been crushed, he was the choice of his party for the Senatorship. But to punish him for opposing Seward’s nomination at Chicago, in 1860, and to satisfy personal spites on other accounts, the managers gave the prize to Roscoe Conkling. Mr. Conkling had also rendered signal service in wresting the great State from Seward, Raymond, and Johnson. “The young Senator from New York,” said George William Curtis, “takes her imperial flag, and will place as its motto exhorts, ‘Excelsior.’”

the United States, as well as in Ireland, against oppression ; and many influential Republican leaders hoped to draw a strong Irish contingent into alliance with the party always and everywhere opposed to oppression. By the way, the French had been warned to get out of Mexico on the first meeting of this Congress ; they had heeded the warning ; and their Mexican Emperor, Maximilian, was now trying to follow them, all too late. Left to his own resources by the French, he was worsted by the Mexicans, taken prisoner, and executed.

The Speaker left home for Washington early in November, repeating his lecture seventeen times on the way, in partial answer to two hundred and fifty invitations. Occasionally the newspapers suggested him for the Presidency, saying the people wanted Grant, but that it would be unsafe to take him from the head of the army. In a letter of December 20th to his old partner Wheeler, he says :

“ You speak of my prospects of being President as promising ; and yourself rejoice over it, as I am glad to see. I hear it everywhere that I go, and it is current talk here among members. But you know how often I have said at home that I am satisfied with my present position, and I have indulged in no ambition for higher honors. I say so to all who talk with me about it ; but a good many smile and turn incredulously away. Yet it is really so. If it is to be, it will be, but it will have to come, if it does, without my electioneering for it, or running after it. When I think of its grave responsibilities and cares, and contrast it with my present pleasant position, I am not attracted toward it ; and yet these expressions of confidence and regard are very flattering indeed. To think of the steps from the printing-office, where we have worked together so harmoniously, and all coming without forcing or urging, or, indeed, any contest at all except with the enemy, is almost marvellous. I send you from clippings on my table articles on the subject from two leading papers in New York, and could send you a dozen more from Pennsylvania and New England, besides many I never saved. I intend to let it drift, without lifting a finger to control the current, quite content if this great honor falls on other shoulders.”

Of a balance still due him from Mr. Wheeler on the purchase of the *Register*, he writes :

“ I would not like to trade at all for that mortgage note on Sherwood. You know how poor a collector I am, and if anything happened to him I could never foreclose on a friend, and one blind at that. But you can let what you owe me stand a whole year if it would embarrass you at all

to pay earlier. Put it, if you have no objection, in a note payable in one year without interest, and then pay when convenient."

Again, shortly afterward, to same :

" I am not flush, financially, as you might imagine from my offer to pay balance, if that mortgage note was on the office. I pay six hundred and fifty dollars a month for house and board for self and family, which is more than my salary, and I have expenses of hundreds of dollars per month besides. But I expected to sell some small investments I had to pay current expenses, and would have paid out of that, as all my salary during the recess was, of course, invested ere this, and which is all I can save."

The returning Congressmen were welcomed to the Capital in December by the citizens in mass, Judge Carter delivering the address. In response, the Speaker reviewed the rapid movement of affairs during the vacation, dwelling on the rising stubbornness with which the verdict of the people in the fall elections had been met by the South.

He said in part :

" Yet, while we cannot compel them to approve the constitutional amendment, our duty to the nation, to justice, to liberty, and to humanity is none the less. And exponents of the people's will, as we are, we cannot avoid the duty. Indeed, we may see in it the finger of Providence. Like our fathers, we have in the past few years builded better than we knew. In the earlier stages of the war how willingly would an overwhelming majority of the people have consented to perpetuate slavery in the Republic, if Southern traitors had taken from our lips the bloody chalice of civil war, which they compelled us to drain to its very dregs ! But God willed otherwise ; and, at last, when every family altar had been crimsoned with blood, and every cemetery and churchyard crowded with patriot graves, the nation rose to a higher plane of duty, and resolved in these halls that slavery should die. Then the storm-cloud of war passed away ; God's smile shone on our banners ; victory after victory blessed our gallant armies ; and the crowning triumph was won that gave salvation to the Union and freedom to the slave.

" Since then we have been earnestly struggling for reconstruction on some enduring and loyal foundation. Stumbling-blocks have impeded our progress ; and when at last a mild and magnanimous proposition is made, embodying no confiscation, no banishment, no penalties of the offended law, we are baffled by a hardening of heart against it as inexplicable as it seems irremovable. Does it not seem as if again the Creator is leading us in His way rather than our own ? And as we turn for light, does it not flash upon us that He again requires the nation to conquer its prejudices ; that inasmuch as He has put all human beings on an

equality before the divine law, and called them all His children, He demands that we shall put all on an equality before our human law, so that every one in the region poisoned by the influences of slavery and the principles of treason shall be clothed with all rights necessary for full and safe self-protection against tyranny, outrage, and wrong—not left defenceless to the mercy of those who so long exhibited no mercy to the Government they sought to destroy?"

Without anticipating the means by which this was to be done, the Speaker claimed for Congress, under the plain language of the Constitution, the power to do whatever might be necessary.

Upon reassembling, Congress hastened to repeal the section of the Confiscation Act which authorized the President to grant pardon and amnesty to ex-rebels by proclamation. It enfranchised the blacks in the District of Columbia and in the Territories, and admitted Nebraska into the Union. It declared by concurrent resolution that no rebel State should be reinstated until it should have ratified the Fourteenth Amendment. It prescribed the duties of the Clerk in preparing for the organization of the next House, and provided that the Fortieth Congress should convene immediately on the dissolution of the Thirty-ninth Congress. It restricted the President's field for mischief, so far as was practicable, by the Tenure-of-Office Act. The impeachment of the President was considered, but from lack of time the subject was necessarily left to the incoming Congress.

All this was negative, defensive merely. Congress had declared amply enough how the rebel States should not be reinstated. Two years after the close of the war, however, the Union was still unrestored, and while claiming, under the Constitution, absolute jurisdiction of the question, Congress had failed to prescribe the terms on which the Union should be restored. The peace was become a truce. The war bade fair to break out again, with the President at the head of the ex-Confederate forces, and with the restoration of the Union as their avowed object. Since the day it convened, Congress had been occupied with the problem of reconstruction and restoration on just and safe prin-



ciples. But many things had compelled it to make haste slowly. With substantial unanimity within itself as to the end to be sought, there was extraordinary diversity of opinion as to the best means of reaching it.<sup>1</sup> In consequence of the defection of the President, every measure had to be adopted by a two-thirds vote. There was a natural indisposition to adopt radical measures if it could be avoided, and it was long hoped, if not believed, that the indirect action of Congress would prove sufficient. But both the country and Congress were at last convinced by the course of events that affirmative Congressional action was indispensable, involving the sweeping away of Mr. Johnson's ex-rebel State governments and the enfranchisement of the emancipated slaves. Mr. Stevens had been of that opinion ever since the emasculation by the Senate of the Fourteenth Amendment, as adopted by the House, and immediately thereupon proposed a measure containing the germ of the Military Reconstruction Act. Called up from time to time, and pressed upon the attention of the House by Mr. Stevens, it was passed on the 13th day of February, 1867, after a four weeks' debate upon it in Committee of the Whole. By the 20th both Houses had agreed upon it, and passed it. On the 2d day of March the President returned it to the House with his veto, over which it was at once passed by both Houses; and with only two days of the Thirty-ninth Congress to spare, it became law.

Noon of the 4th of March being near, a resolution was offered thanking the Speaker "for the courteous, dignified, able, and impartial manner in which he has discharged the duties of presiding officer." Mr. Le Blond, a Democrat, said he hoped it would be unanimously adopted, as, on motion of Mr. Maynard, it was, by a rising vote. Mr. Hogan and Mr. Winfield, both Democrats, seconded the

1. "If I might presume upon my age," said Thaddeus Stevens in one of these debates, "I would suggest to the young gentlemen around me that the deeds of this burning crisis, of this solemn day, of this thrilling moment, will cast their shadows far into the future, and will make their impress upon the annals of our history, and that we shall appear upon the bright pages of that history just in so far as we cordially, without guile, without bickering, without small criticisms, lend our aid to promote the great cause of humanity and universal liberty."

motion for its adoption. Mr. Winfield said he desired the country to take it as something more than routine. Constituencies and Representatives alike, he continued, had been roused to the highest pitch of mental excitement by the conspiracy, the war, the mode and purposes of it, and what was next best to be done ; and the duties of presiding officer were unusually difficult and delicate. The Speaker had discharged them in such manner as to merit the warmest expressions of consideration and gratitude. He felt that he represented the feeling of all retiring members in saying that the urbanity and gentleness of his manners, his kindness of heart, and his justness and fairness as a presiding officer had so far secured him their affection, friendship, and confidence, that they would follow his career through life with no common interest, and with their best wishes for his happiness, prosperity, and success.

The Speaker's valedictory was felicitous. He was beggared for words to fitly express his thanks for so unusual and significant an indorsement. He had tried to reach the high standard of his predecessors in the performance of his duties, and was grateful for the uniform support he had received. Death had thinned their ranks less than ordinarily. They must separate, and they would never all meet again. " But as in a distant landscape the eye rests with delight on its beauties, while its defects are thrown into unnoticed shade, may memory, as in after years we review our association here, bring before us all the pleasures of this companionship in the national service, forgetful of the asperities, which should perish with the occasion that evoked them."

In his history of the Thirty-ninth Congress, Mr. Barnes says : " No one towered so conspicuously above the rest as to be universally recognized and followed as the ' leader,' " although Thaddeus Stevens, from his age, services, ability, position, and force of character, was very prominent and influential. That under such circumstances so great results were harmoniously wrought out, he ascribes in part " to the patriotic spirit which pervaded the minds of its

members," but in part also "to the parliamentary ability and tact of him who sat faithfully and patiently as Speaker of the House. Deprived by his position of opportunity of taking part in the discussions, which his genius and experience fitted him to illustrate, he nevertheless did much to direct the current of legislation which flowed smoothly or turbulently before him. The resolution of thanks to the Speaker, moved by a member of the minority, and passed unanimously, was no unmeaning compliment, but an honor fairly earned and justly paid."

The Rev. Dr. Boynton, Chaplain of the House, writing for the *Cincinnati Gazette*, said of these Congresses and of the Speaker :

"History will yet record that in every element of real statesmanship ; in clear, broad views of human rights and relations ; in deep, true moral convictions ; in all that constitutes the heroic character, the leaders of the Thirty-ninth Congress were superior to their predecessors ; and among them Mr. Colfax was, and is, an acknowledged leader.

"They were men who met firmly the shock of the most formidable rebellion of modern times, and crushed it ; and then, against the whole power of the Executive, a great party at the North and the reinspired rebels conceived and executed a safe plan for restoring the South and reuniting the country. Men capable of this are great men. For three consecutive Congresses [written after he was elected Speaker the third time], and while the greatest questions ever presented to American statesmen were being discussed, in a time of extreme peril, these strong men invited Mr. Colfax to preside over them, guide their deliberations, and wield the great power of the Speaker, when any grave mistake would have imperilled their party and their country.

"Many of the strong men in the House could do, perhaps, each in his own sphere, what the Speaker could not ; but in the administrative ability needed in his high position ; in the power to so guide the great mental forces of the House as to reach a result ; in the faculty of seeing at a glance the true aspect of a difficult case, and of prompt decision ; in that 'tact' which means an intuitive perception of what is needed, and how it can be done, Mr. Colfax has no superior among our public men in the House or elsewhere.

"His convictions rest on a firm moral and religious basis, and therefore he is not likely to change. He is one of the best living representatives of the true American type of mind, thoroughly practical, working right on to definite ends with great executive force, power of endurance, and an unwearied attention to the details of business. In any higher position he would bring to the conduct of affairs the same clear concep-

tions, the same power of prompt decision, the same exquisite tact and firmness that distinguish him as Speaker.”

A writer in *Putnam's Magazine* for June, 1868, said of the Speaker :

“ As a presiding officer, he is the most popular the House has had since Henry Clay. His marvellous quickness of thought and his talent for the rapid administration of details enable him to hold the reins of the House of Representatives, even in its most boisterous moods, with as much grace and ease as Mr. Bonner would show the paces of Dexter in Central Park or as Mr. Gottschalk would thread the keys of a piano, in a dreamy maze of faultless, quivering melody.

“ As an orator, Mr. Colfax is not argumentative, except as clear statement and sound judgment are convincing. He is eminently representative. A glance at his broad, well-balanced, practical brain indicates that his leading faculty is the sum of all faculties—judgment ; and that what he believes the majority of the people either believe or can be made to believe. His talents are administrative and executive rather than deliberative. He knows men well, estimates them correctly, treats them all candidly and fairly. No man will get through his business with you in fewer minutes, and yet none is more free from the horrid brusqueness of busy men. There are heart and kindness in Mr. Colfax's politeness. Men leave his presence with the impression that he is at once an able, honest, and kind man. The breath of slander has been silent toward his fair, spotless fame.”

In a speech at Bedford, Pa., September 4th, 1866, Thaddeus Stevens said : “ As a further enumeration of some of the acts of Congress, I refer you to a speech of the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, lately made to his constituents. No sounder patriot exists. And I will take this occasion to say that as Speaker I believe no abler officer ever presided over a deliberative body.”

## CHAPTER X.

### FORTIETH CONGRESS.

1867-1869.

RE-ELECTED SPEAKER, INAUGURAL.—CONGRESS ADJOURNS TO JULY.—LECTURING, HONORS, RECEPTIONS.—CONGRESS CONSTRUES THE RECONSTRUCTION ACTS, ADJOURNS TO NOVEMBER.—SERENADE SPEECH.—THE SPEAKER PROPOSED IN MANY QUARTERS FOR PRESIDENT.—THE FALL CANVASS AND ELECTION.—JOHNSON'S MACHINATIONS TO DEFEAT CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION.—THE PRESIDENT IMPEACHED, TRIED, ACQUITTED.—THE REBEL STATES ACQUIESCE IN THE LAW.—COLFAX SOLICITED TO STAND FOR GOVERNOR OF INDIANA, DECLINES.—PROPOSED FOR VICE-PRESIDENT.—NOMINATED WITH GRANT, CONGRATULATIONS, COMMENTS.—RECEPTION AT HOME.—A SUMMER IDYL.—ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT.—MARRIES MISS WADE, NIECE OF SENATOR WADE, OF OHIO.—CONGRATULATIONS, RECEPTIONS, BANQUETS, PRESENTS.—COUNTING THE ELECTORAL VOTE.—TAKES FINAL LEAVE OF THE HOUSE.

IMMEDIATELY on the dissolution of the Thirty-ninth, the Clerk called the roll of the Fortieth Congress. There had been no caucus; Colfax was nominated for Speaker "amid as enthusiastic and universal a clapping of hands," said a press dispatch, "as was ever accorded a public favorite. Republicans did not cheer more than Democrats, men more than women, the galleries more than the House. It was a spontaneous recognition of a rare personality and a true manhood." On the ballot he received 127 votes to 30 for Mr. Marshall, of Illinois. Upon taking the Chair he spoke as follows :

"GENTLEMEN: Elected for the third time to this responsible and trying position, I appreciate more than ever before the importance of this trust, and realize more than when first entering upon its difficult duties the absolute necessity of your confidence and support. Nor do I overrate the gravity of our position as American legislators.

"The years have never dropped their sand  
On mortal issue vast and grand  
As ours to-day."

“ A nation decimated by the conflicts of fraternal strife, a land desolated by the destructive marches of hostile armies, a people with the fruits of prolonged war, ripened into the gloomy harvest of hearts dead with the bullet, as well as hearts heavy with bereavement and broken with anguish, look anxiously, from North and South alike, to this Capital of our continental domain.

“ But there is a pathway of duty luminous with light, and by that light we should walk. It is to guide our steps by the justice of God and the rights of man. It is to anchor our legislation on what the great Commoner of England, John Bright, declares to be the simple but sublime principles on which national questions should be settled—the basis of eternal right. It is to write on our banner those words that will shine brighter than the stars that gem the firmament—‘ liberty, loyalty, and law.’ It is to so make history that posterity will rise up and call us blessed.

“ The Congress which has just passed away has written a record that will be long remembered by the poor and friendless, whom it did not forget. Misrepresented or misunderstood by those who denounced it as enemies, harshly and unjustly criticised by some who should have been its friends, it proved itself more faithful to human progress and liberty than any of its predecessors. The outraged and the oppressed found in these Congressional halls champions and friends. Its key-note of policy was protection to the down-trodden. It quailed not before the mightiest and neglected not the obscurest. It lifted the slave whom the nation had freed up to the full stature of manhood. It placed on our statute-book the Civil Rights’ Act as our national Magna Charta, grander than all the enactments of the American code. And in all the region whose civil governments had been destroyed by a vanquished rebellion, it declared, as a guarantee of defence to the weakest, that the free man’s hand should wield the free man’s ballot, and none but loyal men should govern a land which loyal sacrifices had saved. Taught, too, by inspiration that new wine could not be safely put in old bottles, it proclaimed that there could be no safe or loyal reconstruction on a foundation of unrepentant treason or disloyalty.

“ Fortunate will it be for us if, when we surrender these seats to our successors, we can point to a record which will shine on the historic page like that of the Congress which has just expired. Thrice fortunate if, when we leave this Capitol, our whole national structure shall be permanently restored, resting on the sure foundation-stones of loyalty, unity, liberty, and right.

“ With such convictions of duty I come to this Chair to administer your rules, but not as a partisan. I appeal to you for that generous support by which alone a presiding officer can be sustained, pledging you in return an inflexible impartiality, which shall be proved by my deeds. And invoking on your deliberations the favor of Him who holds the destinies of nations in the hollow of His hand, I am now ready to take the oath of office prescribed by law.”

Congress proceeded to perfect a supplementary reconstruction act. The act of the last Congress declared universal suffrage the principle upon which reorganization should proceed ; this act provided the machinery in detail for reorganizing upon that principle. Both acts recognized President Johnson's State governments "for municipal purposes only." The President appointed Generals Thomas, Ord, Sheridan, Sickles, and Schofield to the command of the five military districts into which the South was divided. About the end of March Congress adjourned to the first Wednesday in July. Maryland was soon afterward recovered by the Southern party through a constitutional convention. Jefferson Davis was released on bail, Mr. Greeley becoming one of his sureties, and thereby incurring a good deal of odium among his old admirers. Mr. Johnson "swung round the Southern arc of the circle," and left the Constitution in the hands of the Southern as well as the Northern people. His Attorney-General, Mr. Stanberry, was delivered of an opinion on the reconstruction acts which led Congress to declare, in its July session, "that the existing provisional State governments are not legal governments," and to put its own and a finally unmistakable construction on the reconstruction legislation. It appointed a committee to investigate the Lincoln assassination conspiracy and a committee to inquire into the cruelties to Union prisoners during the war, and on the 20th of July adjourned to the 21st of November.

With Stevens, Wade, Sumner, and others, the Speaker was serenaded on this adjournment. In response, Mr. Colfax said they had been forced to hold this session against their will. Mr. Johnson had vetoed the reconstruction bills because they made the generals supreme. Said the Speaker :

"We passed them over the vetoes, meaning to make the generals supreme. But when it became apparent that they would be accepted by those States, the President vetoed his own vetoes, promulgating, through his Attorney-General, that the laws made the generals subordinate to the provisional governments. We have returned and declared our meaning

again, and so that it cannot be misunderstood. Some think we have done too much ; some, too little ; I think we have struck the golden mean—firm, yet prudent ; courageous, without undue excitement ; inflexible, and yet wise.”

The charge of military despotism did not alarm him. They were insisting on the policy first announced by the President himself. The Speaker predicted a more overwhelming victory than ever in 1868, both in the North and the South ; for “ the South will acquiesce and return,” said he ; “ each and every man with the ballot guaranteeing his personal liberty in his own right hand.”

In the earlier recess of Congress the Speaker repeated his “ Across the Continent ” lecture, “ with the view,” said the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, “ of obtaining the Presidential nomination, in case it should not be found necessary to nominate General Grant, who will be selected only as a last resort.” “ The popular Speaker is lecturing,” replied the *Toledo Blade*, “ for the one hundred and fifty dollars a night he receives, without which he could not afford to ornament the Speaker’s Chair. To get the Presidential nomination, he has only to authorize his friends to say that he will accept it.” He was received with distinction wherever he appeared ; the best people lavished attentions on him, and flocked to hear him lecture. Ordinarily, he lectured for pay, but he declined pay from relief or charitable societies, especially if they were connected in any way with the soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

At a reception tendered him by the Union League Club of New York, President John Jay said : “ A volume of biography would fail to convey an idea of Mr. Colfax’s character so vivid as that suggested by the fact that he was chosen Speaker successively of the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, and Fortieth Congresses. To them history will accord a glory akin to that which hallows the memory of the

1. “ Mr. Colfax answered our call for lecturers, agreeing to come on the adjournment of Congress and deliver eight lectures, entirely at his own expense. Before Congress adjourned the State took the Home under its care, and then Mr. Colfax turned this benefaction on the G. A. R. He showed me his memorandum-book, containing several pages of cities where he had these engagements, and he filled them.”—*Mr. J. H. Lozier, Agent Indiana Soldiers’ Home.*



Continental Congress of the Revolution." Eloquently commending the great labors of these Congresses, "under which, we trust, the Speaker may presently call the Representatives of every State of a reunited Republic," Mr. Jay offered "to our illustrious guest, personally and officially, our heartfelt congratulations and most cordial welcome."

Answering Mr. Jay, the Speaker rapidly reviewed the history made in the last six years—the suppression of the Rebellion, the abolition of slavery, the reconstruction of the Union on the basis of justice—and complimented his hosts on the service their powerful organization had rendered at every stage of the momentous contest. He eulogized the Thirty-ninth Congress, and spoke hopefully of the growing signs of acquiescence in its terms of restoration. Referring to the Union men of the South, he said :

"When the waves of treason swept over all that region, a faithful few refused to yield to secession. Branded as traitors to the Confederacy, because they would not surrender their birthright, they never swerved from their allegiance. Punished by confiscation and robbery, and threatened with outrage and death, they never faltered; and when they could no longer live peaceably at their homes, they fled to the mountains, the caves, and swamps, and said: 'Welcome confiscation, robbery, exile, or death; we stand by the Stars and Stripes to the last drop of our blood and the last beat of our hearts.' God bless those faithful Union men! They are to lead back these States, clad in new robes of liberty and justice."

At Lansing, Mich., a month later, a constitutional convention being in session, he was invited to a seat on the floor, and introduced by the President of the convention as "one who by his talents and acquirements, his exalted patriotism, his devotion to the public interests, and his sympathy with humanity, has won for himself a proud place in the affections of this nation, and now justly ranks as one of the foremost of American statesmen." In reply, the Speaker disclaimed such high praise, complimented the convention, ventured some suggestions as to the importance of its mission, and assured them that he felt a neighborly interest in their State, since he lived just over their border in Indiana, and had for thirty years.

He sought rest and recreation during the summer, visit

ing the coast of Maine, the Mammoth Cave, in Kentucky, and the Lake Superior region. "Staying in one place," he said, "tends to low spirits."

In August Secretary Stanton having declined to resign at the President's request, the President suspended him from office, appointed General Grant Secretary of War, *ad interim*, and endeavored to use the general to thwart the execution of the reconstruction acts, apparently lacking the nerve to do it himself, and being desirous of embroiling Grant with the friends of Congress. Sheridan and other generals commanding in the South were thus superseded, an amnesty proclamation was issued to strengthen the ex-rebel party, and by the use of the Presidential influence in numberless ways, reconstruction in accordance with law was practically brought to a stand-still ; so that, at the election on the constitution in Alabama in February following, the ex-rebels neither voted nor permitted the Union men to vote, and the constitution was rejected.

Mr. Colfax engaged in the fall canvass with his full energies, speaking to great crowds in many States. Colonel Forney writes him : "I cannot too heartily express my admiration at the tone of your speeches and the boldness of your opinions. Congress will meet surrounded by the great expectations of the people for bold action." At Wooster, O., the Speaker was reported as saying that he counted the days till Congress should meet, because Stanton would then go back to the War Department, and the President would be required by the House to defend himself from charges of "persistent usurpations and violations of his oath to execute the laws." October 23d he spoke at Cooper Institute, New York City. "He was greeted by one of the largest and most distinguished audiences ever assembled in the building," said the *New York Tribune*, "and his response to their greeting was one of his finest achievements." His speech was an eloquent defence of his party, its record, its position, and intentions. He began :

"I come before you to-night from my distant home to vindicate and defend the principles and the policy of that noble Union-Republican

organization, which alone, of all other parties in this broad land, from the hour that the first gun was fired on Sumter until the last rebel sword flashed before Richmond, never despaired of the American Republic. [Applause.] Its past is crowned with the glory of having saved this Union from the menaces of the sword of treason. I know that the unfaltering heroism of our soldiers on every battle-field upon the land, and of our sailors on every wave-rocked monitor and frigate upon the sea, gave to us our victories, lifting us from every valley of disaster and reverse, and planting our feet on the sun-crowned heights of victory. [Applause.] But it was the action of the Union-Republican Party in the Congress of the United States that placed that army in the field. It was organized by law, it was armed and equipped by law, it was fed and clothed by law, it was re-enforced by law ; and when the time came that this party had to meet, in the face of the defeats of 1862, the odium of tax-laws, that the banner might be kept flying in the field, and the draft-laws, that our ranks might be kept full, we went forward faithfully and fearlessly, defying all prejudice, and placed those laws upon our statute-books, that through them the country might live, and not die. [Applause.]”

They could not obtain indemnity for the past, he said ; “ the soldiers of the Union sleep the sleep that knows no waking ;” but they had the power to demand security for the future, “ and that, God helping us, we intend to have, not only in legislation, but imbedded in the imperishable bulwarks of the national Constitution, against which the waves of secession may dash in the future, but in vain.” No party in the country had so longed and labored for peace as this Union-Republican Party. “ We are anxious to end this turmoil ; we are anxious to have reconstruction an accomplished fact ; we are anxious to welcome back the old States around the council-table of the nation ; but we are anxious to have it done on right terms, on just terms, on terms under which every Union man throughout the entire South, from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, can stand up and say he loves the flag and loves the Union, without fear, reproach, dishonor, or ostracism ; and we will take no less.”

The first session of the Thirty-ninth Congress proposed as the basis of restoration the adoption of a constitutional amendment, “ a bond of public justice and of public safety combined, to be embodied in our national Constitution,

to show to our posterity that patriotism was a virtue and rebellion a crime. It was scouted, kicked out of every Legislature in every State of the South which had been reconstructed under the unwise policy of Andrew Johnson." They were then obliged to devise some other plan, and at the second session of the same Congress "we made the basis of our reconstruction, first, every loyal man in the South, and then we gave the ballot to every man who had only been a rebel, who had not added to treason the crime of perjury." This also they rejected. "They said they would not register at all, and if they did register, they would vote against holding conventions. They can do as they please. Upon them rests the responsibility, not upon us. They may vote down reconstruction in three States—Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas—and when they do it, we shall, as Providence, perhaps, intended, at the Presidential election have the sharp, direct issue before the people of the country, 'Will you have rebel governments in these States, or will you have governments resting on the great mass of the people?' and I am not afraid of the decision."

He discussed the acts of the President, denouncing them as usurpations. Congress had declared that no legal governments exist in the South. Mr. Johnson's amnesty proclamation expressly declared the contrary. Congress had temporarily disfranchised certain classes of rebels. Yet in the teeth of that action the President assumed to amnesty them. Reciting the Presidential oath prescribed by the Constitution, "Who will say that Andrew Johnson has faithfully kept that oath?" he asked. "He would hardly say so himself. There has been a good deal of misrepresentation of what I said in Ohio," he continued. "I will say again exactly what I said there. I do not intend to take back my words. I said that when Congress assembled again, if they find that the laws cannot be executed, that the President will not execute them, but, on the contrary, uses his executive power to resist the laws of Congress, and to keep the country in turmoil, then I said that there was only one resort, and our fathers put upon us the responsibility of that resort." (Great cheering. A

voice—"Impeach him.") He denounced the suspension of Secretary Stanton, the removal of Sheridan and Sickles. "James Madison says: 'Wanton removal of meritorious officers would subject the President to impeachment and removal from his own high trust.'" Alluding to the reported organization of troops in Maryland and the threats with reference to Congress published in the President's organs, he said:

"I do not believe there is any one who dare execute these threats that I have read to you from these organs of the President of the United States; but this I did say in Ohio, that if any one in this broad land by revolutionary force destroys the Congress of the United States, overthrows the law-making power of this country, and drives it from its halls by illegal military power—I care not who that man is, be he high or low, if we have a country, he will afterward be tried as a traitor, he will die a traitor's death, and fill a traitor's grave. [Immense applause.] I have no fear of any such thing. I use no threats; I am not in the habit of doing it; but I utter that prediction, knowing, as I believe, the will of the people, and what their own hearts and consciences would demand. There has been one rebellion; that is only remembered in broken hearts and crowded graveyards; weeds of mourning and vacant chairs in every household; weary crutches, empty sleeves, pallid faces, wasted frames; a heavy debt and taxes; but if there is to be another rebellion after this—if the law-making power, which is the people speaking through their Senators and Representatives, is to be trampled under foot by revolutionary force, I believe in my heart there will be some example made to go down into American history as a warning, that no man hereafter shall gamble with the peace of this country and lose nothing by the stake."

He ended as he began:

"I turn gladly from this dark picture I have painted of the usurpations of your President and the recreancy of those who call themselves the Democratic Party to that party we love in our heart of hearts. Oh, my friends, its victories are enshrined in our history! You must tear out from the annals of our country its brightest pages before posterity shall forget the victories and the bright deeds of this noble party, of which you and I are part and parcel."

The full history of this critical year has yet to be written. It is plain, however, from the fulminations of the Johnson press, the organization of the Maryland militia, and the President's open machinations to circumvent Congress and sustain his own policy of reconstruction, that the

country narrowly escaped a very serious peril. The project of assembling Mr. Johnson's Southern Senators and Representatives and his adherents in Congress, declaring *them* the Congress of the United States, and supporting the declaration by force of arms, and thus consummating, if possible, a revolution in the interest of the ex-Confederates, was seriously contemplated and discussed by the President. Doubtless it ended in discussion only for lack of the unqualified adherence to the President of General Grant. At one time, when Grant accepted the War Office, and superseded Sheridan at New Orleans by Hancock, it looked as though he had determined to side with the President against Congress. Journals like the *New York Tribune* took that view of his action, and questioned it accordingly.<sup>1</sup> But when Congress asserted itself, or rather asserted the law, the general abandoned the President, and what followed destroyed the President's remaining power for mischief.

The fall elections in the great central States showed a more considerable reaction against the Unionists than any election since 1862. It was an "off-year," and people's feelings, like the tides, ebb and flow. The taxes were severely felt, and the appropriations were still reminiscent of war times. Secretary McCulloch was steadily contracting the currency by retiring the legal-tender notes, and the Democratic leaders had the *finesse* to make the Republicans appear responsible for it, and for the stealing of ninety per cent of the two-dollar gallon-tax on spirits, although the Administration had long since become completely Tylerized. There was delay in reconstruction and in voting the soldiers' bounties; and the constitutional amendment involving negro suffrage, good enough for the rebel States, was a distasteful dose to some of the loyal States. The people had been left behind by their Congress. The opposition, on the other hand, were alive at every point, and,

1. Grant's letter of August 17th to Johnson, written at Johnson's request for suggestions with reference to the reassignment of the generals in command in the South, was published August 27th. This letter satisfied the *Tribune*, which, since the 15th, had questioned General Grant's position and intentions.

encouraged by Mr. Johnson's success in obstruction, were making a last desperate effort to defeat Congressional reconstruction, which threatened to give the South to the Republicans forever. As a master inducement to voters, they proposed to cancel the national debt by the issue of an ocean of greenbacks, thus saving the interest on the bonds, and subjecting the money in them to taxation.

During the summer many newspapers in all parts of the country and some county conventions in Mr. Colfax's district signified their preference for him for President. The following is representative of all of them :

" There is one man, however, on whom the eyes of Republicans have for some time been turned with intense interest, and that interest increases every day the more his character and his actions have been scrutinized. This man is Schuyler Colfax, of Indiana. As a Congressman and Speaker of the House he has made his mark at once so palpably that none can fail to see it. There is a freshness of outspoken honesty, of principle, and love of the Union about him, which has drawn the hearts of hosts of Union men toward him. His head is clear and his heart is sound, and he consecrates the powers of the one and the impulses of the other toward the one great object—the securing the legitimate results of the victory of the Union over rebellion.

" As Speaker of the House he has proved that he is possessed of executive ability of the highest order, and in all other respects he presents himself before the country as one on whom the mantle of Lincoln has fallen. For masterly summing up of the issues of the day, his various short speeches which have been published have never been surpassed. Terse, pointed, yet never bitter, but with a vein of kind feeling for his opponents in error, they continually remind us of Abraham Lincoln.

" The Republican Party can trust, with unlimited confidence, Schuyler Colfax to maintain their principles in all their integrity at all hazards and under all circumstances. Faithlessness to that freedom which he loves with so great a love, and into the vindication of which from his first entrance into public life he has thrown all his heart and soul with all the vigor peculiarly characteristic of his nature, is impossible with Schuyler Colfax. Contemplating his whole public course, we think that all, even his political opponents, must feel instinctively that he would make a *good* President. In that word *good* is summed up what the nation needs in a President, what it lost in the death of Lincoln, but would again recover with Schuyler Colfax in the Presidential Chair." <sup>1</sup>

But when Mr. Colfax returned home from the fall can-

1. Republished from the *Yonkers Statesman* in the *New York Tribune* of August 27th, 1867.

vass, none knew so well as he that the people had already awarded the next Presidency to General Grant. He had seen it in fifty audiences between the Mississippi and the Hudson. Earlier there had been misgivings. The general was known to have been formerly a Democrat, he had had no political training or experience, and many doubted whether his sympathies were with the President or with Congress. Indeed, it was the Johnson men in New York who first formally proposed him for the great office. He was reticent beyond all other men, but was understood to be indisposed to give up his life office at the head of the army, even for the Presidency. He had the prestige of the successful soldier. But for his capacity as a soldier, it is extremely doubtful if the Rebellion could have been suppressed at all. Although millions had been equally as devoted and faithful, to the conqueror of Lee, after all, the Union owed its preservation ; because without his leadership the devotion and sacrifices of all the rest would have been unavailing. The times were still unsettled, turbulent ; the South, encouraged by the President and a great part of the North, almost in the temper for another outbreak. General Grant would, at least, keep the peace. He soon declined to be the President's tool as Secretary of War, and Johnson thereupon charged him with breaking his word. He wrote the President that he regarded " the whole matter as an attempt to involve me in resistance of law, for which you hesitated to assume the responsibility, in order to destroy my character before the country." This was all, perhaps more than all that was needed to make him the irrevocable choice of Republicans for the Chief Magistracy. Mr. Colfax caught all this from his audiences, and after the canvass of that fall he never again thought of his own elevation to the Presidency as a possibility.

Before leaving for Washington he delivered his lecture " Across the Continent " for the benefit of the Grand Army Post at South Bend, saying at the close that it would never be repeated. His other duties had become too engrossing, and he ceased lecturing for some years.



Upon the meeting of Congress, November 21st, the standing committees were announced. General Schenck was appointed Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Justin S. Morrill having been translated to the Senate. Of this the Speaker writes Sinclair :

"I was sorry to disappoint Garfield, whom I love, and who had set his heart on being Chairman of Ways and Means. But he was below Hooper on the committee, and to jump Hooper with one lower would have insulted him. I had an idea of settling the difficulty by taking Shellabarger, but when his health failed last summer I turned toward Schenck, who was in Congress years ago, a great worker, and one of our ablest debaters. It surprised him, as it did the House, but fifty members have told me I hit it just right. Garfield is Chairman of Military Affairs, which for his third term is better than I got at that stage, but is disappointed. In spite of what the correspondents say, there was never less discontent with the committees, nearly all acknowledging, even the disappointed ones, that they are wisely and very strongly made."

Mr. Greeley writes him : "I think your committees are very skilfully made up." He tells Sinclair that "we have settled down to housekeeping [No. 7 Lafayette Square] as cosily as possible, and find the house more comfortable than we expected. We shall have no dinner parties, but plain family ones, as I have no charming young wife to preside. And *without wine*—won't that be odd here?" A story is told of two gentlemen calling at Governor Morgan's, where the National Republican Committee were enjoying a wine supper. "Take away your thin potations, Morgan, and let us have something to drink," said one of them. "Why, gentlemen, you must have been dining with Mr. Speaker Colfax," was the Governor's reply. But Colfax's style of hospitality is the coming style, while Morgan's is destined to pass away. With every fleeting year the people who "dare not drink" increase in number.<sup>1</sup>

The President's message argued the unconstitutionality and the failure of Congressional reconstruction. He denounced the Tenure-of-Office Act, and generally assailed the action of Congress. The House Judiciary Committee

1. "WHO DARES ?—At a dinner party in New York, where illustrious American and foreign statesmen were seated around the table, Mr. Colfax, then a Senator, declined to take wine; whereupon a friend exclaimed, half-jestingly: 'Colfax *dare* not drink!' 'You are right,' was the noble answer; 'I dare not drink.'"—*English Paper*.

made majority and minority reports on the impeachment of Mr. Johnson, and while the country grew excited about it, the House, on the 8th of December, voted impeachment down, 108 to 57, so loath were the majority to proceed to that extremity, and so anxious to legislate on many other subjects which required attention. On the same day the House adopted a resolution, by a vote of 112 to 32, to adhere to the reconstruction acts. With reference to this, the Speaker wrote to Mr. Conway, of New Orleans :

“ You need not fear that Congress will take any backward steps in reconstruction. We have staked our political existence on the principle that the States lately in rebellion shall be organized on the enduring corner-stones of loyalty and justice. While I do not believe in confiscation, or anything looking like revenge, and while I hope to see suffrage as universal as safety to the cause of loyalty will permit, and the restored States guaranteeing education to all, I would not modify the terms of reconstruction in any essential feature one hair's-breadth.”

Congress passed still another supplementary reconstruction bill, this time placing the execution of the law in the hands of the General of the Army. The Senate vindicated Secretary Stanton, and General Grant surrendered to him the War Office. Mr. Johnson then undertook to carry out his purposes through the General of the Army, independently of, and, indeed, in opposition to, the Secretary of War. General Grant proving altogether intractable in this undertaking, the President nominated Sherman Brevet-General, with the view of having him arrest Grant for disobedience of orders. General Sherman declined any honor that would affect injuriously the reputation of his friend Grant. General George H. Thomas was then tempted in like manner by the President. He notified the Senate by letter that he hoped he would not be confirmed.

Baffled in securing a general of high rank subservient to his purposes, the President, on the 21st of February, issued an order removing Stanton, and directing Adjutant-General Lorenzo Thomas to take charge of the War Office. The Senate immediately went into executive session, and voted the President's action illegal, 25 to 6, notifying the President, General Lorenzo Thomas, and Secretary Stan-

ton of this their action. General Thomas proposed to take possession of the office, nevertheless, by force, but was arrested under the Tenure-of-Office law, on complaint of Stanton, and immediately admitted to bail. He did not renew his attempt to take possession of the War Office, but it was plain at last to every one that a crisis had come. People who had for two years protested against impeachment now said : "Impeach !" On the 24th of February, 1868, the House resolved, 126 to 47, the Speaker voting aye, "that Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanors in office." In his last desperate move, the President disclaimed any other intent than to have the constitutionality of the Tenure-of-Office law tested.

His formal impeachment and trial followed, occupying public attention about three months. Not since the assassination of Lincoln had there been so great excitement. But there was a feeling of relief that some definite result was at last promised. "Let us have peace." The trial was conducted with the utmost decorum and impartiality, no one at first having any doubt of its result. In declining an invitation to attend the opening of the new club house of the Union League Club in New York, the Speaker wrote :

"Without the slightest attempt at party concentration, the Republican Representatives voted, as one man, that the issue the President seemed determined to force upon them should be met. In that Senate Chamber where Andrew Johnson was inaugurated Vice-President, from which, alas ! an assassin's bullet elevated him to the Presidency, the greatest of American trials progresses, day by day. Amid the sharp encounters of the able lawyers there arrayed against each other, I can never forget that solemn Presidential oath, by which, in the peculiar language of the Constitution, the Chief Magistrate swears that 'he will *take care* that the laws be faithfully executed ;' and side by side with that oath, memory constantly arrays the Presidential acts of the last two years. While not presuming to discuss the question with Senators, whose oaths bind them to administer impartial justice, I have not been willing to doubt the result. His conviction ends the incessant resistance to law, which revived the rebel spirit of the South, with its mournful record of riot, public massacre, and private assassination, and which has kept the whole country in turmoil and discord. His acquittal indorses all his claims of power for the

remainder of his Presidential term, claims imperilling the well-being of the country ; and I believe the impartial justice of the Senate will save the Republic from such a calamity."

The President escaped conviction by one vote, seven Republican Senators voting against it, one or two of them at least under grave suspicion. To all of them the Republican Party said : " Be no more Senators of mine ! " The object sought, however, had been attained. Impeachment of the President had been discussed for two years, considered by committees, reported on, postponed, voted down, voted up. When it was finally determined on, that action, by all reasonable calculation, involved the certainty of conviction. The South evidently so regarded it, for it acted on that conclusion. So that when the Senate voted on the eleventh article, and it was lost by one vote, and afterward on articles one and two, and they were lost, and the high court of impeachment adjourned *sine die*, six of the rebel States had accepted the terms of Congress. A month later they were admitted by a bill passed over the veto in both Houses, 30 to 8 in the Senate, 105 to 30 in the House. All the good that could have accrued from the President's deposition was thus secured, and the possible harm avoided.

The Republicans had meanwhile nominated Grant and Colfax for President and Vice-President, nominations which were regarded as equivalent to elections. The altercations and ill-feeling growing out of the impeachment proceedings were soon alleviated, if not altogether removed. The clouds that had gathered broke away, and the skies brightened in every quarter. As in 1866, there was no middle party, and no chance of one. The contest was appealed to the people, but with the advantage on the part of the Republicans that their work was mainly accomplished. There was no object in further factious resistance to the will of Congress.

Left in the main to the poor and ignorant for support, the reconstructed State governments had much to contend with ; but they placed the principles of free institutions in their organic laws, and were enabled to hold them there

until all thought of changing them was substantially outgrown or rendered futile ; and although the fact may not as yet altogether conform to the law, the natural tendency is and must be in that direction. These governments subsisted, of course, only through the support of the President. Had Horatio Seymour instead of Ulysses S. Grant been elected President in 1868, there would have been a counter-revolution in the South ; or if not this, a truce patched up that sooner or later would have broken down and again precipitated war.

There is no more doubt of the wisdom than of the justice of the Republicans in these great matters. They did what they ought to have done. They did it as they should have done it. They did nothing they ought not to have done. They ought to have resisted the extension of slavery ; they ought to have defended the integrity of the Union ; they ought to have abolished slavery and secured the personal liberty of the emancipated slaves. These things they did. They ought not to have executed any one for treason ; they ought not to have reinstated certain classes of forsworn traitors in their forfeited political rights ; they ought not to have excluded the great mass of ex-rebels from participation in the reconstruction of their prostrate States ; and these things they did not. The evils charged to their policy were inherent in the conditions, and for these they were not responsible. Had they been met in their own spirit by the ruling class of the South, most of these evils would have been avoided. As the years pass the men of those times will be more and more seen and acknowledged to have played their part as worthily as did their fathers in the English and American revolutions.

There was a general desire in Indiana to nominate Mr. Colfax for Governor. In answer to many, he wrote Mr. Harvey, of Indianapolis, declining to be considered a candidate. He believed it to be his duty to serve out his term as Speaker. Referring to national politics, he said that Congress would reduce taxation, stop contraction, retrench in expenditures, see that the taxes were honestly collected and returned, and provide for the protection of every

American citizen. He aimed, by citing former partings of the political clouds, to dissipate "the hopeful boastings of our opponents." On the eve of the assembling of the State Convention, February 20th, he wrote more at length to Governor Baker, reciting the successes of the Union-Republican Party against steady and bitter Democratic opposition. "And the President," said he, "now in full sympathy with the Democratic Party, which opposed his election, stands self-convicted of having striven to induce the General of our Army to defy a law he did not himself dare to resist. The heart of the country turns toward the single-hearted and illustrious officer, bitterly denounced as he has been, with more affection than ever, longing for the hour when it can call him to the high place honored by the father of the country that our greatest soldier saved."

The State Convention of Indiana signified its choice of Ulysses S. Grant for the Presidency and of Schuyler Colfax for the Vice-Presidency, "with the wildest cheers, the convention rising to a vote." Since General Grant had become the settled choice of the people for President, many newspaper writers had been urging Mr. Colfax for Vice-President. The following appeared in the Washington correspondence of the *New York Independent* :

"As a presiding officer, Mr. Colfax has probably no equal in this country or Europe. As a politician he seems to have made, thus far, no mistakes. His course has always been true, noble, and straightforward, and his popularity seems to be unbounded. He flies too high to be hit by any shot, and if nominated for either of the two highest offices in the gift of the nation, he will go through the conflict, it is believed, unscathed, a triumphant victor."

To a gentleman who wrote him of the personal preference for him in New Jersey, the Speaker replied :

"At Chicago the first question above all others should be, Who will most strengthen the Grant ticket in the doubtful States—the real battle-field? If the answer selects another, I shall say Amen with all my heart, for with me all personal considerations are subordinate to the cause we love. If I should be nominated, I should regard it as a high honor, and should be especially proud of the vote of New Jersey, because it is the home of my ancestry."

When the Republican Convention met in Chicago, May

21st, 1868, the nomination for the Vice-Presidency was the great prize to be awarded, as the convention had merely to ratify the choice of the people for the Presidency. The second office had been much magnified in importance by the trouble with Mr. Johnson. No one was seriously thought of who would not have graced the first place. Accordingly, the nomination for Vice-President was more strenuously sought by the friends of distinguished statesmen than at any previous convention. Among the candidates were Benjamin F. Wade, Reuben E. Fenton, Henry Wilson, Hannibal Hamlin, and Andrew G. Curtin, and the delegates had been selected at a time when it was supposed that Mr. Wade, as President of the Senate, would succeed to the Presidency, through the deposition of President Johnson. The supporters of Fenton, of Wade, and of Wilson were numerous, well organized, and early on the ground. Mr. Colfax's supporters, outside of Indiana, were scattered and but imperfectly organized. Since General Grant was from Illinois, the geographical argument was against Mr. Colfax. Under the circumstances, he could hardly have entertained high hopes of the nomination, nor did he.

Senator Henry S. Lane, of Indiana, placed him in nomination in the National Convention, saying: "He is from Indiana, near to our homes, near to our hearts. We know him, we love him, the people are united for him, there is but one voice. Although his residence is in Indiana, his fame is co-extensive with the whole country. He is a young man, representing the religious and moral sentiment of the commonwealth, and to a great extent a tried and true leader, no doubtful man." Mr. Cortlandt Parker, of New Jersey, seconded his nomination as "the candidate of the young men, loved by them, possessing all the charms of heart and the distinctions of mind of the true patriot." Mr. S. M. Cutcheon, of Michigan, also seconded the nomination. "We esteem him as true to principle as the needle to the pole. We trust him, we love him, we have watched him—he lives just over our border; in the State of Michigan his name is all-powerful."

Following are the ballots :

	1st.	2d.	3d.	4th.	5th.
Benjamin F. Wade.....	149	170	178	204	199
Reuben E. Fenton.....	132	140	130	144	137
Henry Wilson.....	119	113	101	87	61
Schuyler Colfax .....	118	149	164	186	224
Andrew G. Curtin.....	52	45	30		
Hannibal Hamlin.....	30	30	25	25	19
James Speed.....	22				
James Harlan.....	16				
J. A. J. Creswell.....	14				
William D. Kelley.....	6				

Before the fifth ballot was announced General G. M. Dodge, chairman of the Iowa delegation, got the floor, withdrew three or four of Iowa's votes from Fenton, and cast the vote of Iowa solid for Colfax. Instantly Colonel Alexander K. McClure's voice was heard—"Pennsylvania asks to change her vote ; she casts her 62 votes for Schuyler Colfax." The Indiana delegation cheered until their throats gave out. The galleries heightened and prolonged the tumult, while delegations vied with one another in changing off for the coming man. After he had thus received 522 votes, Fenton still having 75, Wade 42, and Wilson 11, on motion of the friends of Fenton, seconded by the friends of Wade, his nomination was made unanimous. The reporter of the *New York Tribune* wrote :

"The result of the contest is a surprise to almost every one. Colfax's friends had not been working with as much noise and zeal as was expected of them. Both last night and this morning it was conceded by almost every one that the contest was really between Fenton and Wade, and when the first ballot was taken the impression was unchanged ; but if the majority of the delegates were not for him, the masses who were looking on were. Every time his name was mentioned the enthusiasm was greater than for any other candidate, and this did as much as anything to effect the result."

Mr. Colfax wrote the Rev. Dr. Eddy, July 5th :

"I told Bishop Janes that the meeting of the Conference [Methodist-Episcopal, two hundred and thirty delegates, representing eight thousand clergymen] at Chicago, at the same time with the National Convention, was one of the fortunate things for me with which my whole life is filled, and but for that I would not have been nominated. He seemed pleased



at the acknowledgment, and said he thought so too ; that the leading members were a unit for me, and said so wherever it was proper. I miss you from the *Advocate*, but I think your decision is wise, just as after three terms as Speaker, I made up my mind, whether the Vice-Presidency was or was not higher or more influential, it was well to try another field."

Outside of Indiana Mr. Colfax's strength was mainly in Michigan, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Vermont. He was the second choice of Massachusetts, and the first choice of a few strong men in different delegations—California, Illinois, Iowa, and more markedly in Ohio and Pennsylvania, where their stand for him was very important. Had Ohio remained solid for Mr. Wade, he might have won the prize. It was not Wade, however ; it was Fenton whom the politicians had determined to nominate.<sup>1</sup>

The news was received at South Bend with bells and bonfires, bands and speeches, and "the people turned out in mass to hear the dearest wishes of their hearts confirmed," Democrats joining with Republicans in these spontaneous demonstrations of pleasure at the success of their townsman.

General Grant said : "Well, Colfax is the most popular man in the country, and the only thing the Democrats can accuse him of is that he is a Republican."

The Speaker's mother said : "He was my candidate, and I thought all the time he would be nominated."

Acting Vice-President Wade said : "I guess it will be all right ; he deserves it, and he is a good presiding officer."

Governor Fenton telegraphed : "I congratulate you upon your nomination, and General Grant on having an associate so worthy to share with him the cordial support of the people."

Thaddeus Stevens wrote from his sick-bed : "I must congratulate you in *writing*, if congratulations are needed between us. I was for Wade, as he will be left in the

1. Senator Henry S. Lane writes him of the inside workings at the convention : "Our whole delegation worked for your nomination honestly, earnestly, and, I am rejoiced to say, effectively. In this we were most ably seconded by our old friend John D. Defrees. No man at Chicago did more for your nomination than he did ; none, perhaps, so much."

cold, and not for any personal preference. You must take care of him when I am dead and gone, which I doubt not the party will do." Within three months Thaddeus Stevens was dead.

The candidate for the Vice-Presidency received hundreds of congratulatory letters and dispatches. Of his praises in the newspapers, there was no end. "It is a noble, glorious ticket," said the *New York Tribune*. "Since the days of Washington and Adams we have had none more worthy of the overwhelming unanimous support of the American people without distinction as to party." The *New York Herald* said: "The Chicago Convention could not have chosen a better ticket. Colfax gives that positive strength and consistency to the ticket which makes it a unit, and expands the circle of its influence." The choice of the convention was universally hailed with delight and enthusiasm by Republicans; it was acknowledged to be most happy by the opposition. Grant, the great soldier; Colfax, the accomplished statesman; both simple-hearted and high-minded; both administrators; both incapable of breach of trust; both in sympathy with the loyal people; both popular beyond parallel from services to the commonwealth.

With his friends around him, Colfax received dispatches from the convention at the Speaker's room in the Capitol. When his selection was finally announced, he was overwhelmed with congratulations, Republicans and Democrats, Wilson and Wade men joining, and the room rang with cheers again and again. He immediately sent the dispatch to his mother on Lafayette Square. As he left the room the employés in the building gathered around him, and in the most affectionate manner tendered their felicitations. In the Capitol grounds people who knew his sunny face, but who had never spoken to him before, stopped him for a hand-shake and the privilege of telling him how glad they were. His progress up Pennsylvania Avenue was an ovation participated in by everybody.

A few days later, at the residence of General Grant, General Joseph R. Hawley, in the name of the convention,

formally presented the nominations to the distinguished gentlemen. "Cordially agreeing with the convention," said Colfax, when it came his turn to respond, "I accept the nomination with which I have been honored." At an earlier hour in the same day he had accepted a nomination to the same office by a convention of soldiers and sailors. Serenaded, he said of Grant: "Brave, modest, firm, speaking by deeds, his name is the synonym of victory;" and of the Republican Party, "History records that our organization saved a nation and emancipated a race. On our banner is inscribed, 'Liberty and Loyalty, Justice and Public Safety.'" In his letter of acceptance he commented with force and eloquence on the wisdom and strength of the principles announced in the Republican platform.

Congress adjourned on the 30th of July. The Speaker's reception on his return home outdid all previous receptions, effusive as these had always been. Escorted by the Chicago Ninth Ward Tanners, by clubs, bands, and committees, his train of twenty-five crowded cars entered South Bend to find its streets thronged by thousands of his townsmen and his country constituents, flags and streamers decorating nearly every house, bands playing, bells ringing, and whistles screaming. Welcomed home in due form by Mayor Humphreys, he replied at length, touching politics lightly, but dwelling fondly and long on his always happy relations with his constituents. He talked of times past in a charming manner. Later in the day there was a variety of political speaking, the Speaker taking his turn. Said he: "If treason again lifts its head, bringing anarchy and civil war in its train, it will not be the fault of the Republican Party. It stands by liberty, by justice, and we are to win this fight as we did in 1860, because we are right." The day closed with a pole-raising, a torch-light procession, and more speaking in the Court House.

The echoes of this home festivity had hardly died away when Mr. Colfax left South Bend for the mountains of Colorado, with the following party—namely, his mother, Sister Carrie, and stepfather; Miss Sue Matthews, Miss

Nellie Wade, ex-Lieutenant-Governor Bross, Sam Bowles and daughter, and the Speaker's Secretary, Will Todd. Candidate for so high an office, it did not comport with his ideas of propriety to engage with his usual activity in the canvass, and, besides, he needed a vacation. The trip had to be made in part by stage, and had not yet lost the charm of novelty. They first went to the end of the Union Pacific track, then just turning the crest of the continent. Returning to Cheyenne, a day and a night by stage brought them to Denver. After a few days' rest they prepared for camping, and in company with Mr. and Mrs. Witter, Governor Hunt, and others, making the party about twenty in number, they undertook the tour of the parks. These parks are elevated plains, at that time solitudes, accessible only by private conveyance. The weather in August and September is perfect—days without clouds, nights without dew, no sudden changes of temperature, air invigorating, no pests of any sort. Then, perhaps, the pleasantest haunt in the world for the camper, the railway has since made the whole region as commonplace as the old overland emigrant trail.

Nothing occurred to mar the enjoyment of the Speaker's party, save one night spent under the stress of an Indian scare. It proved a false alarm, but it brought together a squad of mounted miners, who, with some friendly Ute chiefs, escorted them several days on their return trip from those mountain mirrors—the Twin Lakes. Climbing up into the South Park from the Arkansas River by way of Trout Creek, they lingered and looked back again and again. There could be no more fascinating view; the eye is never weary of the ocean nor of the magnificent towers of the Sawatch. Then through the South Park itself, purple hills away to the right, and the ancient mountains on the left, out across the Kenosha Summit, down the Platte, over the foot-hills, and back to Denver.

Toward the end of September Mr. Colfax was at home again, and "the gossips are at last right," said Mr. Bowles's newspaper, "in making a matrimonial connection for the Speaker. He is engaged to Miss Nellie Wade,

a niece of Senator Wade, of Ohio. She is a sweet, sensible, accomplished lady, an Ohio farmer's daughter, quite worthy of the place she is destined to take. Her father, brother of the Senator, died several years ago, and she spent part of a winter in Washington two years since, when the acquaintance began with Mr. Colfax and his family, which has ripened into this interesting relationship. The Rocky Mountains whispered the sweet secret to the world, and congratulations are echoed back from all quarters to both parties." <sup>1</sup>

In October Mr. Colfax actively engaged in the canvass, making his first speech at Lafayette to twenty thousand

1. A TALE OF TWO WEDDING RINGS : Three or four months before he died Colfax wrote from Denver to his friend Mr. Phoebus, of Old Point Comfort : " Did I ever tell you that a miner, who heard of our engagement on our mountain trip—a party of twenty of us—sent me the gold he had washed out with his rocker that very day, and asked me to have Mrs. Colfax's wedding ring made out of it, as it is ?"

Miss Wade accompanied the Speaker's party on the invitation of Miss Carrie Matthews, the Speaker having authorized her to invite a friend. Miss Wade wrote Miss Matthews, July 12th, as follows : " But before I forget it I want to tell you a singular dream I had about you one night last week. I dreamed that you and I were sitting in an upper window of an old and very high mill. A clear and beautiful stream of water flowed by, and we were admiring the flashes of sunlight upon it, when all at once you glanced down on a plat of grass there was between the river and the mill, and exclaimed, ' O Nellie, I see my old precious, precious ring down there !' and immediately started for it. When you got down, you stooped and picked it up and put it on your finger. It was an opal, and very beautiful. There were some other rings lying on the grass, and you said, carelessly, to me : ' Get you one, Nellie.' Wasn't it strange ? But what a goose I am to tell you of my dream ! I had better talk about our travelling dresses."

On the 4th of this July the author, then editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, and a stranger to both of the ladies, started from Denver for the South Park with a gentleman named Newlin to inspect a mine, and was returned to Denver by the 11th. While in the park Mr. Newlin gave him a tiny vial of gold-dust he had washed out of a grassy bar on the platte at Fairplay, which lies under the eye from Mount Lincoln. Note that this was the " last week " of Miss Wade's dream.

In August the Speaker and his party were in the park, and on the top of Mount Lincoln, and there he and Miss Wade pledged their troth. The gold-dust the miner gave him—out of which Mrs. Colfax's wedding ring was made—was rocked out of the same grassy bar on the platte at Fairplay, under Mount Lincoln, and the miner was Mr. Newlin.

But Miss Matthews had already secured her ring. When the party left Denver for the park the author accompanied them the first day out. On that day he and Miss Matthews became engaged, and with no knowledge of Miss Wade's dream, or of where her wedding ring was to come from, he had Mrs. Hollister's wedding ring made of the Fairplay gold-dust given him by Newlin. So the two ladies found their rings on the same grass-plat under the high old mill, in accordance with the dream.

Miss Matthews had been a member of the Speaker's family for several years. When, a few months later, she was married, the Speaker gave her five thousand dollars, saying it was one tenth of what he was worth. A third wedding came of the trip—that of Miss Sue Matthews and Mr. Frank Hall, of Denver, then Secretary of Colorado Territory.

people. He was met at the depôt and escorted to the stand by a procession numbering thousands—largely “ Fighting Boys in Blue ” in their gay uniforms—which kept up a steady round of cheering. Nearly every building in the town was decorated, the ladies waved handkerchiefs from the windows, and the bands played national airs. It was a gala day, and there were many such this fall. The popular candidate for the Vice-Presidency was serenaded wherever he went, called on for speeches at places of amusement, called out of the cars at stations on the railroads. To him the canvass, and all his movements after his nomination, were made one continuous ovation. But also, everywhere, the giants of discussion and debate were in the field, and the people seemed to have abandoned all else to listen to them. Withal the Republicans barely carried Indiana on the 8th, losing several Congressmen in this and the other October States. The speaking and the outpouring of the people to hear it went on growing in volume. The gathering of the 12th at South Bend was the largest ever seen in Northern Indiana. Every species of demonstration known to popular electioneering was made the most of. Acres upon acres of people assembled in town after town all over Indiana, Ohio, and, indeed, all the States, to listen to the Speaker and many capable and distinguished party leaders. Speaking at Detroit, and going thence next day to Niles, Mich., Mr. Colfax was called out at stations, and spoke twenty-one times.

On the eve of the election he spoke at New Carlisle, where seven thousand people had assembled. This must have been a proud moment to him. Here he had alighted from an emigrant wagon thirty-two years before, dependent on himself for his place in the world. The friends he made here in his youth must also have been proud. He alluded, says the reporter, to New Carlisle as the home of his young days, saying he retained a fondness for it still, and always should ; and then for two hours discussed the issues of the canvass, evoking almost continuous applause.

The night of election-day South Bend Republicans held a watch meeting at the Court House, the Speaker

sending them bulletins from the telegraph office. At eleven o'clock he visited the meeting, and was handed over the heads of the crowd to the stand, where, when they wearied of cheering, he made them a brief stirring speech, and then returned to his post in the telegraph office, the meeting breaking up toward morning.

Next evening there was a fine display of fireworks, bonfires, procession, music—every demonstration of rejoicing. The triumph of the Republicans was overwhelming: they had elected two thirds of Congress and of the Presidential Electors. From the Speaker's arrival home, three months since, South Bend had been in a state of mild delirium. His county returned 824 majority for Grant and Colfax; his district, now the eleventh, and shorn of six counties, 2000 majority for General Jasper Packard, his successor. The second rebellion was over. It was, in truth, in many respects, a repetition of the victory which culminated at Appomattox.

Congress met November 10th, and in five minutes adjourned to December 7th. The Speaker's journey to Washington and back was a continuous popular ovation.

On the 18th of November Schuyler Colfax, Speaker and Vice-President-elect, and Miss Ellen W., "eldest daughter of the late Theodore M. Wade, were married at the residence of the bride's mother at Andover, O. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Mr. Beach." The *South Bend Register* heartily felicitated its founder. Mr. Colfax wrote his fast friend, Mr. Thomas Underwood, of Lafayette: "Two elections in one month! Ought I not to be happy? But I expect more real happiness from the election decided by one than from the election decided by millions."

Immediately after the wedding the bride and husband, with relatives and friends, started for Washington, where Mrs. Colfax soon became a general favorite. "The whole nation," said *Harper's Bazar*, "join in congratulating him on his marriage, and wishing him and his bride a future of unbroken felicity." The Speaker's marriage seemed to double and redouble the attentions of his old

friends. A series of banquets and receptions was given him and his wife in Philadelphia, New York, and other Eastern cities, extending through the holidays, and, indeed, the entire winter.

At a banquet given him by the Union League Club of Philadelphia, December 19th, the Speaker said : " The incoming Administration will be characterized by retrenchment ; by honesty, efficiency, and high character in all persons in the public service ; by a close guardianship of the Treasury against unwise and extravagant schemes ; and by a fiscal policy which will maintain our credit untarnished, appreciate our currency, and place us on the firm rock of specie payments."

On Christmas day they received at the Armory-rooms in Springfield, Mass., " grasping the outstretched hands of five thousand people," said the reporter ; " always with a genial smile and often a quick pleasantry, he looked the most enviable of men, especially if your eye rested on the lady at his side. Mrs. Colfax has a face of fine intellectual beauty, and a distinguished and affable grace as winning as her husband's, and as ready for the touch of every hand ; for she paid the full penalty of wedding a servant of the people, and all there had a smile and a bow from both. It will please the women folk to know that the necklace of pearls she wore was her husband's wedding gift, and that her dark hair was adorned with a coronal of pure white blossoms." In response to a serenade, he complimented the Armory Club, the ladies, the citizens, and his host, Sam Bowles, " with whom I have made long trips over the plains, through the mountains, chased by Indians ;" but the armorers who, during the war, armed a regiment a day divided his heart, even with the ladies.

At their New Year's reception all the Congressmen, irrespective of party, and nearly all the town called to pay their respects and wish them well. Valuable presents were received from New York. The Speaker seemed at this time to be taken into the families of the whole country as a member, the eldest son, as he had long before been in



the Ninth District of Indiana. A *rara-avis* in politics, he enjoyed it all with the simplicity of a child. Heretofore his mother and sister had comprised the ladies of his household. Now these ladies gave place to Mrs. Colfax. The Speaker's receptions had long been a feature of Washington society. They were never more agreeable, more thronged and brilliant than this winter. Throughout Mr. Johnson's term the Speaker had held a sort of rival court, his levees being the common resort of the friends of Congress.

Said the Washington correspondent of the *New York Herald* :

"At Speaker Colfax's popular levees the tone of ceremony is let down, and hearty hospitality mingles with unconstrained ease. Here all shades of politics blend in rainbow harmony of color, and general geniality dissipates all stiffness and constraint. Mrs. Colfax receives with much grace and good-nature. There is nothing artificial in her manner, and if there is any restraint it arises from a disposition to check an exuberance of kindly feeling. She was dressed in pink satin, wore white flowers in her hair, and a chaste necklace of pearls. A little way from her stood Mrs. and Miss Matthews and their cousin, Miss Runk, all three attired in colors that made a pretty and effective contrast. The visitors were from everywhere, and all appeared familiar acquaintances, whom the Speaker was never so glad to see. Wonderful man is Colfax ; through clouds and sunshine always the same cordial, smiling, whole-souled fellow. A pleasant word and look for everybody, never losing his equanimity, steady in his orbit as the sun, and, like the solar luminary, sending forth beams that warm and cheer the social sphere around him. Every one goes away in a happier mood than he came."

A stormy occurrence signaled the last days of Speaker Colfax in the House. The day was approaching when, under the Constitution, the electoral votes must be counted in the presence of the two Houses of Congress. There was question as to Georgia's right to representation, and on the 8th day of February the twenty-second joint rule, which provides that disputed electoral votes shall not be counted "except by the concurrent vote of the two Houses," was modified by a concurrent resolution, settling in advance the disposition of Georgia's votes, by permitting the summary to be made both with and without them, but announcing that, in either event, Grant and Colfax

were elected ; a form adopted by Mr. Clay in 1821, with reference to the electoral votes of Missouri, and followed in 1837 with respect to the electoral votes of Michigan.

The two Houses met in joint session in the spacious Representatives' Hall February 10th, a splendid and crowded audience of spectators in attendance, to perform this duty. Mr. Wade, President of the Senate, occupied the Speaker's Chair as presiding officer. Mr. Speaker Colfax sat at his left. When the State of Georgia was reached—purposely left to the last—General Butler, of Massachusetts, objected to the counting of her votes for various reasons. Under the concurrent resolution the objection should not have been entertained by the presiding officer, but it was, and the Senate retired, the House voting by itself to sustain Butler's objection. On the return of the Senate, Mr. Wade announced that under the concurrent resolution, the Senate had overruled Butler's objection, and the result of the count would be accordingly stated by the tellers.

Mr. Butler called attention to the action of the House, and proposed to submit a resolution. The Chair declined to receive it. Butler appealed from the decision of the Chair. The Chair declined to entertain the appeal. A scene of tumult ensued, "of which the official report," said Colfax afterward, "gives but a faint idea." President Wade ruled steadily that nothing was in order but the statement of the vote under the concurrent resolution, and finally said: "The tellers will now declare the result." Senator Conkling, one of the tellers, thereupon "proceeded to declare the result amid great noise and disorder, the President endeavoring to maintain order by repeated raps of the gavel." The uproar continuing, the Speaker said: "The Speaker of the House appeals to members of the House to preserve order. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House will arrest any member refusing to obey the order of the President of this convention."

At that moment nearly one third of the members were on their feet, some of them gesticulating violently, and danger of collision between members and Senators (the

latter had been denounced as "interlopers") was imminent. "It was language like this," said General Garfield; "it was a manner and bearing of unparalleled insolence; it was the fell spirit of disorder—that spirit that prefers to reign in hell rather than serve in heaven—that would bring chaos into this sacred hall, where order and calm deliberation should forever dwell. . . . And I believe that not only the members of the House but the whole country will recognize the debt of obligation they owe to the Speaker of this House, who threatened to use the constabulary force at his command to preserve order in this hall." Mr. Washburne, of Illinois, too ill to be in his place in the House, wrote the Speaker: "Every man who loves his country must blush crimson at the scene of yesterday. I thank you for the stand you took in calling the House back to a sense of its position and conduct. You were emphatically right, and the country will applaud you for your conduct."

As soon as the convention had adjourned General Butler offered, as a question of privilege, a resolution that "the counting of the votes of Georgia, by order of the Vice-President *pro tem.*, was a gross act of oppression and an invasion of the rights and privileges of the House." Since the Speaker had sustained to the full extent of his power the action of the Vice-President, the resolution arraigned him equally with that officer. He called Mr. Dawes, of Massachusetts, to the Chair, and took his seat on the floor during the three days' debate that followed. "Order had to be preserved," he said in the course of the debate. "The House had met as a House at noon, and had not adjourned. It was a House of Representatives, and was sitting, as the Constitution requires its presence, as a House. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House was here, as required by the rule. It is his duty to aid in the enforcement of order under the direction of the Speaker, and of no one else, and he received that direction from him. And the Speaker thus appealed to the House. The President of the Senate uttered the very words you by your votes commanded him to utter. The votes of Georgia did not affect the result. The President rose and declared

exactly what both branches of Congress ordered him to declare. I appeal to you, Representatives, on no such sudden excitement as this to put upon your journal a record that will not stand the test and scrutiny of the people, nor of your own private judgments in the cooler period hereafter."

After Butler had toned his resolution down to a reference of the subject to a select committee, with leave to report at any time, on motion of General Logan the matter was laid on the table by a vote of 130 to 55. "Speaker Colfax has distinguished himself greatly by the superb calmness, firmness, dignity, and force with which he has discharged his duties and met the assaults of the passionate and combative Butler," said the *Hartford Courant*.

On the 3d of March Mr. Colfax resigned the Speakership, Theodore M. Pomeroy, of New York, succeeding him for the remainder of the session. On the same day, the joint resolution proposing to the States the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, the crowning measure of reconstruction, was adopted by the House. On the 15th of March, 1870, the Secretary of State proclaimed its ratification by three fourths of the States. The Forty-first Congress convening March 4th, James G. Blaine, of Maine, was elected Speaker, Mr. Dawes and other candidates withdrawing. "Mr. Blaine attracted notice as Chairman of the Republican Executive Committee of his State during the last canvass," said the *South Bend Register*. "He proved the possession in a great degree of those qualities for which Mr. Colfax is so distinguished—energy, clearness, force, concentration, and ability to direct."

In this, his final valedictory to the House, Mr. Colfax said :

"The fourteen years during which I have been associated with the Representatives of the people here have been full of eventful legislation, of exciting issues, and of grave discussions vitally affecting the entire Republic. All these, with the accompanying scenes, which so often reproduced in this arena of debate the warmth of feeling of our antagonizing constituencies, have passed into the domain of history ; and I but refer to them to express the joy—which apparently is shared by the mass of our countrymen—that the storm-cloud of war which so long darkened

our national horizon at last passed away, leaving our imperilled Union saved ; and that by the decree of the people, more powerful than Presidents, or Congresses, or armies, liberty was proclaimed throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof."

He referred to the proud position of the Republic among the leading nations of the earth, glanced at its illimitable resources, and at the inevitable influence abroad of the vast enlargement of liberty at home. " May we not hope that by the moral force of our example fetters may everywhere be broken, from the rivers to the ends of the earth ?" Alluding to his steady efforts to administer his high office with sole reference to the public weal, " I may be pardoned," he said, " for the expression of gratification that while no decision of mine has been reversed, no appeal has been taken and decided by a strictly party vote. If in the quickness with which a presiding officer is often compelled to rule, hour after hour, on parliamentary points, and in the performance of his duty to protect all members in their rights, to advance the progress of public business, and to preserve order, any word has fallen from my lips which has justly wounded any one, I desire to withdraw it, unreservedly."

" I leave this hall with no feeling of unkindness to any member with whom I have been associated in all the years of the past, having earnestly tried to practise that lesson of life which commands us to write our enmities on the sand, but to engrave our friendships on the granite. But the last word cannot longer be delayed. I bid farewell to the faithful and confiding constituency whose affectionate regard has sustained and encompassed me through all the years of my public life. Farewell to this hall, which in its excitement and restless activities so often seemed to represent the throbbings and the intense feelings of the national heart ! And finally, fellow-members and friends, with sincere gratitude for the generous support you have always given me in the difficult and often complex duties of this Chair, and with the warmest wishes for your health, happiness, and prosperity, one and all, I bid you farewell."<sup>1</sup>

After his retirement from the Chair the House unani-  
mously adopted the following resolution :

1. Subsequently the employés of the House of Representatives clubbed together, and bought the chair in which he had so long presided, and presented it to him. It occupies a bay-window in the library of his house, which is the especial "den" of the present Schuyler Colfax.

“ That the retirement of the Hon. Schuyler Colfax from the Speaker's Chair, after a long and faithful discharge of his duties, is an event in our current history which would cause general regret, were it not that the country is to have the benefit of his matured talents and experience in the higher sphere of duty to which he has been called by a majority of his countrymen. In parting from our distinguished Speaker, the House records with becoming sensibility its high appreciation of his skill in parliamentary law ; of his promptness in administering and facilitating the business of this body ; of his urbane manners ; and of the dignity and impartiality with which he has presided over the deliberations of the House. He will carry with him into his new field of duty and throughout life the kind regards of every member of this Congress.”

Mr. Johnson retired from the Presidency at the same time, pardoning the last of the assassins who had made him President. Said a wit of the times : “ He owes a good deal, he has nothing, the rest he bequeaths to the poor.” His political estate was entirely dissipated. Since the return of the Speaker from the Pacific, certainly until the course of Johnson made Grant's election to the Presidency inevitable, Colfax, from his character and position, had, perhaps, been the most influential of the President's opponents, and history must record that the President was beaten at every turn, and that he deserved to be beaten, because he was on the wrong tack. Events had now given Grant the Republican leadership, and Colfax accepted second place with a loyalty that never wavered, and that postponed the capture of the White House by the Democracy for twelve years—from 1872 to 1884.

## CHAPTER XI.

### FORTY-FIRST CONGRESS.

1869-1871.

DECLINES TO BE GENERAL SOLICITOR FOR OFFICE, ALIENATIONS.— VISITING, EAST AND WEST, A SECOND PACIFIC TOUR, SPEECH AT SALT LAKE CITY.—AN OLD FRIEND IN TROUBLE.—“THE ADVOCATE OF ALL GOOD CAUSES.”—ALL MEN HIS READERS.—CANVASSES INDIANA.—HIS RETIREMENT ANNOUNCED.—RESPONSE.—CHRISTMAS-TIDE.—ATTACK OF VERTIGO IN THE SENATE, SOLICITUDE OF THE COUNTRY.—A BREATH OF PRAIRIE AND PINE FOREST.—ASKED TO RESIGN THE VICE-PRESIDENCY AND BECOME SECRETARY OF STATE.—HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS DRIFTING INTO OPPOSITION TO GRANT.—GREELEY'S AND BOWLES'S CANDIDATE.—AN EMBARRASSING POSITION FOR A LESS LOYAL MAN.—GUARDING AGAINST MISUNDERSTANDING WITH THE PRESIDENT.

ON taking the Chair of the Senate as Vice-President, Mr. Colfax said that he realized the delicacy as well as the responsibilities of the position. Most of the Senators were his seniors in age ; he had not been chosen their presiding officer by them ; he should need their assistance and forbearance. “ Pledging to you all a faithful and inflexible impartiality in the administration of your rules, and earnestly desiring to co-operate with you in making the deliberations of the Senate worthy of its historical renown, I am ready to take the oath of office.”

There was great pressure on him for recommendations to office, applicants supposing his power over patronage increased, whereas it was diminished. Under the usage he had always had the disposal, or, at least, great influence in the disposal, of the offices in his district. Now he had no district, or rather, his district was the whole country, and the power of appointment to office was vested not in

the Vice-President, but in the President. He was willing to join with members or Senators in recommending unobjectionable applicants for places, but he declined to become a general solicitor for office, and this was the unhappy cause of misunderstanding and alienations. Writing to his friend, Mr. Wetherbee, of San Francisco, he says: "I believe with Mr. Jefferson, when he was Vice-President, that intermeddling by a Vice-President with a President's patronage is officious and unwise; and I have kept out of all the imbroglios as to office everywhere, as a matter of principle and propriety. If it has alienated friends, I regret it very much, but cannot help it."

One alienation was much talked of, and merits notice. The Senate caucus had nominated a new Public Printer vice John D. Defrees. "It was a combination of Southern Republican Senators," Colfax wrote his mother, "who were after the offices of Sergeant-at-Arms and Executive Clerk, and got them, Fenton—whose friend was nominated over Defrees—and Morton, who wanted to pay off Defrees for going to Indianapolis, as he had against my protest, to work against Morton's election." The life-long friendship of the two men was well known, and the movement to oust Defrees was kept from Colfax's knowledge. When he heard of it, he said to his Secretary, Will Todd: "I could not have felt it more keenly had it been aimed at myself, and had I known of it, I would have done all I could to prevent it." He asked Mr. Todd to say this to Defrees, if he met him during the day, he himself having to go to his place in the Senate. It chanced that for that evening a number of Congressmen were under engagement to dine with him at his house. The next evening, after dinner, the first hour at his command, he set out to call upon and sympathize with his old friend. He was met by a messenger from Mrs. Defrees, returning to him some presents he had given the family, a telegram of thanks he had sent to Mr. Defrees at Chicago in 1868, and a card bearing on one side "Mr. and Mrs. Defrees," and on the other a message implying that he was an unfaithful friend. No explanation had been sought or awaited, and



the incident in all its details had been telegraphed all over the country.

In a card published by Mr. Defrees,<sup>1</sup> he says that the next day Mr. Colfax was informed by a mutual friend on his (Defrees's) authority that he was not blamed for not preventing the action of the Senate caucus, "but because he had not shown any interest in the result after it had taken place, and that the card and presents had been sent to him by Mrs. Defrees of her own accord, without my approval, and much to my regret. To this explanation, given in all kindness, he simply remarked that as my name was on the card (the 'Mr.' had not been erased by Mrs. D.), I must be responsible."

Whoever was responsible, the result was that Colfax was held out to the world as an ingrate by his oldest friend. He felt inexpressibly wronged. "I don't want to see Defrees or Mrs. Defrees," he wrote his mother, "or hear any explanation of this unparalleled insult. I have no malice in me about this or anything else, shamefully treated as I feel that I have been, but I do not intend to ever allow him to converse with me about it." Mr. Defrees professed an equal disinclination to a reconciliation.

But when, in after years, a great trial fell upon Mr. Colfax, Mr. Defrees wrote about him in such terms "that I was glad," says Colfax, "the first time I met him, to tender him my thanks; and, shaking hands together, the unpleasant alienation of the past four years ended, and, I trust, forever."

Congress, having modified the Tenure-of-Office Act at President Grant's request, and passed a new reconstruction act for the three still recalcitrant States, adjourned in April. The Vice-President and his wife spent the summer visiting: first in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa; then in the East, "to show Mrs. Colfax New England in June;" finally, on the Pacific Slope, with nearly the same party as in 1865. His wife accompanied him; ex-Lieutenant-Governor Bross was accompanied by his daughter Jessie; and Mrs. Calhoun (now Runkle), then on the staff of the *New*

1. In the *South Bend Tribune* of April 13th, 1872.

*York Tribune*, took Mr. Richardson's place. Mrs. Colfax's sister Marcia and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Bowles were of the party. Mrs. Calhoun was invited on the request of Miss Jessie Bross.

Chicago celebrated the completion of the first Pacific railroad on the 10th of May, the day the last spike was driven. Having all his life taken a keen interest in the growth and development of the West, and particularly in the construction of an overland railroad, the Vice-President was naturally called on for the principal glorification speech at the evening meeting on that occasion. He dwelt with fervor on the magnificence of the work and on the unique and commanding position it gave this country, fronting on the two main oceans, half way between the old continents. The successful close of the war and the construction of this road, he said, opened a new chapter in national progress and power. We were no longer "a giant without bones," as Talleyrand once called us. America had now its spinal railroad, its ribs of iron, its nerves of electric wires. It would number its hundred millions of prosperous happy people by the end of the century; and beyond that its greatness and grandeur, if only wisdom ruled in its counsels, would be "what my poor tongue might in vain attempt to portray on this joyful night."

Passing through Lafayette, Ind., where he was compelled to hold a popular levee, he arrived May 20th at the capital of Illinois on a visit to his friend, C. H. Smith, the *Springfield Journal* greeting him as follows: "He can truly say that he never planted a thorn in any human heart. Yet is he a man of great positiveness and energy of conviction. The people have seen him these many years in the strong light that beats upon a politician, and they have never discovered in his conduct the first speck of meanness or corruption, nor the least employment of his great influence for his personal advantage. It was this that nominated him at Chicago, the popular will tearing like cobwebs the artfully constructed rings of the party managers."

His visit to Springfield was the occasion of a public and private entertainment, which was participated in by the State officers and by eminent gentlemen, the Springfield Zouaves, the Emmett Guards, and the people at large. Such ovations were for years an every-day occurrence wherever he went.

In the latter part of June a correspondent of the *New York Sun* wrote from Hartford, Conn. : " Mr. Colfax's progress from Strafford, Vt., was one continued ovation. Notwithstanding the private and quiet character of his visit to New England—in spite, indeed, of his oft-expressed wish that no public announcement of his movements should be made, such is the universal popularity of the ex-Speaker and prospective President, that even the rural districts have kept themselves informed of his whereabouts, and at every considerable station along the route of his journey yesterday, crowds of eager citizens assembled to call him out and cheer him and take him by the hand."

He visited most of his old Washington colleagues living in New England and the adjoining States, and was the recipient of every pleasant attention and of every honorable distinction.<sup>1</sup> The papers of twenty New England towns were full of accounts of the graceful doings and sayings of the Vice-President and his royal hosts. The leading Democratic paper of Rhode Island, the *Providence Herald*, said :

" In his remarks at the City Hall he wounded no sensibilities, provoked no criticism, and yet showed a full appreciation of and capability to discharge personal and political obligations. His allusion to Senator Anthony was exceedingly happy, both in conception and expression. Passing to general topics, he gave his hearers a sensible and manly speech, completely denuded of Buncombe. If Mr. Colfax strained a point at all it was in praise of the President. And while, as a politician, we might be compelled to qualify some of his eulogiums upon Grant, as a man we give him credit for speaking in praise of his official chief. As

1. At Senator Morrill's home the Vice-President had a reception. The Senator said to the crowd : " When I built my house I intended it to be large enough to contain all my friends. Friends, come in !" and they cheered. After which said Senator Morrill, in his long-drawn style : " But I never expected to build a house large enough to hold the friends of Schuyler Colfax ;" and then they cheered again and again.

a pleasant, social, intelligent gentleman, he has undoubtedly won the regard of all with whom he came in contact."

This was really part of "their wedding journey," which continued off and on for a year or so.

August and September were given up to the Pacific tour. Three days now sufficed for what in 1865 had required three weeks. The trip was no longer difficult or dangerous, and its novelty was fast wearing off. The majority of his party were ladies, and the chief object was to enjoy again the glories of the Sierras, of Shasta and Hood, of the Geysers, the Big Trees, the Yosemite, the Golden Gate, of Napa and San José valleys, of San Francisco Bay and city, and to renew and extend the friendships of the former visit.

"He escaped nowhere some measure of the honor due his high public position," said the *San Francisco Bulletin*, "and the affectionate attention that his personal character has won from the whole country wherever he appears." Additional incentives to courtesy, continued that paper, were the benefits felt by the far West to have resulted from his original Pacific journey, calling attention, as it did, to the resources and attractions of this coast, and indirectly if not directly hastening the construction of the overland railroad. "This feeling was universally and most flatteringly manifested during this summer's tour of the Vice-President and his friends."

Serenaded at Salt Lake City, the Vice-President expressed in plain language the American people's condemnation of the practice of polygamy, and of the generally exclusive non-American policy of the Mormon leaders, endeavoring to show them that in these respects they were standing in their own light, doing themselves a mischief. The meeting was disturbed by Port Rockwell, a Mormon ruffian in liquor, who shouted occasionally: "I never killed any one who didn't need killing." It was time that some prominent man should speak plainly for national institutions and authority in the Mormon capital. The Vice-President saw this, and opportunity serving, he did so. It was his way, and, of course, it was a hit, the speech

being almost universally published and commended. With men moved by ordinary considerations it would have had a great effect. It merely roused additional and personal opposition on the part of the Mormons. But the country is slowly advancing to the standpoint of the Vice-President in 1869, or, rather, in his first Congress, 1856-57.

After the return home of the party, Mr. Bowles published a new edition of his "Across the Continent," entitling the book "Our New West," and dedicating it to "Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of Congress and Vice-President of the United States, trusted and beloved above all other public men by the American people." In the book Mr. Bowles says :

"He is more than the Henry Clay of this generation ; for the love and respect borne toward him are not confined to his political party, as that of Mr. Clay practically was. A member of Congress now for fourteen years, the Speaker of its House for six, and elevated from that, the third, to the second political station in our Government—the Vice-Presidency—he stands before the country one of its freshest yet one of its ripest, one of its most useful, and certainly one of the most promising and popular of its public men. He has more personal friends—people who, whether they have ever seen him or not, feel a personal attachment to and interest in him—than any other public man in the country."

On the 22d of November a fair was opened in Baltimore, to aid in the establishment of an Inebriate Asylum. Pressed to make an address on the occasion, the Vice-President said in substance :

"We are our brother's keeper ; all our laws and institutions bear witness to it. Our religion inculcates it ; it is so in the nature of things. Springing from a common Creator, we are all brethren. If God has blessed you with a strength of will which has enabled you to sanctify yourselves, it is for you to lift up and guard your weaker brother to save him, if possible, from a living death. There is but one safe way—to touch not, taste not, handle not. When in my young days I saw a companion die in the delirium of drink, calling on God to damn his soul, I resolved to turn my back on it forever, and I did. It is the true course, either in private or public life."

On the death of Grand Master Adams, of Indiana, he writes : "He has illustrated the teachings of Odd Fellowship in every work of humanity and benevolence, in every

inculcation of friendship, love, and truth ; in stern rebuke of all selfishness and immorality, with a faith that never wavered, with a hope that looked beyond the veil, with a charity worthy of the teachings of our altars, he was zealous and untiring." A year previous Mr. Adams had requested the Vice-President to stand up in the Grand Lodge of Indiana and receive the cane (from the homestead of Henry Clay) which he had so long used, saying to him : " My heart prompted me to bestow it on you, because I feel that I shall have need of it but a little longer."

Late in 1869 Mr. Albert D. Richardson, his travelling companion to the Pacific in 1865, and long an intimate friend, was assassinated by Daniel McFarland, on the suspicion of improper intimacy with the assassin's former wife, now divorced and about to be married to Richardson. Richardson and the lady were united in marriage by Henry Ward Beecher, Richardson being on his death-bed. When Colfax heard that his old friend had been shot, he sent him a telegram of condolence, and somehow it got into print. Thereupon a terrible outcry was raised by a part of the press, particularly of New York City, against all the friends of Richardson, " as accomplices in vice and enemies of public morals." The Vice-President wrote Sinclair :

" I have anonymous letters and hostile newspaper slips sent me every day, but shall bear it all in patience and silence. To sympathize with a friend of years when shot down and dying seems to be a great crime in the eyes of many ; but if he had been ' sick and in prison,' I would have followed him there with earnest sympathy, confident that One above would not condemn me. I suppose if I had turned my back on him in his hour of peril and death, and said, ' I never knew the man,' it would have been all right in the eyes of these critics ; but my conscience and my heart would have condemned me."

At Richardson's funeral Mr. Beecher said that men and women above reproach held that he had acted in the main right. For himself he had vowed before God, when the land was rent with war, that those who labored to preserve the nation should be his brothers, fall on them what might. " A strange case—death is a truce, at least to most men—here it culminates in a perfect array of battle against the

deceased. It is a shame, but it is so. He was a man who, perhaps mistaken in some steps and details, in the main made no mistake, but was truly a good man. I believe he was a man whom no one should be ashamed to call a friend."

The storm of malignant calumny beat upon the dead Richardson and all who sympathized with him until it exhausted itself. Whether his conduct was altogether justifiable or not, those who had known and loved him for years would have been dastards had they abandoned him when calamity and death overtook him, and this they did not. In truth, Albert D. Richardson was a generous and noble man.

Desiring his presence on the Forty-sixth Anniversary of the American Sunday-school Union, which was to be celebrated in Philadelphia, May 24th, 1870, Mr. George H. Stuart, of that city, wrote the Vice-President a strong appeal, ending: "I hope and pray that you will give me the privilege of saying to our board that my friend, the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, the advocate of all good causes, will be with us." This anniversary was a notable event. The first General Assembly of the re-united Presbyterian Church and a Baptist gathering of the first order were met in the city of Brotherly Love. The assemblage filled the Academy of Music, floor and tier on tier of galleries to overflowing. Hundreds of the leading Presbyterian and Baptist divines and laymen of the country and a delegation of distinguished men from abroad were present as guests.

The Vice-President went on from Washington, and was called on to preside over the meeting. "He made a capital address," said the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "bidding all welcome, and rejoicing in the occasion which had called together the friends of the noble cause—Presbyterians, Baptists, teachers, superintendents, well-wishers. The President had intended to be present, but finding it impossible, had sent by the speaker a message, 'that for several years he had attended a Methodist Sunday-school in his native county in Ohio, and he had never

forgotten its precepts.'” “We come together to-night,” said he, “those who love this cause, from all quarters of the Union, even from beyond the seas, to attest our interest in it. Four millions of Sabbath-school-scholars in this Republic—what an army! Not ‘an army terrible with banners,’ but an army beautiful with the snow-white banner which has inscribed upon it one sentence—the affectionate command of the Saviour of mankind—‘Feed My lambs.’ In that sign we go forth to labor.”

This was a unique situation for a Vice-President of the United States. There were not wanting men to sneer at him and exercise their ribald wit at his expense. But there was doubtless as much intellect within the sound of his voice as he ever addressed in either hall of the Capitol or at any hustings, and more heart and conscience. These labors were addressed to the fountain-head of human affairs. These people were striving to teach the little ones, who must in their turn bear the burdens of life, to be gentle and obedient, loving and pure. The Vice-President was never engaged in a work of greater dignity, appropriateness, or importance, and he went right on with it as long as he lived.

He never declined appeals to advocate good causes unless compelled to by more immediate duties. And so he might this week be found responding to a toast on Forefathers' Day, dedicating a Young Men's Christian Association Hall; presiding at a literary or art dinner in New York or Boston; next week addressing a temperance meeting, an Odd Fellows' celebration, an Orphans' Fair, or a Sunday-school reunion in Washington, Philadelphia, or Baltimore. He was everywhere received with genuine enthusiasm; magistrates and dignitaries and the best people hastened to do him honor. He was an engaging speaker on these various occasions; not altogether a divine, a philosopher, a scholar, a man of the world or of affairs, but a combination of what is best in all of them. “His speech last evening,” said the *Post* of Philadelphia, “transcends anything we have ever heard on the subject of temperance.” Why? Because he spoke from the heart, in a



straightforward, manly way, and a man's goodness is a part of his eloquence. No synopses could more than mutilate these glowing addresses, which never ceased to fall from his lips while he was Vice-President, nor, indeed, while he lived. On this occasion Governor Geary introduced him, and the City Councils tendered Independence Hall for a public reception. He declined the reception on the plea of official business. With his exhaustless love of men and enjoyment of social festivities, he was beginning to weary a little of public attention.

Publishers placed the best space in the best journals at his disposal, and paid him liberally to use it. His articles, especially on current politics, ran through the party press, and all men were his readers. An article in the *New York Independent*, early in 1870, noted in detail the claims of Grant's Administration to confidence, and a second article, published in August, brought the record down to the eve of the fall elections. The Vice-President rejoiced in reconstruction completed, Army and Navy reduced to a peace footing, eighty-four millions of taxation taken off, provision made for funding the national debt at a lower rate of interest, and for the rapid reduction of the principal. No writer ever had a better field. We had peace. The country was springing forward with a prosperity almost feverish, and the financial success of the Administration was unprecedented. In every respect the contrast with the preceding Administration was very striking.

Urgent demand for his services in the fall canvass of 1870 came from every Congressional district of his State. Not a candidate himself for any office, he said truly that he might fairly "lie off." But it was a labor of love, and he spoke in thirty of the fair cities of Indiana. "Had not your speech at Rushville been the most magnificent oratorical effort I ever heard," a reporter (Mr. J. Q. Thompson) wrote him apologetically, "maybe I could have written something worthy of it; but all I could say looked so tame as a critique, that my erasures constituted a sponge for the whole of it." He was received with all the demonstrations of pride and pleasure men knew how to make, and the

crowds that assembled to hear him exceeded in numbers and enthusiasm the outpourings of the early years of the great contest with slavery.

His opening speech at South Bend, September 10th, was, perhaps, the strongest he ever made. "I come before you," said he, "to render an account of the stewardship by the great Republican Party of the interests which were committed to its charge by the votes of the people in 1868." And sentence followed sentence for two hours and a half, each as clean-cut, pithy, well directed, and well delivered as a rifle-shot. Facts and figures were marshalled and thrown into action with the precision and skill of an old tactician, with the air of a commander, and with the power of a demonstration. "In the masterly, resistless, and overwhelming scope, structure, and force of the whole argument," Mr. Shellabarger, of Ohio, wrote him, "it seems to me that your speech is most admirable, and merits and will receive the gratitude of the country." "I am dreading the necessity of going to press," wrote Mr. Whitelaw Reid from the *New York Tribune* office, "without telling that you have won a handsome victory in Indiana. If it is won, I am sure the result will be largely due to your unceasing and unselfish efforts." But it was not won. Too many Republicans remained at home on election-day. They were too content.

There was abundance of political discontent, too, and it naturally sought to make the Vice-President its leader and exponent. This he declined to be. "I have read your letter," he writes a friend (Mr. S. Newton Pettis), August 22d; "but it does not shake my determination in the least. I am resolved to retire to private life at the end of this term, and under no circumstances could I allow my name ever to be thought of against the President. I am his sincere friend, and you will find, whatever local disaffections there may be as to appointments [and if he had been inspired he could not have prevented them], his re-nomination, if matters stand as they do now, will be as unanimous as President Lincoln's was in 1864."

Ever since his depression after the death of his first

wife, he had longed to escape from public life ; but the turbulence of Johnson's Administration forbade it. He was of opinion that, but for the perversity of Johnson, the Presidency might have come to him in 1867-68. Probably he was in error ; very likely Grant would have been preferred in any event. Now there were eight years of Grant, with more great soldiers behind, and strong men coming on who would never wait for the Presidency to come to them if they could by any means force it a little.

Into a struggle for the Presidential nomination, or for nomination to any other office, it was not in the Vice-President's nature to enter, and he was never really a favorite with the men who make Presidents. His constituency was the people, whom the manipulators of politics generally manage to muzzle. Always his nominations had come by general consent, without intrigue, "bulldozing," or "log-rolling." In his own district, from his young days, every man who held with the party had been cordially invited to participate in nominating conventions, not by hundreds, but by thousands, and when they spoke they uttered the free voice of the people of the district. "If they present men of character and qualifications," said he, "I stand by them as I do by the President, and as I stand by your principles in Congress." For the Speakership there had never been even a caucus candidate against him, the mention of Washburne in 1863 not rising to the dignity of a candidacy. He was not the choice of the party chiefs for Vice-President. The galleries, acting through the delegates, nominated him. If the Presidency were to come to him at all, it must drop to him like a ripe apple ; and although millions continued to desire it, and thousands to suggest it to him, he felt sure the day for that had passed.

He recognized that rotation in office is the law of popular politics. "The King is dead ! Long live the King !" applies in this country not to one, but to multitudes, while life tenure applies to no one. The American people wrong themselves when they ignore the fact that the man who serves two or three terms in Congress with credit has

had an honorable public career. No man can continue in office in this country for twenty or thirty years without doing injustice to other men. Other men are thereby wrongfully kept out of their fair share of public service and public honors. And to say that he fails who does not reach the Chief Magistracy, is to say that all but a score of men in three generations must fail. Indeed, it has come to be that no man great enough to make a respectable failure ever reaches the Presidency, unless by accident or as a successful soldier.

In the opening of the canvass in his own town, on the 10th of September, Mr. Colfax said : " It is well known to many of you that I intend that the present term shall close my connection with public office and public duties." He had already written the same to a friend in the East, who immediately published the letter. He would have had, he said, eighteen years of continuous service at Washington, and his ambition was satisfied. Grant would be renominated, at least ought to be, with an Eastern or Southern man for Vice. " I shall leave public life without a regret, and I expect to go into active business."

A breeze followed the publication of this letter. What does it mean ? men asked. Some thought it was a political manœuvre, like Cæsar putting away the crown. But there was no crown for Colfax to put away. In his judgment, he was renouncing nothing. The Presidency had, perhaps, once inclined toward him, but if so, it had forever withdrawn itself. One term of the Vice-Presidency shelves most men ; why should he desire two ? He had seen some service in the House—fourteen years, and worn all its honors. The Senate had never any charms for him, and if it had, his State was an uncertain reliance. He had long served a constituency coextensive with the land, long borne the responsibilities of leadership. " The great struggle is over, the prize won," John Sherman wrote him ; " there seems but little in the immediate future of American politics to occupy any one." He felt that he had done his share ; his salary had never paid his expenses ; he had accumulated comparatively nothing, and he had a growing

family—why not take him at his word? But those who credited him with meaning just what he said could not see how he was going to carry it out.

Mr. Bowles, just returned from Switzerland, wrote him : “ I congratulate you on your letter, on your great speech, on your wife and baby, and on your purpose to come here and spend Sunday with us. All shows wisdom and good taste. Both the letter and the speech attracted a good deal of attention abroad, and won much favorable comment. You will not go out of public life, but it is a blessed thing to be ready to, and, more, to want to.” Mr. Secretary Boutwell wrote him : “ You think you shall go out of office and keep out. Of myself I think the same. The bystanders would say of us both that we shall stay in until the people say ‘ Go ! ’ which will not be soon in your case, but any time in mine.” Senator John Sherman wrote him : “ Precisely as you wrote I have often thought, but cannot yet express without being misunderstood. I fear, too, the drift of events will lead to defeat, when we may not be at liberty to retire.” The Rev. Robert Collyer wrote him : “ Tens of thousands of men feel, as I do, that you are one of very few we can believe in always and everywhere to see the truth, and tell it, and do it, and do nothing against it, though the fee simple of the land were offered you for the sale of your soul. You must not go out of the national service of your own accord.”

The *Boston Journal* said : “ This adds another claim to the public respect which no retirement can elude. Mr. Colfax has shown that a politician can be popular, even in Washington, without compromising that character which most commends itself to the best men and the best women of the day. In the exigencies, too, when men who were thought bolder hesitated and kept silent, this merely amiable man, as he is called by them who do not understand him, spoke the right word, and led public sentiment.” The Washington correspondent of the *Sacramento Record* said : “ The country and the Republican Party can ill afford to lose him, and there are not a few of his

companions in office who will do their best to sway him from his purpose." The press had always lauded him as one of their guild, and because he was both loved and admired; the appreciative notices they gave him on this occasion were innumerable, and their words seemed weighted with all the regard and affection that words can be made to contain or convey.

"If there is a happy man in Washington it is Colfax," said the Washington correspondent of the *Brooklyn Union*, this winter of 1870. "Politics are getting rather grim and rancorous. There is perplexity in the air and in men's hearts. Old party companions are saying hard words of each other. By what exploit of self-discipline is it or by what felicity of temperament that Mr. Colfax is as fresh and light-hearted as a boy just let out of school?" He was with Grant, as with Lincoln, his confidential counselor, and they were much together. This Christmas of 1870 he spoke at a fair in aid of the orphans made by the war, the associations of his theme and of the season lending to his lips an unusual felicity of expression. His home was a wilderness of Christmas presents, an enchanted palace out of the Arabian Nights. There sat his baby boy, bewildered, glancing, as we may suppose, with dreamy, wondering eyes from his mother to the brilliant pieces of a thousand-dollar silver service, and back again, presented by the grave and reverend Senators, upon whom association with their presiding officer had wrought its usual charm. He had captivated them, and so far as he was concerned they were all of the same politics. Amid the strivings, the perplexities, the successes, the failures, and all the anxious rivalries of the Capital, the Vice-President moved serenely, the genius of peace and happiness.

In January, 1871, he writes Mr. Bowles: "You have seen about the twenty-five thousand dollars per year offer. It is a reality. *Inter nos*, though I have tried to keep the details out of the papers, it was Jay Cooke, for the Northern Pacific Railroad, but it involved, of course, my resignation as Vice-President, which no money consideration could justify, in my opinion. I told him that duty prevented

it, but that I felt honored by such appreciation, as it was the most magnificent offer I had ever heard of. He writes me since, insisting that if he and his railroad cannot have me, I must stay in public life ; but that is a *past* issue, you know." Mr. Jay Cooke writes the author, May 15th, 1886 : " My idea was that Mr. Colfax could combine his editorial, political, and oratorical talents in such a way as to widely enlarge the interest in the grand work I had undertaken, and greatly enhance the success I hoped for. I felt that his aid would be well worth the salary proposed."

But he was not in his customary robustness of health. He had not quite the spring and elasticity of twenty years before, and the last canvass had worn him down ; rather, the high pressure at which he had been running all his life caused the machinery to sound a note of warning. On the 22d of May, 1871, attacked with vertigo in its severest form, he fell insensible at his post in the Senate. " I suspect I was very near the gates of death," he wrote Sinclair. " My pulse ran down to thirty, and I was cold except around the heart for hours after the attack." A great and tender solicitude was manifested by the people in all parts of the land. The *Brooklyn Eagle* (Democratic) of May 26th, 1871, said :

" It is, in a manner, both sad and suggestive to note the universal esteem and good feeling, the grief, and the warm wishes for recovery, which perfume the breezes from the Potomac and the Capitolean Hill, that are wafted over the sick man's bed. . . . Let it be said to his honor, while the opportunity still remains, that he has planted no antipathies ; he has crushed none and conquered many of his rivals ; he has lived pure and poor in an atmosphere redolent of dishonesty and of opportunities for ill-gotten affluence ; he has been open-handed to the young, deferential to the old, as considerate to inferiors as to equals, and, if possible, more popular with opponents than among his party followers in public life. We wish him many long and happy years of perfect health and high honor, but we cannot shut our eyes to the seriousness of his present situation.

" If he is to be called hence in the prime of his life, and, by indication, long before the exhaustion of his political opportunities and prospects ; if he is soon to snap the domestic ties so recently, so happily, and so modestly formed, and but yesterday, as it were, crowned with a new life and a new hope, then a man, really good, and nearly great, will be

lost to the public service ; one who was admired without envy, and whose climacteric career never imbued him with undemocratic instincts—a genuinely self-made man, an honest office-holder, a fast friend, and a Christian patriot and gentleman.”

Anxious eyes, from ocean to ocean, scanned the bulletins from Washington. In about a week it was announced that he was out of danger, and bade fair to speedily recover. May 31st he started home in a special car, tendered by the Pennsylvania Central Railroad. “No public officer has become more endeared to the people of the whole country,” said the *New York Tribune* ; “and for the speedy and permanent recovery of no one could more fervent or universal aspirations ascend from all parts of the country.”

His physicians attributed the attack to over-mental work without relaxation, aggravated by a low state of vitality and the vitiated air of the long executive sessions of the Senate, with closed doors and windows. The only wonder was, they said, that it had not come long ago. He had had three attacks of vertigo before, but very much less severe ; two of them while he was speaking ; and he had such attacks, or something similar, once or twice afterward when speaking and also when walking. He had done the work of two or three men for twenty years. “Certainly, since first elected Speaker, I have never risen in the morning here at Washington that I have not felt I had twice as much work to do that day as there was really time for.” His prostration brought him no relief. “The correspondence pours in on me as usual—office-seeking, money-begging, and business and inquiries of all kinds,” he writes Sinclair, June 11th. “But I answer only the twentieth of it. Mrs. Colfax takes me out riding about two hours a day, and I walk out in the garden without help one hour a day. Have no pain or sickness, only weakness. I gain strength slowly, and realize that when I have fully recovered I am to feel like a man of fifty instead of thirty, as heretofore.” It had been given out that hard smoking occasioned this attack. He had smoked but one cigar that day, and evening was near when he was taken ill. He thought it best to break off, however, and he never smoked again.



July 11th he writes Mrs. Sinclair that he is well and strong as ever. "Our people have enjoyed seeing me pick raspberries day after day, and, indeed, week after week, as they thought it really looked like resting from mental pursuits. Never before had I felt that I had time for it. I picked bushels, as we had great quantities." The doctor allowed him to go to Valparaiso for the Fourth, on condition that he keep out of the sun and shake hands sparingly. "But it was the Fourth, you know, and how could one avoid mounting the American bird for a few minutes? Hundreds squeezed my hand, and with tears in their eyes, saying they had feared they were never to see me alive again. I see, just as I am going out of public life, Horace [Greeley] is being put on the track for the Presidency. If I were not so sincere a Grant man I should be satisfied with the new movement. But I am honestly for Grant, and can give you a hundred reasons when we meet."

Subsequently Marvin H. Bovee, of Wisconsin, wrote him: "The last time I saw Horace Greeley was at La-crosse, Wis., in November, 1871. In conversation with him at the hotel after his lecture that evening, I brought up the question of his Presidential aspirations. 'Yes,' he said, 'I shall be a candidate before the National Republican Convention; not that I want the nomination, but I hope to develop sufficient strength in that convention to force Grant off the track and to nominate Schuyler Colfax.'"

In August, with Senator Windom and other gentlemen, the Vice-President visited Wisconsin and Minnesota, to get a breath of prairie and pine forest. In that part of the country he did two characteristic things. At Winona he addressed a Sunday-school: "Be masters of your tempers," said he; "hasty words cause more unhappiness than anything else. Do no act privately that you would not like to have exposed." At Fort Abercrombie, in the ranks drawn up to do him honor, was a soldier wearing ball and chain for desertion; he secured this man's pardon. To a *St. Paul Dispatch* reporter, with reference to published

charges that he was a party to the movement against the renomination of Grant, he said : " I am for Grant against the field, open and above board. I am here unofficially, seeking rest. Have been out beyond roads, where we travelled by compass, seventy miles beyond Georgetown toward the Cheyenne ; it is a beautiful country, not an acre of waste land. I feel a great deal better than when I first came up, and have been greatly pleased with the magnificent country I have seen." At Otter Tail Lake the Chippewa chief, Little Rabbit, and thirty braves paid their respects, the chief making a speech full of complaints : they had been cheated out of their lands, were poor, suffering beggars, etc. In reply, the Vice-President said he recognized them as children of the Almighty Father of all men, but that they must employ the same means their white brothers do, if they would be strong and comfortable. They must learn to do their part ; then the Government and the white people would aid them to till their lands, provide for their families, and school their children. Governor Austin and Senators Windom and Ramsey did the honors at St. Paul, showing the Vice-President everything of interest about the city and in the vicinity. Declining a military reception, tendered by General Hancock, he went to Brainerd, thence to Duluth, and thence back to St. Paul, and directly home. Speaking occasionally at reunions of the Indiana soldiers and of the Odd Fellows, he took no part in the canvass this autumn.

Before leaving for the Northwest, he received the following letter :

*Private.*

" LONG BRANCH, N. J., August 4, 1871.

" MY DEAR SIR : I owe an apology for not writing to you soon after coming to this place, as I fully intended to do, to inquire after your health. But hearing through the papers daily of your steady improvement, and knowing your proneness to answer all letters, a task which I did not want to impose, and my own laziness must be accepted as a full apology. (This is a long sentence to contain so little, is it not ?) To be candid, I do not know that I would impose on you a letter now, knowing that it must be answered, only that I am *just the least* selfish. You know that Governor Fish came into my Cabinet reluctantly ; that I have

retained him by persistence, against his will, as long as I have. Now he says he must go, and seeing, as I do, that he is suffering in health, I have not the heart to urge him stronger than has already been done to remain longer than he has consented to—the meeting of Congress in December. I have cast about in my own thoughts for a man from New York or Pennsylvania who would strike the public favorably, and suit me, at the same time. Now, I have one suggestion, going out of those States, that will suit me exactly, and I believe the public generally, if he will give up a higher for a lower and harder position. In plain English will you give up the Vice-Presidency to be Secretary of State for the balance of my term of office? That is a question that might have been asked in one sentence. It requires an answer, too. In all my heart I hope you will say yes, though I confess the sacrifice you will be making.

“I will say to you, confidentially, that I have thought of Andrew White as coming nearest to my own notions of any one in the State of New York. He has filled no public position to bring him prominently before the people. In Pennsylvania I have not been able to think of any one. Now, I want a short letter from you, giving your views about this matter.

“Everything seems to be working favorably for a loyal administration of the Government for four years after the 4th of March, 1873. It is important that we should have such an administration, though it is not important who the head may be. Whoever has the place will have a slave's life. My only anxiety in the matter is that there shall be entire harmony and unanimity in favor of the choice of the convention which nominates him. Tammany and ‘the New Departure Democracy’ are working to that end. Some who profess to be with us take a course to defeat them. All will be well, however, I hope and confidently believe. Please present my kindest regards to Mrs. Colfax and Colfax, Jr.

“Faithfully yours,

“U. S. GRANT.

“HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX, Vice-President.”

The author has been unable to recover the answer to this letter, but certainly the Vice-President declined the President's invitation or request, and doubtless because of disinclination to lay down a trust committed to him directly by the people, even to oblige his friend.

The political situation was fast growing interesting for Mr. Colfax. To a man not absolutely loyal to his convictions of duty, it would have been embarrassing. That the Vice-President went through it without any imputation on his good faith, shows how entire was the confidence reposed in him by his countrymen. His life-long,

most influential, most intimate political and personal friends, particularly in the press—Greeley, Bowles, Halstead, and Medill's and Bross's paper, the *Chicago Tribune*, under a management hostile to them—were drifting into opposition to Grant. To the support of the President he was committed by his friendship, by his sense of justice, his knowledge of politics, his loyalty to the party which had so highly honored him, and to the principles for which he had been contending all his life.<sup>1</sup> With him, as with the voters of the party, the unhappy little causes of complaint against the President had no weight. To induce a serious party defection on their account was to endanger everything and gain nothing.

On his own part, he was resolved to retire from office and engage in business. "But I long for unity and consequent victory. These dissensions imperil all. And with a Democratic national triumph, what a future is before us!" The rank and file of the party and the loyal leaders were determined that he should run on the ticket again with Grant. The burst of protest against his retiring became a steady stream, and swiftly increased in volume after it appeared that there was to be a serious apostasy among the leaders of the party. As that apostasy, led by Greeley and Sumner, grew more pronounced and gathered strength, many desired him to be a candidate against Grant; and toward the last thousands of straight Republicans entertained the hope, if not the belief, that Grant would withdraw, and the party be reunited on Colfax for President. He was bombarded with letters from all parts of the country.

From Michigan :

"I don't wish to annoy you by political allusions, but it is hard to find a Republican about here who either wishes or expects the renomination of Grant, and who is not ready to throw up his hat for the Vice-President as his successor."

From Illinois :

1. In his defence of Fremont, in 1862, against Frank Blair, Colfax had occasion to say that he "had started in company with the gentleman from Missouri, and had kept on, while the gentleman had switched off." This was a similar experience. He had started with these gentlemen; they were switching off, he was keeping on.

"I now regret that you are and have been Vice-President. Had you remained quietly as Speaker, no power could have kept you out of the White House. The thinking men of the Republican Party don't like Grant, for good and sufficient reasons. You say truly that, as his lieutenant, you cannot run against him. I think you were wise in declining to run again with him. You know my reasons."

From Illinois :

"In the Republican ranks there is scarcely a dissenting voice, and among the people at large the wish is universal that you shall allow your name to be used again—for President if possible ; if not, as Vice-President with General Grant. And this is the deep-seated, earnest sentiment of the people, those who ask no office or reward, nothing but a continuation of the present system of administration."

From New Jersey :

"I shall continue my efforts here, and when the Philadelphia Convention meets, shall go there and do all that I possibly can to have the name of Colfax, instead of Grant, placed at the head of the ticket ; because I believe that in this way, and in this way only, can the Republican Party be saved from disintegration and defeat."

From Pennsylvania :

"As a Republican of unquestioned faith, and one who served three years in the Army of the Potomac in the late war, I entreat you to let your name come before the convention, and rest assured you will receive the nomination in preference to all others."

From Indiana :

"We cannot re-elect General Grant ; we can elect you ; so please keep quiet, and do nothing rashly."

There had been a quiet but persistent effort to bring Greeley and Grant together. Grant wrote Colfax in August, 1870 : "I am half inclined to offer the English mission to Mr. Greeley, but I possibly may not make the offer." In November Greeley wrote Colfax : "I thank you for your good opinion and your good offices ; but if the President should offer me the English mission, I should decline it. My business needs *me*, and I don't think the English mission does much." December 1st Colfax wrote Sinclair : "I spent several hours with the President last night. In the course of conversation, he said he had written John Russell Young [then on the *Tribune*] about his

regard for Mr. Greeley, and his desire to have him come and spend an evening with him, and that Young said he had read it to Mr. Greeley." A little later the President and Mr. Greeley met at the Walbridge funeral. General Grant took Mr. Greeley up in his carriage, and carried him off to dine and spend the evening with him. But nothing availed to reconcile the philosopher to the President's leadership. He had been dissatisfied with the party policy ever since the war ceased. It had not been sufficiently conciliatory toward the South to please him. Mr. Bowles wrote Colfax January 2d, 1871 :

"I am pretty much disheartened, however, about Grant. I have held out, until within two or three days, with the hope that he might reform his tendencies, and save both himself and us. But I fear it is too late, and that our only hope of saving the party is in successfully relieving ourselves from him two years hence. The pressing of the San Domingo question, and the means by which it is done, are a great scandal and outrage ; and it is such a violation of the platform he laid down in his inaugural, that it goes far to destroy all confidence. I am glad you can keep your faith and your hope ; I shall cling to a little through you ; but it is pretty discouraging. I say all this without any special approval of Sumner's course. His manner of fighting the President and his San Domingo schemes seem to be unfortunate for all parties ; but, on the abstract question, he has the real *heart* of the Republican Party with him."

And again, January 21st :

"You need never apologize for writing frankly to me on points of difference. I was very glad to read all you would say in defence of Grant, and had purposed to put before you, at length, the other side of the question ; but no matter now. The San Domingo business has taken a healthier turn, and I hope the report of the commission will be the end of the whole question for the present. It is the only way to peace in the party, and to the successful continuance of the Administration. But the want of faith in Grant's wisdom, his incapacity for his position, it seems to me, is both strengthening and deepening, and I still think we shall change candidates. Who? you ask. Well, if it was left to me, I should have no hesitation in answering ; and, it seems to me, my candidate never stood so good a chance as he does now ; and that, indeed, he will prove almost the only hopeful resort in the emergency of '72. But we will not talk of that now. The least said about it, certainly before the public, the better."

It is hardly needful to say that Colfax was Bowles's candidate. Writing to Sinclair, April 14th, Colfax says :

“ As to politics, you see I stick to Grant. I determined in 1868 that there should be no ill-feeling, alienation, or discord between President and Vice this term. And I feel sure that it is to be Grant or a Democrat in '72. I am more than ever resolved to quit public life myself, as you will see when the time comes.”

Mr. Bowles writes again, June 14th :

“ In public affairs, you see the *Republican*, and note that we still fight with a free lance. Greeley's speech and position delight me immensely. They will do great good. He is wiser than the Administration, broader than his party, and if he had brought the *Tribune* up to the standard of his speech in the last year or two, we should not have been in the hard condition that we are now, in some respects. I recognize, of course, the possibility—say probability—that Grant will be our candidate again. If he is, I expect to support him. But we ought to do better, and to go up higher. We ought to have a man of higher tone, personally, and of larger experience, politically. But this is politics, and as one of your doctors, I forbid such exciting themes. Good-by !”

In the fall Mr. Greeley had come to the conclusion that he could not support Grant in 1872. He thought it looked as though Colfax might become an available candidate. November 15th Sinclair wrote Colfax : “ Seriously now, I beg you not to say again that you are in earnest in your statements that you shall retire from public life. Nobody doubts the fact, and nobody believes that you would be seeking a nomination, even if you had not retired ; but it may be necessary to insist on your being a candidate. I told Mr. Greeley I should write you, and he asked me to ' tell Schuyler that he may publish once a week that he is for Grant, but not to say anything more about his own retirement.' ”

This letter reached Mr. Colfax while he was characteristically “ taking a circuit round *via* Indianapolis, to meet with the Odd Fellows' Grand Lodge and dedicate a Young Men's Christian Association Hall, visit Senator Lane at Crawfordsville, and see about the public buildings at Chicago.” He replied, November 25th :

“ I guess I will obey your injunctions and H. G.'s as to ceasing to talk about retiring ; but, as H. G. concedes, I shall have to say about once a week that I am for Grant, as I really am, and even that does not pre-

vent the John Russell Youngs, General Butlers, etc., from persistently asserting that I am in a conspiracy to supplant him. If I had not been so distinctly pronounced, mischief-makers would have succeeded in producing alienations between us, as they always have heretofore done between President and Vice. But they have failed utterly; and I rejoice that whatever discords there may be, none can be traced to any ill-feeling between the two men the Republicans elected to their highest offices in '68. So it shall be to the end. Doubtless General Grant has made mistakes. So has every public man. I have made many in appointments in my district, but my constituents always forgave me. Mr. Lincoln made many, some of them almost ruinous to the nation. And doubtless I would have made numberless ones if I had been in Grant's place. One reason why I couldn't be in a combination for his place is that I never wanted it. I would not exchange offices with him to-day. I prefer mine to any other in the Government, but I concluded to retire to get out of every one's way, and because my ambition was really satisfied. I think still that it might be better for me to be withdrawn from the ticket, but I guess I will say no more about it, though if I am silent two weeks the papers will be after me in full cry as a candidate again."

On the 9th of November he wrote President Grant, with the view of preventing misunderstanding, which many were trying to create. He says :

"Everywhere, to friend and foe, in print and in correspondence, I have said to all who spoke to me on the subject of politics that I was for your renomination and re-election, and that I was a candidate or aspirant for nothing. And whenever the dissatisfied have come to me with their complaints, they have obtained no sympathy, nor aid, nor comfort. I have abstained from criticism, even when I thought it deserved, so that no one should be able to use my comments in an unfriendly way. If I have had any influence with the people, it has been used to discourage and condemn the petty carping and fault-finding against you, and to endeavor to increase, not to diminish, the public confidence in you. Indeed, I have written long letters to several editors, old friends of mine, but who have been unjust to you, refuting in detail, one by one, their charges. It is easy to repeat it now, when the auspicious result of the elections leaves no doubt as to next year's campaign, but I ask you to remember, in justice to me, that I have for ten years said exactly what I am still saying on this point."

President Grant replied :

*Confidential.*

"EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., November 14, 1871. }

"MY DEAR MR. VICE-PRESIDENT: I have your letter of the 9th instant, and hasten to answer it, merely to set your mind at rest concerning



the possible effect on me made by such publications as those enclosed. From the time of our election there have been people intent upon creating jealousy between us. So far as I am concerned, their efforts have totally failed, and I want no evidence but my senses to tell me that their failure with you is equally complete.

"The *New York Standard* is largely owned and completely controlled by General Butler. He, Butler—to repeat none of our conversations except what is here pertinent—said to me that your letter published in the *Independent* was a bid for the Presidency, that you were Horace Greeley's candidate, etc. I simply replied testifying my entire confidence in the earnestness you felt in declaring (your position) to the country, but that if you should be the choice of the Republican Party I did not know a better man to lead them, nor one that I could more earnestly work in support of; that my great ambition was to save all that has been gained by so much sacrifice of blood and treasure; that I religiously believed that that could only be done through the triumph of the Republican Party until their opponents get on a national, patriotic, Union platform; that the choice of the Republican Party was my choice; that I held no patent right to the office, and probably had the least desire for it of any one who had ever held it, or was ever prominently mentioned in connection with it. Give yourself not the least concern about the effect on me of anything the papers may say to disturb our relations.

"Yours very truly,

"U. S. GRANT.

"HON. S. COLFAX."

General Butler would not have been far out of the way respecting the *Independent* article had any other man with Colfax's standing been its author. It expressed with clearness and precision the popular demand for reform. In view of the growing dissatisfaction with Grant's leadership, of Colfax's faculty of gauging the direction and force of public sentiment, and of the fact that the article was republished with approving comments by the entire Republican press, any other man than Grant would have thought it cause for jealousy. The party could not afford, said the writer, to ignore the increasing popular demand for revenue reform, for civil service reform; that the incompetent and unworthy shall not be appointed to office; that the appropriations shall be reduced, land grants and subsidies cease, and general amnesty be proclaimed. It was a very significant article, saying in effect that all that the Greeley Republicans were demanding, and more, should

be acceded to as a matter of course ; and its publication, under the circumstances, was conclusive proof of the Vice-President's disinterestedness and sincerity ; of his confidence that the President and the country would take it in the spirit in which it was put forth.

It is easy to criticise, to point out what ought to be done ; as easy as it is hard to do it. In his December message to Congress, President Grant showed that he could talk reform as well as any of his critics. " How completely our good President comes over to the advanced platform in his message !" Bowles wrote Colfax, December 14th. " Really, it is pretty discouraging to those of us who are trying to have the convention nominate another man ! If he would only practise as well as he preaches, he would not leave a single inch for us to stand upon. Certainly, he encourages us to go on in the cause of reform administration, of advancing simplicity and purity of government. Still, I insist he is the weakest candidate the Republican Party can nominate. And yet, again, I don't see how it is possible to nominate anybody else. And yet I hope !"

## CHAPTER XII.

### FORTY-SECOND CONGRESS.

1871-1873.

THE PARTY APPARENTLY NEGATIVES HIS RETIREMENT.—HE REFUSES TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY AGAINST GRANT.—THE CONVENTION, GRANT'S FRIENDS NOMINATE HENRY WILSON.—GIVES IN HIS ADHESION TO THE TICKET.—BUT DECLINES TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN THE CANVASS.—FORCED TO, HOWEVER, TO SAVE THE DAY.—DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.—REPLIES TO THE CREDIT MOBILIER CAMPAIGN SLANDERS.—VISITS THE INDIANA LEGISLATURE.—DEATH OF HORACE GREELEY.—INVITED TO TAKE GREELEY'S PLACE ON THE *Tribune*.—THE NEGOTIATION, WHY IT FAILED.

THE elections of November, 1871, were carried by the Republicans, and there was no longer any reasonable doubt of Grant's renomination. Part of the old ticket being inevitable, the demand for all of it grew stronger. After the meeting of Congress urgent appeals were made to Colfax to reconsider his determination to retire, and a determination to nominate him whether or no was manifested. "The Republican Party demands (we use the strong word as the right word ; it is not a mere request) that Hon. Schuyler Colfax shall again be its candidate for Vice-President." This was the position taken by a large part of the Republican press. His declining two years in advance was termed a "breach of discipline," "and the best rebuke," said Senator Anthony's paper, the *Providence Journal*—and in this it spoke for the leading Administration Senators—"will be a renomination, which, whatever he may think or say, it will be hardly possible for him to refuse when imposed upon him by the convention representing the general wish of the party." Speaking of this afterward, Colonel C. C. Fulton said in the

*Baltimore American*: "In short, his announcement of retiracy was met by a national negative. Leading journals and influential Republicans insisted that he had no right to take himself out of the hands of the party. Under this loud, commanding, almost compelling expression, Mr. Colfax so far modified his former position as to leave himself at the order of his party, not seeking the office, nor yet holding himself at liberty to refuse. In this he did what was simply duty."

Near the end of 1871 he wrote to friends in South Bend in explanation of his position. While he had avowed his intention to finally retire from office at the end of his term, he had never said that he would reject a renomination for his present place if the representatives of the people, without any agency of his, deemed it wisest to renominate the old ticket. "Many Senators and others insist that the old ticket, on various accounts, must be run again. I have no claims on my party. They have given me every office I desired to fill. I have no unsatisfied aspirations, no unrealized ambitions. But I love my party too well to say that if, without my being a candidate, they insist on my accepting a renomination, I would throw it back in their faces by an absolute declination. I would be a monster of ingratitude to do that. But if it comes at all, it must come because the representatives of the people want it, and not because I do." Again, a little later: "You will see that I have yielded so far to the demands of our friends here as to allow myself to be placed just where you wished me to be—that is, willing to accept a renomination, if our friends deem it best to put the old ticket in the field. But I am for Grant's renomination, and believe him to be the most unjustly criticised man that ever filled the Executive Chair."

Early in January he wrote Mr. Sinclair:

"What I have said recently, exposing me, as it does, to the suspicion of insincerity in my heretofore avowed desire of retiring, has been said as a duty to the party I love so much, which I have labored so hard to build up and defend, and to which I owe so much. If my running with Grant would help to save the country from ruinous reaction and political disaster, I could not refuse."

Away back in the fifties he had laid down the principle in a *Register* editorial that nominations were neither to be sought nor declined ; that every member of the party was subject to the order of the party ; and he had inspired a similar article in that paper in the sixties. His embarrassment now was caused by his having declined, not a nomination, but a candidacy in advance, and it was only beginning. His mistake was in thinking that he could retire from the public service at all while his health and strength remained. He was too well qualified ; office had always sought him ; and in spite of all that afterward happened, it always did.

In the earlier months of the year, as the breach among Republicans widened, many party organs favored taking Colfax for President, as one on whom all Republicans could unite. Mr. Bowen, of the *New York Independent*, questioning Sumner, ascertained that he would not support Grant, but would support Colfax. "If we can re-elect General Grant, let him be nominated ; but if it is doubtful, then we insist that Mr. Colfax must and shall consent to the use of his name for the Presidency," said the *Independent*. The State of Indiana would have presented his name for the first office. He wrote a letter to the *Indiana State Journal* vetoing such presentation. An Iowa paper, the *Cedar Falls Gazette*, thereupon remarked : "Ambitious without vanity, discreet without fear, in all things upright and true, Mr. Colfax has written a letter in which he positively declines to be a candidate for the Presidency, and reiterates his declaration in favor of General Grant. We do not think that should bar the people from pressing him for that office."

Colonel John W. Foster, Chairman of the Indiana State Republican Committee, wrote him :

"Your letter in the *Journal* was read with great pleasure by your friends, and I am satisfied it has done General Grant much good in Indiana. It appeared very opportunely, as a majority of our county conventions were held on the day it was published, and it was read in more than half the counties that day. You will see its effect in the resolutions of very many of them."

He received many letters from Indiana like the following :

“ Your message to the *Journal* has settled the Presidential question in Indiana most happily, and hereafter we shall have but one watchword— ‘ Grant and Colfax,’ and we shall, I feel confident, come out of the contest in 1872, as we did in 1868, victorious. However much we might desire to see you occupy the *first* place on the ticket, after what had been done, apparently with your approbation, in bringing General Grant forward for a renomination, your best friends in Indiana did not see how the record already made could be changed. There is scarcely a doubt that the convention on the 22d will pass resolutions settling the question as you desire.”

“ Your letter to Fishback has settled matters. It kept Wayne County from indorsing you [for first place]. It was doubtful before your Fishback letter as to result of our convention on 22d ; there is no doubt now. Your desires as to action of State Convention to best of my ability shall be carried out.”

“ Your letter to the *Indiana State Journal* will not materially affect the result. It was expected you would, with characteristic good faith, stand by the President to the last. You could not do otherwise, but your friends are not bound by your position. There is no use in blinking the facts that stare us in the face—Grant cannot be re-elected. I go to Indianapolis next week with but one purpose, and that is to fight against instructions. The truth must not be covered up now. I am grateful to Grant, but cannot consent to the sacrifice of the great Republican Party, for the mere purpose of honoring him with a second term. Forgive me if I have written too strongly. I feel it all.”

After the State Convention :

“ I regretted nothing so much as that our State instructed for Grant and Colfax, although it was done on account of your letter ; for I tell you that the feeling of the masses in the convention was ‘ Colfax for President,’ and I hope that circumstances may yet make it so.”

The Washington correspondence of the *Cincinnati Commercial* had the following in January :

“ In view of the possibility that Grant may fail of a renomination, the question is being asked here with a good deal of persistence, ‘ Who will be nominated at Philadelphia four months hence?’ The one who stands the best chance in that contingency is Schuyler Colfax, and I’ll tell you why. No man in any party has such a hold on the popular affection as he, and he is the only man upon whom the party can unite. There is not a spot on his record. Never was there even a charge against him. Never has he done an improper or an injudicious thing. While in Con-

gress, he never gave a vote on the wrong side of a question. Examine his record in the light of to-day ; it is consistent and straightforward. That he would make a judicious, popular, safe Executive, nobody can doubt."

With similar testimonials many Republican papers were filled. Colfax wrote an article for the *Independent*, the keynote of which was—No bolting. He wrote to a Grant mass-meeting in New York, urging Republican unity ; the party's brilliant triumphs were won by the toleration of minor differences, said he. To a delegation from North Carolina, who called to pay their respects, he commended the Administration of President Grant ; he said Grant deserved to be re-elected as much as Lincoln did in 1864 ; the impartial verdict of history on the two men would be the same. To Mr. Sinclair he wrote : " I suspect you didn't like my letter to the *Indiana State Journal*. But it was a political duty. I can't consent to add to our unfortunate divisions a contest all over the United States between the friends of the President and Vice-President for the nomination. I love my party too well."

He wrote Mr. Sinclair again a little later :

" I must acknowledge the compliment of the splendid dinner you got up for me, and I was very glad to meet those I did. I determined to avoid discussion of the ' situation,' but you saw how it came on. I hope you did not think I spoke too zealously when I *had* to speak or give tacit assent to points made in my presence against Grant. I tried to be respectful and good-natured, but to show them that duty to the party required me to do what I did. Now the Indiana Convention is past and has done all that could be asked, I shall write no more letters. But in point of mere policy alone (although real friendship had far more to do with my action), my position is just what it should be."

So he had been in the enemy's camp. In one of his editorial homilies when a mere boy he asks : " Have you heard your friend traduced and listened in silence ?" The enemy invaded his camp in turn. The recalcitrant editors were not seldom guests at No. 7 Lafayette Square. " It is due the party to state a fact within our knowledge," said the *Baltimore American*. " The strongest persuasions and arguments have been employed to induce Mr. Colfax to consent that his name should go before the Philadelphia

Convention for nomination to the Presidency. He has firmly refused, saying, 'General Grant merits the confidence of the nation, and I will not oppose him.' "

There was cause for alarm. Republican defection was a new thing. It had not then been shown that apostate leaders, whatever their standing, could not, as did Lucifer, lead off the host. Greeley and Sumner, fathers of the party, had the respect and confidence of Republicans to an extraordinary degree; and the four great Republican newspapers—*New York Tribune*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Cincinnati Commercial*, *Springfield Republican*—and many party leaders of the second or third rank falling off with them, all professedly out of dissatisfaction with President Grant, made the prospect, not of nominating, but of electing Grant, appear somewhat dubious. A slight defection in the voters would lose the great central States, and with them the battle. This gave character to the demand that Colfax should become a candidate against Grant.

By the end of March he appears to have seen that his disinterestedness was not appreciated by the real party managers, and that they, in fact, contemplated throwing him overboard. He looked at it philosophically, however. Referring to his February letter to the State Convention of Indiana, he writes: "I doubt whether the party throughout the United States realize the sacrifice I thus made, for the movement had made but little noise outside of the State, and I also doubt whether many other public men would have acted as I did, turning their back on so flattering a temptation. But I do love the party and its unity and success far more than any possible advancement, and am willing to be sacrificed politically, now and hereafter, if thereby the harmony and continued ascendancy of the party can be secured. My political future is quite uncertain. I will not work and electioneer for a renomination, and have not; others are working vigorously, as they have a right to do. But having said I would accept a renomination if the party thought it best to renominate the old ticket again, I shall leave it to the convention, unembarrassed by any efforts to control their action. If they deem



it best to put on a new man with General Grant, I can go on the retired list, as you know, without a murmur of regret." Mr. Bowles wrote him on the 5th of April :

" I really wish you had stayed out of this business after you once got out. It is not going to be pleasant for you or your friends. I find a growing conviction that the people who are running the ' machine ' mean to slaughter you at Philadelphia. I cannot think they will be so stupid, yet I believe, on the whole, that I hope they will do it ! The party is going to the bad under such leadership as [that of] Morton and Butler and Grant. If they cannot be thrown off by resolution, the people will come in and throw them off by a revolution ; not this year, possibly, but still surely, and in good time."

But no considerations personal to himself availed to shake the Vice-President's loyalty to his conception of his duty ; and the " Liberal " Republicans were unable to convince him that the cause now and always so near his heart could be served by his allowing himself to be placed at the head of the " reform " revolt. So these Mugwumps of 1872 went to Cincinnati, and on the 1st of May nominated Horace Greeley himself for President. This revived the demand for the Vice-President's candidacy for first place on the regular Republican ticket, and now it came from straight Republicans, who believed that if by any means Colfax could be nominated by their party, the Greeley ticket would collapse of itself. Without any doubt it would have collapsed in that case, at any time before it was indorsed by the Democracy.<sup>1</sup> But Colfax could be nominated only if Grant withdrew ; and Grant had been denounced and vilified until he desired the nomination as a vindication. The persistency of the demand for Colfax in the interest of harmony seems finally to have produced a coolness toward him at the White House ; for it was given out that if the President had any choice among the aspirants for a place on the ticket with him, it was not the Vice-President. Grant may not have authorized this, probably did not ; but he could have disowned it. If he had said the single word that Colfax would have

1. Early in July the Democratic National Convention met at Baltimore, adopted the Greeley ticket, and indorsed the Greeley platform.

hastened to say had their cases been reversed, there would have remained no more doubt of Colfax's renomination than of his own. Without being actually jealous, Grant may well have preferred that a man who cast so huge a shadow should stand a little farther from the throne. Of jealousy, there is nothing in his history to show that he was capable. At the same time, he never hesitated to set aside a man who displeased him, if it was within his power ; and he did it with the impassiveness of fate.

On the eve of the meeting of the Philadelphia Convention, May 23d, the Vice-President wrote General Hawley, of Connecticut, in answer to the suggestion that his nomination for President might restore harmony, that he did not suppose any other nomination than Grant's to be within the range of possibility. "Nearly all the States have declared in favor of his nomination. Unless he declines, therefore, his renomination is as certain as the assembling of the convention ; and though there has been a good deal of general discussion as to the possibilities of peril in our present political situation, I do not think the President believes there is any danger whatever ; and he cannot therefore consider that his withdrawal would be in any way advisable. I could not present my name in rivalry or opposition to his, he remaining a candidate, as he doubtless will ; for it would be attributed to an ambition to succeed him, which I never had, and as a personal movement tending to political discords, alienations, and consequent mischiefs. Hence I have resisted all appeals to allow my name to be used in antagonism to his, even when urged so strongly last February by life-long friends and influential papers in my own State ; and I have so replied, when I have replied at all, to numerous letters from many parts of the United States."

The Vice-President had for two years perceived, and had been constantly repeating, that President Grant's renomination was inevitable. His Presidency had been as successful as his generalship. Now, as in the year of battles, he was the rock on which the people rested. The Grant of the White House was the identical Grant of the Wilder-

ness. The discontent of party leaders was mainly personal. Whether he could be re-elected might be questionable; that he would be renominated, unless he should decline, was absolutely certain. His renomination was the work of the people.

The Republican Convention met at Philadelphia on the first Monday in June, nominated Grant for President in obedience to the instructions of the States, and proceeded to ballot for a candidate for Vice-President. As usual, there were several "favorite sons;" there were but two candidates—Schuyler Colfax, of Indiana, and Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts. There was an idea in the convention that the nomination of Wilson would be a good Roland for Sumner's Oliver, and that the eight-hour law was in some way Wilson's thunder. Certain Washington newspaper correspondents, who claimed that Colfax had slighted them since his elevation to the Vice-Presidency, worked actively and efficiently against him.

The result, however, was easily in the hands of the President's friends, who had literally forced the candidacy upon Colfax, and they gave the nomination to Wilson. The Chairman of the Indiana delegation wrote Colfax: "In my own mind I gave up the contest on Tuesday, when Cameron failed to give us any assurance of support." In Lancaster County, Penn., the only place in Cameron's dominions where the voters were consulted, Colfax received 4698 votes against 296 for Wilson.<sup>1</sup> Of course but for Colfax's letter of 1870, there would have been no candidate against him. He would have been renominated by general consent. But it was peculiarly brutal, after forcing him to substantially recall that letter, to allow him to be defeated on account of it. It is true that his power was moral only; he never meddled with the machinery of politics; and in ordinary times the political machine cares as little as any other machine for moral power.

At the Chicago Convention, four years before, with 324 votes necessary to a choice, he had but 186 on the fourth ballot. On this occasion, with 377 necessary to a choice,

1. Dispatch in *New York Tribune* of March 12th, 1872.

at the close of the first ballot he had  $321\frac{1}{2}$  to Wilson's  $360\frac{1}{2}$ , 63 scattering. With no exertion on his part, but all by friends, who had made him a candidate against his wishes, this was not a bad showing of strength. At that moment the result depended on whether a Colfax or a Wilson man first got the floor to change the scattering votes from the "favorite sons" to Colfax or to Wilson. A Wilson man having been made chairman expressly for this contingency, Colfax of course had no further chance of winning.

Mr. E. G. D. Holden, of Grand Rapids, Mich., wrote Colfax in 1874: "I did not so much regret your defeat for renomination at Philadelphia, in 1872 (for I was in that vast hall at the time), because I felt that the people would need you in 1876. There were dozens within my hearing that day, when the final result was reached and you were defeated and your telegram came, who said: 'It is all right; Colfax shall be the next President;' and I pray God it may prove true."

The Hon. A. W. Tenny said at Williamsburgh, N. Y., June 12th, 1872: "Though Colfax was defeated he was not dishonored. The great heart of the nation throbs as warmly for him to-day as it did in 1868. No man is more beloved by the American people than he. Firm in principle, courteous in manner, steadfast in his devotion to the cause of his country and humanity, he has made his life illustrious by duties faithfully performed, and by his sublime impersonation of those rare and shining qualities which make the Christian patriot and the honest man. And as we now take our farewell of him for the campaign of 1872, we mingle with our farewell a nation's benediction and a people's love."

The *Chicago Evening Post* said: "In the great virtues which constitute a pure and high statesmanship Henry Wilson is one of the noble few who can match Schuyler Colfax. That he does this is the highest praise, and this we cheerfully accord him."

The Vice-President received the intelligence of his defeat with equanimity. He hastened to telegraph his

thanks to his friends and supporters, his adhesion to the ticket, and his congratulations to his successful competitor. To a part of the Indiana delegation who called on him in Washington, and, through Judge Denny, paid their respects in a very handsome manner, he replied that he accepted the action of the convention without regret, and should go on the retired list with no unkind feelings toward any one. He loved far better than political honors the Republican Party, whose great deeds were never even approached by any other party in any age or clime. The Republican Party had yet much to do before disbanding. As always heretofore, he would be found in November supporting the ticket and platform. The same day he wrote Sinclair :

“ Glad to receive your kind letter, but Philadelphia has not left a sting behind with any of us. We go Tuesday or Wednesday to our quiet Western home, sure of more happiness and rest. Mrs. Colfax will not return here next winter, and I shall board, and not keep house. Wasn't it odd that, after all, Pennsylvania should have defeated me? Some of these days I will tell you and Mrs. S. things I could not say now without seeming sore-headed, which I am not. But it is no secret that Cameron's demand that Pennsylvania should vote against me caused my defeat, and that he was deaf to appeals from his most earnest friends. I would not make any appeals to him, of course, or to any one else, for many reasons, and didn't want any one to do so.

“ I have the consciousness of having done my duty to my party and its organization ; of resisting every temptation from my State and elsewhere to add my name to the list of Vice-Presidents who drifted into rivalry to their chiefs ; and of having given up my expressed desire to retire at the demand of many influential Republicans. But the fact that I had been mentioned as one that could unite the party ; who had not quarrelled with any of the malcontent Republicans ; and who had privately preached the gospel of recognition and conciliation as a political necessity to keep three millions of voters united and victorious, weakened me in some quarters. The Administration organ here, as the *Republican* is called, was steadily against me ; but I do not suppose the President took any part, one way or the other, and I did what I did without ever asking reciprocity. I have not seen him for a week.

“ As you say, our roads must diverge, but our friendship must not be impaired. I must stand by the regular organization for many reasons. I have been honored by it in the past in many ways. My name was submitted to it, and I have no taste for co-operation with Democrats. But though I don't expect to be in the canvass, I cannot say a word against my old friend, H. G., deeply as I regret his candidacy.”

This letter implies, plainly enough, the writer's conviction that he had been entitled to a reciprocity of friendly offices from the President, which he had not received, and this was true. At the same time, General Grant said of him to some Baltimore friends: "Previous to my election to the Presidency I had esteemed Mr. Colfax very highly; but I have learned since to regard him as a man who can always be relied on, and whose judgment is never warped by prejudice or private considerations. He is probably the first Vice-President who in our history has been awarded by the President any influence in executive affairs."

The Vice-President reached home by way of Andover, O., about the 20th of June. That evening a mass-meeting of thousands of his townsmen surrounded his residence as a serenading party, and called him out. He made a characteristic speech, acknowledging his indebtedness to his fellow-citizens of South Bend and the district for their whole-hearted support these many years. He glanced over his career, from his founding of the *St. Joseph Valley Register* and his election to the Constitutional Convention of his State. To uplift the down-trodden, to secure equal rights and protection for the humblest, had been his one sole aim as he had travelled this broad land over and over and spoken from the stump twelve hundred times in half the States of the Union. The courts of the State had affirmed his position in the Constitutional Convention; and to-day not a voice was lifted between the two oceans against the principles for which they had unitedly contended. "Looking back on my twenty-two years of public service," said he, "if I were to die and be gathered to my fathers to-night, there is not a single line of my record that, dying, I would wish to blot out—not one." He thought it a fit time for him to pass to the retired list, and ended by repeating with emphasis his indorsement of the Philadelphia ticket and platform; his devotion to principles, he said, not being affected by considerations of public office and public dignity.

His family physician had formally warned him of the danger to his health, and even life, involved in his making

another such canvass as for twenty years he had been in the habit of making. Usage did not require this on the part of Presidents or Vice-Presidents. He had done it for the love of it in 1870, saying then, all over the State, that it was the last canvass he intended ever to make. He had planned for the summer visits with his wife to several places in the high North-west. But most pressing calls for help, from Maine to Texas, poured in on him. Mr. Blaine wrote from Augusta, Me. : "Come now and help us. I do not feel like taking No for an answer. Do come!" Mr. Cornell wrote from New York : "Do not say No to us ; your eloquent voice will be heard and heeded by our people." The whole County Committee wrote : "The cry goes up from Lake County, 'Oh, that Colfax would come ; one speech from him would work our deliverance !'" The Hon. Zachary Chandler, Chairman of the Union Republican Congressional Executive Committee, wrote him, July 26th : "It is deemed of the highest importance, as, in fact, an essential element of the campaign in its present aspects, that you should make a speech at the earliest moment possible, at any place and under any circumstances you choose, so that the same may be published and scattered broadcast. Your present silence is working great harm ; a timely speech will do us great good. Please telegraph a reply."

Soon after his return home he had written Colonel Foster : "With my physicians' warning, and having publicly indorsed the new ticket at Philadelphia, at Washington, and at home, I must be allowed to go back, as the National Convention did, to my public declarations of 1870, so well understood all over Indiana." But he answered Chandler's appeal, August 3d, on introducing Governor Morton to a South Bend audience ; making a brief, stirring speech, which was printed as a campaign document and circulated by the tens of thousands. No doubt it was a strong element in stemming and turning the political tide, which had thus far set toward Greeley with great force and volume.

On the 1st of August he writes Mrs. Sinclair : "Mother

has been much more dangerously ill since we came back from Washington than ever before. She is very weak, and we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that her life cannot be long. We have given up all of our proposed summer visiting, and have not been away a night from home." Again, August 7th, after saying that his mother was apparently somewhat better : "As I wrote you, I stand by the regular ticket, for it is a political and personal duty, having submitted my name to the Philadelphia Convention, to vote exactly as if I had been nominated instead of defeated there. Nor have I allowed a syllable of complaint against any one to fall from my lips. Whether all I did for the unity of the party and to maintain the utmost harmony between the two highest officers of the Government was reciprocated or not, does not affect my course in the slightest."

He had declined to go into the active stump-speaking canvass, he continued, but "at the request of our Republicans I presided and also spoke at Senator Morton's meeting here last Saturday. I hope you read my speech and saw that I said nothing against your cousin [Greeley], except that he and I, after a lifetime of personal friendship, should vote this year different tickets. I have had many acts of friendship from him, and no political obligation requires me to say any unkind word of him ; and I would not do it if it did, notwithstanding our pathways of duty lie in opposite directions. So you must give me one credit mark, not a very long one, for whoever does only his duty is not entitled to a very long one."

It is plain that Colfax was no politician, after all. A man who would neglect a political duty out of regard for his personal friend, and who was as faithful to duty as the steel to the magnet, must have mistaken his vocation when he engaged in politics.

On the 10th of August Henry Wilson was in South Bend to speak. Colfax's mother was dying, but the ruthlessness of politics compelled her to send him away from her side to Wilson's meeting. "Schuyler, you must go there," she said. "If you do not, you know what they



will say. No matter about me, I wish you to go." Always obedient to his mother, he went to the meeting, introduced Wilson in a generous and manly speech, and hastened back, his mother living less than twenty hours afterward.

Mrs. Matthews died of cancer Sunday afternoon, August 11th, 1872, at half-past four o'clock. It was four years since the dread disease had declared itself; for four years the Angel of Death had visibly hovered over the Vice-President's home. In the effort to save Mrs. Matthews, every remedy known to science was tested. Temporary relief, possibly some postponement of the inevitable end, was all that was accomplished by this and by the most assiduous and tender care and nursing. Her son wrote Mrs. Sinclair, August 26th :

"Your kind letter of the 14th brought sympathy to all our stricken household, and it was needed, for our house is very lonely and desolate; far more than we imagined it could be before our dear sufferer passed away. She commenced failing steadily in June, and day by day grew worse and weaker. We tried to imagine that we would realize that God's will was wiser than ours, ending her years of agony, and find consolation in that beautiful idea that life is not really life till it is baptized in death. But since she has gone we cannot feel reconciled to her [our] loss. Mr. Matthews is overwhelmed with grief, and wanders around inconsolable. I have insisted that he shall go and visit his daughters in Iowa, Colorado, and Utah till November (when we go to Washington) to escape the harrowing reminiscences of anguish and care and death about this house. He seems lost, now that the strain on his mental and physical nature has ceased, and the daily, nightly, and hourly war with the enemy that robbed us of her is over.

"The terribly sultry weather hastened her departure. For three weeks—from the time she kept her room till her death—she was fanned night and day, mainly by Mr. Matthews, as he could not leave her, and she could not bear him out of her sight. Fortunately, in her last days she lost all dread of death; her hopes as to the future were bright, and the agonizing pain left her; so that she passed away like one free from all pain. She looked beautiful in her coffin, robed as a bride; brighter and younger-looking than when she presided for me in Washington before this terrible malady attacked her.

"She was conscious, and recognized us all (my sisters Carrie and Mary had come on) lovingly to the end. Indeed, after her pulse had stopped and her extremities were cold, in her last breath, when her devoted husband (and there never was so devoted a husband and nurse)

was bidding her a weeping farewell, she fixed her mouth, as she had so often during the day, to kiss him, and then passed away.

"Dear mother! you know how I loved her and how she loved me. All I am I owe to her; and amid our sorrows I feel happy that the last nine years of her life she was with me, and enjoyed so many happy hours in our family. But for the cancer she would probably have out-lived me."

Mrs. Matthews was a leader in society, whether in the pioneer settlements of Northern Indiana or in the social circles of the National Capital. Perhaps she was best known as the presiding genius at the home and at the receptions of her son while he was Speaker of the House. An observer in those times declares: "Mrs. Matthews, as a woman, is precisely what her son is as a man: sunshiny, kindly, unpretentious; unspoiled by personal success or popular adulation. Amid fashionable life, she preserves intact the simplest tastes, the most genial manners, the gentlest affections." Hospitable in feeling, genial in manner, kind in heart, brilliant in conversation, noble in all her nature, she had her full share in making the Speaker's receptions the most popular gatherings of the kind, perhaps, ever known in Washington.<sup>1</sup> Many yet survive in all parts of the land who knew her in those days, and who will never forget her gracious ways. Her memory is also still tenderly cherished by her old-time friends, yearly growing fewer, in Northern Indiana, where she was always the helpful neighbor, the light and life of the social circle, and active from her first arrival in promoting the interests of religion and education.

After his mother's death the Vice-President's wife was seriously ill until the middle of October. He attended all the political meetings at South Bend, however, presiding,

1. "Speaker Colfax's receptions," wrote an observer in 1868, "are unlike all others in some respects. No prominent man in Washington receives his thousands of admirers, and says to them after an introduction: 'This is my mother.' She stands by his side, with no one to separate them, bearing a strong personal resemblance to him, while she is only seventeen years his senior. At what a tender age her love commenced for this boy Schuyler—nobody else's boy, though he were President! She has put on her chameleon silk and the cap with blue ribbons to receive the multitude that flock in masses to do homage to her son. Pride half slumbers in her bosom, but love is vigilant and wide-awake. There is no metallic impression on her countenance—a genuine heartfelt welcome is extended to all who come to pay their respects to her idol. So the people come and go, and wonder why Speaker Colfax's receptions are unlike all others."

introducing the speakers, and bearing his own testimony in brief speeches, which were given all the currency possible by the Associated Press. In the heat of the State canvass, while his home was the abode of sickness, suffering, and death, he addressed three mass-meetings in as many counties, his voice thus reaching thirty thousand people.

He made a dozen speeches afterward to great gatherings, the last of them among his best. A Cincinnati reporter describes his meeting at Kokomo, November 1st :

“ Most of the time it was like a religious meeting under intense excitement. The fixed attitude of many of the listeners was an almost painful study. The entire attention of the whole audience was of a peculiar character. There were no cheers, but there was the closest sympathy with the speaker and the most profound attention. There were laughter and mirth, and any number of fervent ejaculations and responses, but no outbursts of applause, such as find vent in huzzas.

“ While his speech was a gallant defence of Grant's Administration, it did not contain a word of personal or party abuse. It was marked by a triumphant air, as if the speaker were assured of success. The effect upon the audience was like sunshine. ‘ I see victory in your faces,’ he said, and every face was positively beaming. In speaking, he displayed the most astonishing versatility of expression. He piled adjective upon adjective just as he did line upon line, precept on precept, analogy upon analogy. His illustrations were drawn from every source, and were very effective.”

The Vice-President dealt with principles and policies ; he defended without attacking ; built up without pulling down ; and while speaking more than all his predecessors in the Vice-Presidential office put together, he made it seem, from the high plane on which he kept the argument, rather a gracious thing for a Vice-President to do. To his old constituents in Indiana and to his near neighbors in Michigan, however, he was Schuyler Colfax. No office could confer additional dignity on the man, nor could he divest himself of aught of his real belongings in laying aside the robes of office.

The canvass was largely a fight between old political friends, now estranged, and was bitter and unscrupulous to the last degree. About the 1st of September charges of bribery and corruption in connection with the Union

Pacific Railroad and its construction company, the Credit Mobilier of America, were cast into the arena. A few years previously Henry S. McComb, of Delaware, had instituted a suit in a Pennsylvania court against Oakes Ames and others, stockholders in the Credit Mobilier of America, to force them to an accounting for certain shares of the stock and its accretions, alleged by McComb to be wrongfully withheld, and, on the strength of letters of Oakes Ames to him, "to have been distributed to members of Congress without consideration, for corrupt and fraudulent purposes." Mr. McComb's testimony in this suit, inclusive of copies of Ames's letters to him, was made public through the New York press. The apportionment of the stock in Ames's letters was by States, but on the back of an envelope in McComb's possession he had pencilled, he said from Ames's reading, the names of the dozen Congressmen, with the amounts, to whom shares had been allotted. In this list twenty shares were assigned to Mr. Colfax. McComb's testimony proved a rich mine of campaign material for the Greeley press, out of which were shaped all forms of calumny, in accordance with the taste and capacity in that line of each particular artist.<sup>1</sup>

It was alleged, for example, that by the distribution of this stock Ames carried through Congress a scandalous proposition, by which the Government abandoned its first mortgage on the road, and allowed the bonds of the company to take precedence; and that by the aid of these bribed men, Ames had swindled the Government out of the whole gross sum for the mail service, while refusing to pay the interest on the Government bonds, as it accrued.

On the 25th day of September, at a political meeting in South Bend, urged by his political friends, the Vice-President took occasion to say something about this. "Not to put myself on the defensive—far from it," he said; "but

1. For example, a Baltimore paper charged that fourteen gentlemen, whom it named, had received twenty-seven thousand shares of this stock, worth in the aggregate seven million eight hundred thousand dollars. "This," said the paper, "is a portion of the enormous bribery and corruption used to carry through the most monstrous fraud of the age—a fraud by which the American people have been robbed of thousands of millions of dollars in money and bonds."

that we may see out of what worthless stuff campaign charges are manufactured." There never was an hour in his public life, he continued, that he would not have willingly left any charge affecting his honesty "to a jury of my political opponents here. No man ever dared to make me a dishonest proposition." He valued the opinion of no one who, knowing him, believed that his ownership in anything could swerve him one hair's breadth from his convictions of duty.

He spoke of his overland journey in 1865, with representatives of the three influential newspapers now giving currency to these infamous charges, and his many speeches, addresses, and lectures afterward, all for the purpose of directing attention to the necessity, feasibility, and great promise of the Pacific Railroad, and of securing its speedy construction, as evidence "that bribing me to support Pacific Railroad interests is just as incredible as that I should need to be bribed to vote the Republican ticket." These labors had the desired effect. "Since we went over the plains," he read from the dedication of Bowles's "Across the Continent," dated December 25th, 1865, "labor upon the eastern end of this road has had a new impetus; new elements of capital and enterprise have become engaged."

"But these very capitalists," he went on, "have been denounced ever since by many papers and politicians as no better than swindlers, for accepting what had been proffered and reproffered by Congress, with the heartiest popular indorsement, and finally risking their millions, where others would not hazard their dollars." Mr. Ames, he said, did not invest a dollar in the enterprise until after he and these newspaper men had appealed to Boards of Trade and capitalists to subscribe "the hundred millions of money to create a new republic—to marry to the nation of the Atlantic an equal if not greater nation of the Pacific," and these appeals had been published; until more than a year, too, after this enactment by Congress in 1864. The railroad had never received or claimed but the half of the gross sum for carrying the mails; the

other half had always been retained and applied on the interest of the bonds. Secretary Boutwell undertook, in 1870, to retain the entire compensation for this service, but the Senate decided that the charter did not authorize it.

“These charges,” he continued, “are very grave, and if true would blast forever the characters of men capable of such conduct, and give color and confirmation to the original charges of bribery and corruption. All of them are false, and known to be false by those who made them. Day after day they have sought to make the people of the United States suspect a number of their prominent public men, and the builders of the Union Pacific Railroad generally, [of being] a band of thieves, scoundrels, and swindlers, and they have demanded that those thus assailed ‘should be heard from.’ Well, they have heard now a calm, dispassionate statement from one of those whom one of the *Tribunes* stigmatized as ‘the twelve apostles who sold out to the Credit Mobilier at twenty thousand dollars apiece.’”

In the course of the speech, he said in substance that he had never owned any stock that he did not pay for; that he claimed the same right as any other man to purchase stock in the Credit Mobilier, or any corporation or property; that neither Oakes Ames nor anybody else had ever given or offered to give him Credit Mobilier or any other railroad stock; and that he had never received a farthing of the fabulous dividends “you have read about the past month.”

In the light of subsequent events, this speech was charged against the Vice-President as intentionally misleading, because it purported to make a personal explanation, and did not make it a full one. By making it seem as if the personal explanation was the gist instead of the merest incident of the speech, some color was given the charge. The speech exploded the current charges of Credit Mobilier bribery and corruption in connection with Pacific Railroad legislation, and thereby defeated the Greeley coalition. This was the Vice-President’s offence. “Nor was the *Republican* prepared,” said his old friend

Bowles, "to see a Christian statesman, a light of the evangelical platform, a pillar of the Sunday-school, and a professed teacher and exponent of the loftiest morality, interposing his own good name and good record as a screen between a self-convicted malefactor and justice;" a sneer which betrays whom the speech defended. Read, "as a screen between Grant and defeat," or, "as a screen between Greeley and success," and one has the secret of the malignity with which the Greeley journals denounced the Vice-President the ensuing winter, and with which some of them pursued him the rest of his life.

Nothing could better indicate his standing in his own State at this time, and the tone of mind which had become second nature to him, than the attentions paid him by both Houses of the Legislature on his visiting Indianapolis, in November, and the tenor of his speeches to them. He dwelt briefly on the personal and material changes time had brought since his reportorial days; on the illustrious deeds of Indiana's sons on land and sea; on the future possibilities of the State. Passing to the responsibilities of the office of legislator, he discoursed like a seer of the olden time. To so act as to promote always the public welfare, to rise above transient political divisions, and to endeavor to make the State nobler among her sister States, truer to the right, was the duty of her legislators. Rules had been written by the finger of Inspiration itself to guide them. "There shall be but one law for him that is born among you and for the stranger;" and "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Whatever was in accordance with these principles would be right; it would stand on their statute-books to the honor of the State and of her legislators; and the shadow on the dial which marked the future progress and glory of such a State would never go backward.

It was rumored in October that the *New York Tribune* Association would offer the Vice-President its vacant editorial chair, after the Presidential election, and reverse the fatal course of the paper, with the view of saving the subscriptions to its weekly edition, mainly expiring at that

season, and of recovering, if possible, its old receipts, fallen off at the rate of a thousand dollars a day, on account of the aberration of its chief. In November Mr. Sinclair, publisher and part owner, wrote Mr. Colfax: "Were the editorship of the *Tribune* offered you, would you feel inclined to accept it; and in such case could you have friends with yourself to secure a controlling interest? The concern is richly worth one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, but I suppose one million dollars would be about the basis." The Vice-President replied from South Bend, November 23d: "There are a hundred questions to be asked before I could commence considering your inquiry. I have taken stock in three of our manufactories, and expect to settle down here quietly, and next summer they want me to put through a new railroad in my spare time. If you wish an answer now, it could not be yes. Mrs. C. is at Andover, and I am sure would not say yes. She has the veto in our family."

December 1st he wrote Sinclair again from Washington:

"I arrived here last night, hearing on the road from Andover the sad news of the last days and death of Mr. Greeley. You can imagine how it all shocked me. I can understand, now, the meaning of your letter, which I did not at the time. Frankly, Mrs. Colfax is not willing for me to give up my plans of rest and travel and quiet business, for she thinks she will own more of me than if I keep in the maelstrom of politics. You know, of course, I could have been Congressman-at-large from Indiana, and it was hard work to refuse my name. But we both thought it was a good time to rest and seek to enjoy life.

"You, perhaps, remember that [Greeley's] Indianapolis speech, which it was said was aimed for me; but it did not at the time cause me to forget H. G.'s many friendly words and deeds in the past quarter of a century; and before his open grave I remember only his earnest friendship and his glorious leadership in so many contests of the olden time. I rejoice now that in all the twenty speeches I made this year, I never uttered an unkind word against him, not a criticism, even, not a syllable that could in any way have pained him.

"How sad Mrs. Sinclair must be! I know how she loved and venerated her cousin, how proud she was of his history and his fame, as well she might be. Please express to her my sincerest sympathies. I have passed through deep waters of affliction myself, but I *do* believe that death is but the commencement of real life—this world but the vestibule to a magnificent temple beyond."



After the election, which went overwhelmingly Republican, Mr. Greeley had resumed his editorial post with a characteristically manly card. On the 1st of December he died. Never was there a more pathetic ending to a great life.<sup>1</sup> In the procession to the grave, which was a noble one, Colfax, Grant, and Henry Wilson rode in the same carriage. Horace Greeley had no sincerer mourner in death, as in life he had no warmer friend than Schuyler Colfax. If the latter had yielded to his dead friend's appeals to contest the nomination with Grant, Greeley would not himself have become a candidate, have worn himself out in the canvass, and died of chagrin at its result. On the other hand, if he had heeded Colfax's warnings against placing himself in antagonism to the party he had so largely created, that party would not have been forced to defeat him and end his life. Greeley was wrong in not yielding to Colfax; Colfax was right in not yielding to Greeley.

The *Baltimore American* of December 9th, 1872, said :

"Undoubtedly, there is no man in the country who could take the vacant chair of Mr. Greeley with more certainty of restoring that great journal to its former influence and importance than Mr. Colfax. Like Mr. Greeley, he is the next 'best-known man in the United States.' He has all those personal elements about him which distinguished Mr. Greeley as a man of the people. He has fought the battles of the Republican Party with all the unflinching fearlessness of Mr. Greeley, and was the foremost of those who labored with him in its formation and in contributing to its success. Mr. Greeley's 'faith in right, his hatred of wrong, his anxiety to better the condition of the poor, his sympathy with the oppressed, his efforts to give strength to the struggling, and his unceasing labors to promote the moral and material advancement of his country,' always met with earnest and active co-operation from Mr. Colfax. He has acted with Mr. Greeley heartily in everything but his 'mistakes,' and he was through life nearer to his inmost heart than any other living man. There is no man more capable of succeeding Mr. Greeley,

1. "We have been terribly beaten," he writes his friend Colonel Tappan, of New Hampshire. "I was the worst beaten man who ever ran for the high office. And I have been assailed so bitterly, that I hardly knew whether I was running for President or the Penitentiary. In the darkest hour my suffering wife left me, none too soon, for she had suffered too deeply and too long. I laid her in the ground with hard, dry eyes. Well, I am used up. I cannot see before me. I have slept little for weeks, and my eyes are still hard to close, while they soon open again. But no more of this. You knew, as I did, that we must stop fighting the rebels some time. But it is now settled that we never shall."

or whose characteristics are more in accord with the best days of the great journalist."

Early in December Colfax went to New York, and he and Sinclair informally talked over the terms, each taking care not to finally commit himself. From their correspondence it appears that Colfax was to have "exactly the same editorial control that Mr. Greeley had. It must be with substantial unanimity on the part of the stockholders. I am a man of strong convictions as to principles and policies, but want peace and not irritation in business and domestic matters." The contract was to cover two years, at fifteen thousand dollars a year, with a bonus of five thousand dollars for expense of moving from South Bend to New York. Colfax was to have twelve shares of *Tribune* stock at one hundred thousand dollars, the same to be paid for within a year, or sooner if possible. He was to buy one share as soon as he could sell something else, get friends to carry two shares for him till he could pay for them, and have friends of his take the other nine shares. Sinclair thinks the price too low, but says: "I shall yield to you on that point. Were it not for my house-building and so forth, I would insist that other parties than myself should sell."

Mr. Colfax replies that he is trying to raise the money. "It is quite a drawback to me that I am not rich, but not a cent of all I have can I trace to salaries or anything else in public life. I believe I told you that I had an offer from Bowen of ten thousand dollars per year as editor of the *Independent*, a weekly, and light work. I was asked by Crouse, of the *New York Times*, if I would consider any other proposition. I told him I could not, honorably, as matters now stand, no matter how liberal it might be. The offer of twelve thousand dollars was a business one at Rondout, N. Y." He had still another proposition to go into journalism, but declined to consider it.

On the 15th Colfax writes his wife: "Orton buys tomorrow, in all probability, fifty-one shares, a controlling interest, for five hundred and ten thousand dollars, of Sinclair [part of his] and others! He wants me to be editor,

but I must find out who is the moneyed man behind him. If some railroad king, and he wants it for railroad interests, I will not go in."

Mr. William M. Orton completed the purchase on the 16th, went to Washington the next day, and persuaded Colfax to consent. The Vice-President wrote his salutatory for the *Weekly Tribune*, to be issued the next morning, the 18th, and sent his secretary, Mr. Todd, to New York with it, subject to telegraphic orders up to the time of going to press. He telegraphed his wife: "Orton and I have definitely settled the details this (Tuesday) evening, and we go to New York to live." Fifteen minutes later he received a letter from Mrs. Colfax, in which she said: "I hope you will not accept." He telegraphed his secretary to withhold the announcement, and wrote Orton, who was still in Washington, that it was the business of a life, not of an hour, with him; and that he must have three days to go and see Mrs. Colfax in Ohio before he could irrevocably decide.

Mr. Orton replied, on the 18th, that he was surprised, for he had retired the previous evening in "the belief that a night's reflection would dispel your doubts, and that I should receive notice to that effect this morning." Reciting the history of the negotiation as above related, Orton says: "You now ask for a delay of three days. The state of my arrangements for the future management of the property renders it impossible for me to consent, and I am constrained to accept your action as a termination of the negotiation for the present. Should you be inclined to reopen it at any time before I have concluded other arrangements, I shall be pleased to hear from you."

Mr. Colfax answers this letter later in the day, detailing the grounds of his action. "I had supposed till the close of our conversation that the eight shares had been reserved for me out of the fifty-one. As it stands now, you could sell the fifty-one shares outright to any one or to any interest, and while I would be editor I would be powerless, and the public would understand that the proprietary control was in the hands of an unfriendly person. I

fear I would be a very positive editor, perhaps too much so for one powerless in the proprietary interest of the paper." He says further that he did not (on the 17th) have a satisfactory interview, Orton's mind seeming to be preoccupied by other business. "I did not wish to disoblige an old and valued friend like yourself, nor to ask delay, and you regarded it as essential that action should be had at once. I therefore informally and generally said what I did, though expressing decided dislike of the modification of my terms as to time of contract." He acknowledged Orton's right to terminate the negotiation for the present, and accepted it, giving Orton full liberty to say that it was his fault. Thus it ended, and well for the Vice-President.

Had he been ten years younger, and able to get his steadfast friends to purchase and hold the controlling interest in the paper, it would have been a great opportunity. But with the control anywhere else, no matter where, it was no place for him; for, as he said, he was a man of strong convictions, and years in high office had increased his natural unfitness for a subordinate position.

Four years later he wrote to Mr. Orton, thanking him for protesting "against the false and unjust use of my name in the *Sun's* account of the *Tribune* negotiations. We both well know that our negotiation did not fall through on account of the Credit Mobilier charge. My wife's reluctance and the fear that I should be exposed to just such charges as Whitelaw Reid has to bear now were the cause, and, in spite of constant questioning, I refused to tell anything about where the money came from." It is no secret now that it came from Jay Gould; nor was it a secret then in the Vice-President's family; nor that this was the main objection he had to accepting the position. Within a week Mr. Reid had somehow displaced Mr. Orton in Mr. Gould's good graces. Gould found Orton's collateral unsatisfactory; Orton's friends failed to come to his assistance; and the *Tribune* of the 23d of November contained Reid's salutatory instead of either Colfax's or Orton's.

Mr. Sinclair wrote Colfax, December 21st: "There was

no action by our Board of Trustees, only a talk. Several of the trustees doubted whether the change [in the course of the paper] should be made while the then proprietors owned ; but when a sale should have been effected, nearly every one agreed that you would be the man for editor. After consultation with Ripley, Rooker, and others, I think all but Reid decided to sell, and I saw Orton, giving him the answer just before I saw you at Hoyt's. The entire scheme would have met the approval of the stockholders and the public. I think that you missed a golden opportunity to make a big reputation in a newspaper."

Most of the Republican papers desired that Mr. Colfax should accept the editorship of the *Tribune* for the sake of the party. Most of his personal friends in the press desired it for his own sake as well as the party's, but some of them advised him against it, and gave strong reasons. The people of South Bend were greatly relieved when the negotiations fell through. "You cannot imagine how anxious your friends here were during the negotiations," wrote Mr. Alfred B. Miller, of the *South Bend Tribune*, "and I did not hear one express aught but regret that you should think of going in there." His South Bend friends believed that his removal to New York and entrance on this new editorial career would in some way be detrimental to his chances of being called to the Chief Magistracy, upon which their hearts had been set for years.

The Vice-President went to Ohio, and he and Mrs. Colfax took their Christmas dinner with Uncle Ben Wade at Jefferson, happy to have escaped the task of reversing and resuscitating a moribund newspaper, even though that newspaper was the *New York Tribune*.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FORTY-SECOND CONGRESS (CONTINUED).

#### *Credit Mobilier.*

1871-1873.

THE CHARGES OF THE CAMPAIGN IN THE HOUSE.—EXCITEMENT BECOMES DELIRIUM.—THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION A NATIONAL CALAMITY.—THE APPEAL “FROM PHILIP DRUNK TO PHILIP SOBER.”—PECULIARITIES OF THE INVESTIGATION.—THE CHARGE SHIFTED FROM CORRUPTION TO FALSEHOOD.—COLFAX CONTRADICTED BY AMES.—WHAT WAS ELICITED PRO AND CON.—THE TWELVE-HUNDRED-DOLLAR DIVIDEND CHECK.—AMES’S DIARIES.—COLFAX’S BANK ACCOUNT.—SUSPICIOUS DEPOSIT EXPLAINED.—DILLON PAID THE CHECK TO AMES.—DREW SAW IT PAID.—AMES ACKNOWLEDGES IT TO GENERAL FISK.—AMES’S MEMORY AT FAULT.—COLFAX’S FEELINGS DURING THE TRIAL.—RECEPTION IN PHILADELPHIA.—ROBBED, PROPERTY RECOVERED.—PASSES THE GAVEL OF THE SENATE TO HIS SUCCESSOR.—AND RETIRES FROM PUBLIC LIFE.

ON the assembling of Congress after the Presidential election, on motion of Speaker Blaine, who descended from the Speaker’s Chair for that purpose, a committee was appointed to investigate the Credit Mobilier charges of the campaign, with Judge Poland, of Vermont, as chairman. The first sessions of this committee were mostly occupied with the conflicting statements of the Credit Mobilier associates respecting one another.<sup>1</sup> Striking as fair an average of their averments as may be, it ap-

1. These men left upon the public records unique portraits of themselves and of one another. No two of them agreed in their statements about the same matters. No one in Congress could make anything out of their books, they themselves could not, or their own book-keepers. Yet doubtless they had the probity, without which a man cannot long do business. They met their obligations when due, if they could. As undoubtedly they habitually bought their way through or over all opposition, with no thought that in some cases it might be corrupt, and no care if it was. There are “honest men,” and honest men, it seems.

pears that in the fall of 1867, when, through a combination of favorable circumstances, Credit Mobilier stock jumped from below par to one hundred and sixty, a block of it was assigned to Oakes Ames and Thomas C. Durant at par and interest from the July previous, on the ground that they had pledged it when no one wanted it, and when it was a great object to them to get it taken. Henry S. McComb demanded some shares on the same ground, but the associates did not deem him entitled to them. For his part, Ames had about three hundred and forty shares. Those to whom he claimed to have pledged it before the "boom" failed to appear, or else they had declined to take it. The committee could get track of only one hundred and eighty shares of it, and they could not ascertain from Ames that any of the Congressmen except Glenni W. Scofield, of Pennsylvania, had been solicited to buy it prior to the December (1867) meeting of Congress.

Mr. Ames appears to have sold to different Congressmen early in this session one hundred and eighty shares of the stock, for the purpose of insuring their attention to the interests of the Union Pacific Railroad, which he claimed were the prey of the lobby, and in which he had invested five or six million dollars. He said he had noticed that men would look after a thing in which they were personally interested. He made a business of "placing" this stock. None of the Congressmen went to him first about it, none of them suspected anything wrong in connection with it, none of them knew much about what it was. "Ames was not a full man in his explanations," said his friend, Horace F. Clark. Closer acquaintance made them suspicious of the stock, and they all sold out of it within a year or two, some with a profit, one at least with loss. Ames had written McComb what he was doing with the stock, and McComb made use of the information in the suit against him before mentioned.<sup>1</sup> This not having the desired effect, McComb waited until the heat of the Presidential election of 1872, and then threatened to publish the information unless Ames would concede his demands.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 382.

Ames, McComb says, told him "to publish and be damned," and it was published. The partisan press at once transformed it into the charge that these Congressmen had been bribed by gifts of this stock to sacrifice the public interest in the Pacific Railroad to the interest of speculators. Some of those accused publicly denied this, and among these was the Vice-President.

Mr. Oakes Ames's letters to McComb stated to whom he had sold the stock, and for what purpose. The persons named were among the most prominent and faithful public servants of the preceding fifteen years. If these men could be bribed and had been bribed to betray their trust, all trust seemed vain—a mockery. A fair investigation was by every consideration due to them and to the country. But in the excited state of public feeling no fair investigation was possible. McComb's testimony had been magnified and distorted out of all semblance for political purposes. This was continued after the election from various motives and for a variety of objects, until the general appetite for scandal latent in every community was roused to intense activity. As the examination got well under way, public excitement became public delirium. All the accused had lived in the public eye without flaw or speck for a generation. If corrupt, they would have been rolling in wealth. Without exception, they were struggling with comparative poverty. Yet they were sent forth from the Capital they had saved crowned with thorns instead of laurel.

At first the public was excluded from the sessions of the committee, but on the 6th of January, in deference to popular clamor, the House ordered the committee to sit with open doors, and to give to the press the testimony already taken. The House also appointed a second committee, of which Mr. Wilson, of Indiana, was made chairman, to investigate the relations and co-transactions of the Credit Mobilier and the Union Pacific Railroad companies. Although, now, the prominent men of those concerns were before the two committees in turn, day after day, testifying and being examined, little that was definite could be



ascertained from their conflicting testimony, and in the inflamed state of public feeling people and Congress imagined themselves in the presence of the most stupendous fraud and spoliation of ancient or modern times.

Congressmen became wilder than the most sensational alarmists on the press. "I declare," said Mr. Shellabarger in the House, "in all the history of finance connected with works of this or any other country, I never saw a scheme of villainy so profoundly arranged, so cunningly carried forward, and so disastrously executed as this one disclosed by the report [of the Wilson Committee] now submitted to the House." "And this is only the outcropping," said the Hon. Job E. Stevenson, of Ohio, "the surface indication of a vast system of fraud, by which there have been turned into the hands and pockets of citizens, private and official, within the last decade, the value of two hundred million acres of public lands and over sixty million dollars in cash. The value of that land, according to the statement of land-grant railroad companies, is to-day not less than one billion dollars. This is the most mammoth robbery ever practised on any government or people."

There was nothing but panic in this outcry. Instead of losing anything by the concessions of the Pacific Railroad legislation, the United States never made so advantageous a bargain in any other case. The Government has no legitimate business with the public lands except to get them into the possession of settlers as cheaply, as speedily, and with as little friction as possible. No way of doing this could be better, even now, than granting them in alternate sections as an inducement to the construction of railroads. For every acre of land thus granted, the Government doubled the price of an acre retained, and through the railroads made both acres immediately available to the people. These lands, if arable, passed quickly into the hands of actual farmers, and are now the abodes of prosperous and happy communities.

As to the subsidy bonds, the Government has realized their value, principal and interest, twice over, probably

five times over, directly and indirectly. From 1862 to 1868, inclusive, six or seven million dollars were disbursed every year for transportation and the subsistence of troops west of the Missouri River, exclusive of the expense of yearly campaigns against the Indians, one of which, that of General Sibley, cost forty-three million dollars. Since the completion of the road, in 1869, there have been no Indian wars on the line, and the ordinary yearly disbursements in that region have been reduced eighty to ninety per cent.

When the road reached the site of the present town of Cheyenne, the *New York Tribune* (of October 28th, 1867) told the whole story in the caption of an editorial—namely, “Five Hundred Miles of Civilization.” When the entire road was completed, the story was “Two Thousand Miles of Civilization.” By means of the road white men have been substituted for savages, domestic cattle for buffalo, income for outlay, perpetual peace for perpetual war, in the wide belt of steppe and mountain which formerly separated the West coast from the rest of the country more impassably than any ocean could have done.

Against this magical transformation, which cannot be translated into sums of dollars, is to be charged, *until it is paid*, the indebtedness of the subsidized railroad companies to the Government. They propose to extinguish this indebtedness by a series of fixed semiannual payments. Their proposition will without doubt be accepted in time, and thus the debt be cleared off. Meanwhile the roads have been improved, extended, and supplied with feeders, until they are better security for two hundred and fifty millions of indebtedness than they were in 1869 for one hundred and twenty-five millions.

When in after times the history of these transactions shall be written, it will be set down that it was the people and Government of the United States, and not the subsidized Pacific Railroad, that made “a thousand and sixty million dollars” out of the Pacific Railroad legislation of the war period. It will be set down that while in those perilous times a railroad to the Pacific was universally re-

garded as cheap at one hundred million dollars, the matter was so managed that instead of giving a dollar for the road, the road itself was ultimately forced to pay the Government more than two hundred millions in interest alone, and that this vast tribute was levied upon a region which, by reason of its arid and mountainous character, was in any event taxed twice as much for the same transportation as any other part of the Union.<sup>1</sup>

But in 1872-73 the people were made to believe that corruption and fraud had tainted this patriotic if bungling legislation from the beginning. The urgent demand for the road as a military necessity when civil war was raging and foreign war seemed unavoidable; the willingness of the Government and the people to give even more than was proffered to induce its construction; the fact that this was four years prior to the era of the *Credit Mobilier*, and that the proffer of the Government, liberal as under changed conditions it proved to be, went begging for three years before it found acceptance;<sup>2</sup> the risks taken by those who undertook the work, and the fact that they wasted their profits in hurrying it to completion five years within charter time, to the advantage of the country and the Government; the fact that the road could never have been built by subscription to its stock, but had to be built, if at all, through a construction company<sup>3</sup>—all these things were lost sight of in the prevailing anxiety to find the builders of the road great public robbers, and certain public men of high reputation to have been their tools. The

1. In advancing its bonds, the Government failed to reserve the option to redeem them after five or ten years, as was done in all the other issues of bonds. This oversight alone added one third to the interest account of the road. The Government greatly reduced the debt-paying capacity of the road by encouraging the construction of competing roads, and for many years it otherwise materially hampered and crippled the road, by treating it, in deference to popular clamor, as a public enemy. The subsidy bonds should have been granted outright, not loaned, and redeemed after five years, and there an end.

2. Even *Credit Mobilier* stock could hardly be given away until the fall of 1867, three years after the charter of 1864 was granted.

3. Two thirds of our railroads have been built through construction companies. If it is fraudulent, an entire generation, with its legislative bodies and courts, is tainted with the fraud. A keen observer says that "the conquest of this continent by the railroad has been involved in no more corruption than personal and State ambition and extension anywhere, even in churches." But some observers see nothing but spots even when they look at the sun.

Public Accuser became the popular idol.<sup>1</sup> Through him it was expected if not hoped to establish that all public men were venal. His old diaries, his memorandum checks and entries, his "original memoranda on slips of paper," were accepted as conclusive against gentlemen of singular purity and unimpeachable veracity, although they would have been thrown out of any justice's court in the land. His tergiversation, his obscurity, his uncertain recollection, even his self-contradictions, troubled no one but his victims.

It is a conclusive comment on the character of the investigation, that the appeal "from Philip drunk to Philip sober" placed all of the "investigated" who were not killed by it, or who did not forswear a service liable to such compensation, in higher station than before. On the testimony of a man whose expulsion from Congress the Poland Committee recommended, because he could not be trusted as a public agent or treated as the associate of honorable men, that committee found James Abram Garfield, of Ohio, guilty of falsehood and perjury. Seven years afterward the people of the United States elected Garfield President, Judge Poland and his political associates on the Investigating Committee supporting him for that office, and every Republican journal that joined in the committee's verdict against him eating its barbed words over and over again.<sup>2</sup>

1. During the last session of the Forty-second Congress there existed a veritable Reign of Terror. There were numerous caricatures of Marat, with their "Amis du Peuple." There was a semblance of the Convention, dominated by a mob, a sort of Revolutionary Tribunal, a Public Accuser, and a Place du Grève for shining reputations.

2. Before the Poland Committee Mr. Garfield said, under oath: "I never owned, received, or agreed to receive any stock of the Credit Mobilier or of the Union Pacific Railroad, nor any dividends or profits arising from either of them."

Judge Poland's Committee said in its report: "He [Garfield] agreed with Mr. Ames to take ten shares of Credit Mobilier stock, but did not pay for the same. Mr. Ames received the eighty per cent dividend in bonds, and sold them for ninety-seven per cent, and also received the sixty per cent cash dividend, which, together with the price of the stock and interest, left a balance of three hundred and twenty-nine dollars. This sum was paid over to Mr. Garfield by a check on the Sergeant-at-Arms."

When Garfield was before the country for election as President, Judge Poland wrote: "I desire to say to all who may feel any interest in my opinion of General Garfield, that nothing which appeared before the committee, or which appears in their report, or any other matter or thing which ever came to my knowledge in regard to him, ever led me to doubt his personal integrity. I believe him to be a thoroughly upright and honest man, and who would be so under all circumstances and against any temptation."

Men whose pockets were full of Credit Mobilier stock, in whose interest Congress had been corrupted—if, indeed, Congress had been corrupted—were not visited with a breath of criticism, because they had bought the stock some months or years before it began to earn dividends. Men who should have said : “ I was promised a hundred shares of it, I could get only ten, so I declined to take any,” but who did say : “ I was asked to take some and declined,” were dismissed without a question, though the facts were well known. Men who said : “ I bought the stock and received all the dividends—I wish I could have got more of it”—were permitted to depart in peace. All those who had settled with the stock-broker and passed receipts escaped with the mild criticism that they should have been more careful in investing their money. The reprobation of the committee, except with respect to Ames and Brooks, and the weightiest imprecations of the partisan press were reserved for those gentlemen who, upon being asked to take the stock, had contemplated doing so, but on second thought had declined, and had therefore had neither stock nor dividends, but who, never having received or passed any papers with the stock-broker, had nought but their word for their version of the contemplated transaction. Of course their veracity was impugned, and there being nothing in the original charge of corruption, the accusation was shifted to that of evasion and falsehood. Something had to be done to appease popular clamor and clear the skirts of the party. The lot of scape-goat fell upon the retiring Vice-President.

Mr. Colfax went voluntarily before the committee at the earliest opportunity, and stated his exact connection with Ames and his construction stock. He said in substance that he had once agreed to buy twenty shares of the stock at par, and interest for a few months previous, and had paid about five hundred dollars on it ; that later, hearing of threatened litigation among the heavy stockholders, and not wishing to own an interest in a lawsuit, he told Ames the same day that he must recede from the transaction ; that when Ames failed, some two years afterward, he

told him he was sorry for his misfortune, and that he need not mind the small amount between them. He said that he had never realized a cent from the transaction, but had lost the five hundred dollars.

When Mr. Ames testified in chief, December 17th, he said he was inclined to think that he had paid Mr. Colfax some dividends on the stock, but he was not sure. When Colfax testified, January 7th, he called attention to the uncertainty of Ames on this point, and said: "I wish to repeat that I never did receive a dollar, or the value of a dollar, or any amount whatever from him." Ames was of the opinion that Colfax's version of the transaction was substantially correct, as he admitted to his friend and colleague John B. Alley, of Massachusetts, to L. L. Crouse, of the *New York Times*, and to William Scott Smith, Washington agent of the Evening Press Association.<sup>1</sup> But, as

1. See Poland Report (No. 77, House, third session, Forty-second Congress), pp. 311, 318, for testimony of Alley and Crouse.

Following is Scott's letter to Colfax:

"OFFICE OF THE EVENING PRESS ASSOCIATION, }  
WASHINGTON, D. C., March 5, 1873. }

"DEAR SIR: I have been urged by one or more friends to communicate to you the point of a conversation I had with Oakes Ames in relation to yourself, on the evening of the day following the one on which you made a statement before Judge Poland's Committee, in relation to your alleged connection with the Credit Mobilier corporation. As anxious as I was that you should establish, beyond all question, the falsity of the charges made against you, believing firmly that they were false, I felt that I had not the moral right to make use of a private conversation on the witness-stand or to subject a personal friend to the indignities which he would have received at the hands of your enemies by placing him there also to narrate the conversation between Mr. Ames and myself in his presence—a conversation, although not confidential, yet of a private nature. The investigation having closed, and Mr. Ames having made certain statements, publicly, contradictory of your explanation, and contrary to his private statement to me in the presence of a witness, I feel as though it is a duty I owe to give you the benefit of the Ames statement.

"On the evening of the day alluded to [January 8th] Mr. Ames came into the room of a friend upon whom I was calling, at the Arlington House; and after talking to some extent on various matters, he said, with much earnestness, that he was surprised to see that you had stated before the Poland Committee that he [Ames] still owed you the sum you had originally paid him as a subscription to the stock of the Credit Mobilier. 'Colfax astonishes me,' said Mr. Ames, 'and I have been looking up the matter to see if he is correct. I remember well of his paying me the five hundred dollars, and of his coming to me afterward and saying he had concluded to back out of the transaction; but my memory is clear, and, in fact, I know that I paid him back his money at the time, and that the matter was then closed up without his taking the stock or my paying over to him any dividends.'

"I was much impressed with what Mr. Ames said, and believed, as he stated, that you had never taken the stock or received any of the dividends. And I confess that as be-

he said to Scott Smith at the Arlington House, on the evening of January 8th, the statement that he had never returned the five hundred dollars to Colfax startled him. "Colfax astonishes me," said Ames to Smith, "and I have been looking up the matter to see if he is correct. I remember well of his paying me the five hundred dollars, and of his coming to me afterward and saying that he had concluded to back out of the transaction ; but my memory is clear—in fact, I know that I paid him back his money at the time, and that the matter was closed up without his taking the stock or my paying over to him any dividends."

Continuing his investigation, Ames, on the 9th or 10th, visited the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House, and asked that officer if he preserved his vouchers. Mr. Ordway preserved his vouchers, and looking through a bundle of them, Mr. Ames found Colfax's check for five hundred and thirty-four dollars and seventy-two cents, payable to him, and his own check for twelve hundred dollars, payable to "S. C. or bearer." One of his sons went to Washington from Massachusetts about the 18th, in company with George W. Kennedy, book-keeper of Oliver Ames & Sons, conveying to Oakes Ames his pocket diaries for 1868 and 1869. Comparing the checks with the entries in his diary of 1868, Ames found that they indicated the payment to him by Colfax, in early March, 1868, of five hundred and thirty-four dollars and seventy-two cents, and the payment by him to Colfax of twelve hundred dollars, on the 20th of June, 1868.

Meanwhile Messrs. Garfield, Kelley, Patterson, and Scofield had been before the committee, and flatly contra-

tween his public statement, made after his conversation with me, in which he maintained that you took the stock and received the dividends, and his private statement, I felt that I must accept the latter, believing that Mr. Ames, in his former statement, was influenced by some unexplained motive. In the six years I have represented leading papers, East and West, at the Capital, among the very few men in Congressional life whose integrity I have never heard impeached or called in question, you are one. The recent Credit Mobilier investigation has not shaken my judgment ; and I feel that when the public excitement subsides, and the facts can be looked at dispassionately, the people will continue to trust you as they ever have in the past.

"Sincerely yours,

W. SCOTT SMITH.

"To HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX."

dicted Ames's testimony concerning them ; and Mr. Thomas C. Durant had said to the committee : " The stock that stands in the name of Mr. Ames as trustee I claim belongs to the [Credit Mobilier] company yet, and I have a summons in a suit in my pocket waiting to catch him in New York to serve the papers." Oakes Ames was hard pressed. He had rendered the country a great service in building the Pacific Railroad. In accordance with eminent legal advice [that of the Hon. Samuel J. Tilden], he and his associates had taken what the law offered for building the road. He had sought to interest leading Congressmen in the enterprise, in order to assure their attention in case it was attacked. He saw nothing wrong or even indelicate in this. He shared the contempt of his class for moral scruples standing in the way of great material achievements. He shared the contempt of his class for men whose temperament impels them to devote themselves to public affairs instead of to money-getting, and who therefore reach middle life " without a dollar." He was not a miser—a miser takes no chances—but he was penurious, and consumed with the ambition to be immensely rich. The attack or overhauling always anticipated had come ; the people were exceedingly excited and suspicious ; instead of serving as a protection, " placing" the stock with Congressmen had already wrought his ruin ; it was easy to convince him that a conspiracy existed among those implicated to swear away the last shreds of his reputation. He was breaking down. He died within three months from a stroke of paralysis. These matters were five years past, and had mostly faded out of his recollection. He returned to the committee room on the 22d of January in a grim mood, apparently determined to take the benefit of all doubts himself. On this occasion, and thenceforward, nine out of ten of his answers were mere inferences from the existence of his checks and the entries in his diaries, his memory, as he acknowledged scores of times, retaining very little, if anything at all, about the transactions themselves.

He testified that he had given the twelve-hundred-dollar " S. C. or bearer" check to Colfax in payment of a



sixty per cent cash dividend on the twenty shares of Credit Mobilier stock, declared about the middle of June, 1868, the check being dated June 20th. Ames had no receipt for this alleged payment. The check was not indorsed. Of itself it proved no more against Colfax than against anybody else. Ames testified that he gave it to Mr. Colfax. Colfax testified that he never saw it till it was brought into the committee-room at the time of the investigation. Ames exhibited an entry in his diary for 1868, purporting to confirm his testimony. But the entries in the diary were partly made from memory. Upon handing the diary to the committee, before which, on the demand of Colfax, Ames at length reluctantly produced it, Ames's counsel, Horace F. Clark, said to Judge Poland: "I am informed by the witness [Ames] that these memoranda were not in every instance made at the time, but that they refer back to the true date of the transactions."<sup>1</sup> Ames disclosed in his examination that he himself placed little or no reliance on these memoranda. He was exceedingly reluctant to testify, point-blank, to their correctness.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Ames acknowledged to the committee that Colfax had never had the Credit Mobilier stock; that he had never called for it; that now, five years after his first and last payment on it, the stock was still in his (Ames's) own possession, together with sundry *other* dividends earned and declared in 1868, about which Colfax had never said a word to him.<sup>3</sup> Ames added that he was holding the stock and dividends, pending the decision of the McComb suit; but that was in explanation of why, as he also acknowledged, he had not tendered them to Colfax. It did not

1. Poland Report, p. 448.

2. The following will be found on p. 455, Poland Report:

"Q. I find on your memorandum-book, right below the entry just given, the following:

"Feb'y 1st, 1868.—Del'd to Hon. Glenni W. Scofield certificate No. 346, for 10 shares of stock on Credit Mobilier, bot. for his account."

"That certificate of ten shares was delivered to Mr. Scofield?"

"A. I guess it was afterward; I cannot remember."

"Q. Do you think you gave him the certificate at that time?"

"A. I think not. I think I did not have the certificate at that time. I think I gave him a receipt for the money."

3. Poland Report, pp. 279-280.

explain why Colfax had manifested no interest in them. Nor is there any possible explanation of that admitted fact, except that Colfax, as he always maintained, had abandoned the stock.

The Wilson Investigating Committee found that under the Ames contract a dividend of seventy-five per cent in Union Pacific bonds was declared July 3d, and a cash dividend of thirty per cent on July 8th, 1868. These dividends stood on precisely the same footing as the sixty per cent cash dividend of the middle of June which was in dispute. Yet Ames did not claim to have paid them to Colfax, and McComb's suit was not brought till the following November. On the strength of an entry in his diary for 1869, Ames claimed that he paid sixty dollars and seventy-five cents interest for six months on this bond dividend of July 3d, 1868—the company not having the bonds, and issuing certificates instead—in January, 1869. Yet he did not claim to have paid any interest after that six months, or to have delivered the bonds, or their equivalent. He did not claim to have paid over this cash dividend of July 8th, 1868, either at the time or ever afterward, or to have paid any interest on it, either for the first six months or for any other period.

Ames's testimony received more support and credence from its apparent confirmation by Colfax's bank account than from anything he produced. In denying the receipt of this twelve-hundred-dollar dividend check, Colfax referred to his account at the First National Bank of Washington. Brought before the committee, this account showed a deposit on June 22d, 1868—two days later than the date of the disputed check—of sundry checks, and of twelve hundred dollars in currency. But after a little delay in getting his witnesses, one of whom resided in Utah, he proved, by unimpeached and unimpeachable testimony, that the deposit consisted of two hundred dollars received from his stepfather, Mr. Matthews, in payment of a debt, and of one thousand dollars received from Mr. Nesbitt, of New York, as a contribution to election expenses. He exhibited the cancelled draft for one thousand dollars, bought with Nesbitt's contribution the same day—June

22d, 1868—and sent to the State Republican Committee of Indiana.<sup>1</sup>

Moses Dillon, cashier of the Sergeant-at-Arms, testified : “ *I think I paid all those checks payable to initials to Mr. Ames.*”<sup>2</sup> When he was first before the committee, Mr. Dillon said he did not recollect to whom he paid them. In a letter to Mr. Colfax, he said that when he gave this testimony he had a strong impression that he had paid the checks to Ames, but had been warned by his employer, the Sergeant-at-Arms, against testifying to an impression as a recollection.<sup>3</sup> Upon his second appearance before the com-

1. Poland Report, pp. 492-497.

2. Poland Report, p. 479.

3. Following is Mr. Dillon's letter :

“ OFFICE OF SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }  
 WASHINGTON, D. C., March 2, 1873. }

“ DEAR SIR : When Ames made the deposit of ten thousand dollars in June, 1868, in this office, my mind was naturally excited as to the purpose he had in view, and was all at sea till the checks came to be presented. Then I surmised that Ames was the acting chairman of some investigating committee, and that, as the Contingent Fund of the House was exhausted, he was paying the expense of the committee himself till an appropriation should be made. I am very confident that the checks to initials or bearer were all paid to Mr. Ames himself, and especially the one marked ‘to S. C. or bearer.’ I then thought he was himself drawing the lion's share of his own deposit.

“ These thoughts had passed out of my mind till Mr. Ames came into the office this session and demanded that his checks should be shown him. The moment I saw them, I recollected all these thoughts of over four years before as vividly as though they had occurred the day before, and as soon as Mr. Ames had retired I remarked to Mr. Ordway, the Sergeant-at-Arms, that I had paid that twelve-hundred-dollar ‘S. C.’ check to Mr. Ames himself, and how I had paid it—namely, in two five-hundred and two one-hundred dollar notes. I was remonstrated with, however, and urged not to testify, under oath, to such belief, as it was impossible that I should recollect transactions of such a character for four years. Being unfamiliar with the laws of evidence, I very naturally did not at first state my strong impressions, but testified as to the facts only. At my second examination, however, I freely stated these strong impressions, and if I had had the self-possession of one accustomed to the courts, I would have stated the foundation of these decided impressions.

“ This strong impression that I had paid this ‘S. C.’ check to Ames was confirmed by himself in answer to a question I put to him only the day before my second examination. I asked him : ‘ Did I not pay that check to you, Mr. Ames ? ’ And he replied : ‘ I think it very likely. ’ Indeed, the more I have thought of the whole matter, the more firmly I am convinced that Mr. Ames drew the money himself. If he had, when writing it, intended it for you, why did he not, as with several others, who have acknowledged the receipt of the money, write the name in full ? All the members who are charged with the initial checks (Colfax, Kelley, and Garfield) deny ever having seen them, and I repeat, as I testified at my second examination, that my very strong impression is, that I paid all the initial checks to Mr. Ames himself. Tendering my congratulation on what I regard as your triumphant vindication from the well-arranged plot to injure you in the estimation of the people, I am very respectfully and truly,

“ MOSES DILLON, Cashier.

“ HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX.”

mittee, Mr. Dillon still declined to testify to a positive recollection, but said his impression that he paid the initial checks to Oakes Ames was so strong that he had no doubt of it in his own mind.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. John T. Drew, of Burlington, Vt., then of the Washington law-firm of Drew, Bliss & Holmes, in Paris at the time of the investigation, wrote to Judge Poland in the June following that *he saw Oakes Ames himself cash this disputed check and pay the money to a man whom he, Drew, did not know.*<sup>2</sup> The Hon. Elihu B. Washburne, then Minister of

1. Poland Report, pp. 477-481.

2. Following is Mr. Drew's letter :

"BURLINGTON, Vt., June 23, 1873.

"HON. LUKE P. POLAND, M.C.:

"MY DEAR SIR: You will remember my being in Washington during the spring and summer of 1868 in charge of the cotton claim of L. Marchant & Co. While so engaged, I called, by advice of yourself, Senator Morrill, Senator Sumner, and General Logan, upon several members of the House and Senate, to explain the peculiarly strong points in that case, and to show how it differed from most cotton claims. On the 20th and 23d of June, 1868, as my diary for that year shows, I called upon Hon. Oakes Ames, of Massachusetts. The first call was with a note of introduction from either Hon. W. B. Washburne or Hon. F. E. Woodbridge—I do not remember which. The second time I met Mr. Ames I had a letter from Major-General Veatch, of Indiana, which I read to him.

"I met Mr. Ames near the door of the Speaker's room, on the right, as you face it. He was talking with a gentleman on New Orleans matters. I stood near him, to claim his attention next, and, without paying any attention to the conversation, could not help catching something of its purport. Mr. Ames remarked to me he would be out directly, and went into the House, and soon came back with a check in his hand, and saying to me, 'Now, then,' walked along to the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk. I walked by his side, and was stating my case. Some one was drawing money at the desk of the Sergeant-at-Arms at the time, or getting some changed, and we stood in the room, and I read the letter of General Veatch, which so strongly vouched for the loyalty of my clients.

"While we were talking, after the reading, I noticed the check in Mr. Ames's hands, because he was all the time looking at it, seemingly, over the tops of his glasses. I remember very distinctly that it was drawn to 'S. C. or bearer,' and was for twelve hundred dollars. I know I thought to myself, 'Who the dickens is S. C. or bearer?' This check was then and there cashed at the desk of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and I well remember one five-hundred-dollar bill and several one-hundred-dollar bills. Walking back to the gentleman he had first been talking to, Mr. Ames handed him this money, and received some kind of a written document in return. I have never seen this gentleman since.

"You know I was in Europe during your investigation of the Credit Mobilier frauds. The first information I had of the 'S. C. or bearer' twelve-hundred-dollar check was at the American Legation in Paris. I remembered then this circumstance of the check, and told Mr. Washburne, our Minister to France at that time, that I knew Colfax never got the money, and that I thought I knew who did. I also informed Mr. Frederick Blossom, of New York, who was for some time my travelling companion. He suggested I had better telegraph you or Colfax; but the dislike I felt to becoming in any way mixed up in the Credit Mobilier scandal, together with the need of spending my time in the investigations into wine-importing frauds, which investigations I was making in the interest of our Government, induced me to keep silent, thinking I should be home before Congress adjourned.

the United States to France, wrote Colfax in confirmation of Drew, as to his having been at the Embassy and as to what he said there.<sup>1</sup> On the 9th day of August, 1873, General Clinton B. Fisk, of New York, wrote a letter to Senator Henry B. Anthony, of Rhode Island, in which he said: "After the adjournment of Congress and on or about the 17th of March I had a conversation with Mr. Ames in Boston touching the statements of Dillon and Scott Smith respecting the twelve-hundred-dollar 'S. C.' check, and Mr. Ames then stated to me substantially as stated by them—that it was likely he drew the money himself on that check; that Mr. Colfax never saw it; and that in this particular Mr. Colfax had suffered injustice."<sup>2</sup>

"On my returning to Washington, Congress had adjourned. I conferred with Mr. H. C. Bliss, my law partner, Mr. A. H. Byington, of Connecticut, and a few other friends, asking them to keep the matter a secret until I had time to see if I could not trace out the man to whom I saw Ames pay the proceeds of the 'S. C. or bearer' check.

"As I had charge of the Rob Roy judgment against A. S. Mansfield, Oakes Ames, *et al.*, I had occasion to call on Mr. Ames in April last, and I related to him the circumstances of the check, and asked him who the man was to whom he then paid the money. His reply was in substance that it was none of my business, and I assented to the correctness of his views. Previous to the death of Mr. Ames, and since, Mr. Colfax, to whom Mr. Byington, against my request, had imparted this information, has urged me to make a full statement of it for the press.

"After thinking over the matter for some time, I have concluded to send to you, the Chairman of the Committee of Investigation, this statement of facts, that you may use it as you may deem most just to Mr. Colfax, whom alone it affects.

"I am, dear sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"JOHN T. DREW, Counsellor-at-Law,

"No. 1332 F Street, Washington, D. C."

1. Following is Minister Washburne's letter:

"LEGATION DES ETATS-UNIS, }  
PARIS, July 31, 1873. }

"HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX: DEAR SIR: I have received your favor of the 7th instant. I have seen the statement of Mr. Drew. It is true that he was at this Legation pending the Credit Mobilier investigation before the Poland Committee at Washington, last winter. I well recollect our conversation on the subject of the 'S. C. or bearer' check, and his statement that he had reason to know that you did not get the money. My recollection of the conversation is confirmed by one of my secretaries, who was present and heard it. I understood from Mr. Drew that he was abroad for the purpose of making certain investigations in regard to frauds committed on the revenues of the United States.

"Yours, very truly,

"E. B. WASHBURNE."

2. Following is General Fisk's letter:

"STAMFORD, CONN., August 9, 1873.

"HON. H. B. ANTHONY, Providence, R. I.

"MY DEAR SIR: In acknowledgment and reply to your favor of the 5th instant, I beg leave to say that there has already appeared in the last number of *Harper's Weekly*

Finally, Oakes Ames never tendered the twenty shares of Credit Mobilier stock and its admittedly withheld dividends to Schuyler Colfax. Oakes Ames died in May after the adjournment ; his estate was appraised ; no Credit Mobilier stock appears of record among his assets. His estate has never tendered the stock and its dividends to Schuyler Colfax. Since acts speak louder than words, the inference is unavoidable that *neither Oakes Ames nor his heirs ever regarded the stock and its dividends as Schuyler Colfax's property, but as their own.*<sup>1</sup>

The issue of veracity between Schuyler Colfax and Oakes Ames is now before the reader, with everything

an article entitled 'Mr. Colfax and Oakes Ames,' in which the information to which you refer has been made public.

"My regard for both of the gentlemen whose names became unhappily involved in the Credit Mobilier scandal was such as to lead me to have frequent interviews with Mr. Ames during the progress of the investigation last winter, meeting him as I did at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, as he passed to and from Washington. I held Mr. Ames in very high esteem. I believed him to be a noble man, and entitled to the gratitude of the country for the sublime faith and courage with which he wielded his immense resources in the successful prosecution of a great national work. I loved Mr. Colfax as a brother.

"After the adjournment of Congress, and on or about the 17th of March, I had a conversation with Mr. Ames in Boston touching the statements of Dillon and Scott Smith respecting the twelve-hundred-dollar 'S. C. or bearer' check, and Mr. Ames then stated to me substantially as stated by them, that it was likely he drew the money himself on the check, and that Mr. Colfax never saw it, and that in this particular Mr. Colfax had suffered injustice. I communicated this information to Mr. Oliver Hoyt, of Connecticut, immediately on my return to New York, and Mr. Colfax was advised of these later expressions of Mr. Ames.

"Mr. Colfax wrote me, requesting that I procure from Mr. Ames a similar statement for the public. Mr. Colfax's communication, although written prior to the decease of Mr. Ames, did not reach me (as I was then West) until after that event. I wrote Mr. Colfax that I would confer with Mr. Oliver Ames, as doubtless there had been some conversation between the brothers of like import as that with myself. I have not met Mr. Oliver Ames since his brother's death, but a letter from him since the publication in *Harper's Weekly* advises me that he received no expression from his brother in harmony with the statements made to me.

"I hope there may yet be developments which will clear away all doubt, and completely vindicate the names of men whose characters for truth and virtue the country can ill afford to have remain under any cloud whatever.

"Very truly yours,

"CLINTON B. FISK."

1. Oakes Ames persisted before the Poland Committee that the Hon. William D. Kelley, of Pennsylvania, was the owner of ten shares of Credit Mobilier stock. Mr. Kelley denied the ownership, and met the continued assertion of Oakes Ames by ordering him to hand the stock to Judge Poland. Ames did so. Judge Poland, at Mr. Kelley's direction, passed the stock to United States Treasurer Spinner. Mr. Spinner sent it to Ames, requesting him to properly transfer it to Kelley, that the donation might be binding, and the Treasury realize the money on it. After some delay Mr. Ames replied, declining to return the stock at all.

elicited at the investigation, or that came to light afterward, which had a material bearing on it. The charge against him was of such a nature that he could be absolutely cleared only by its withdrawal, or by the production of the man who received the money. Until Ames died Colfax cherished the hope that he would, at length, clearly recollect the truth, and withdraw the charge. Afterward, until his estate was settled, Colfax believed that his effects would disclose unquestionable evidence that he had been in error. Meanwhile, Mr. Colfax co-operated with Mr. Drew in a search for the man who received the money—a search never wholly abandoned while Drew lived. Mr. Drew was ignorant of this man's name, and the incident was five years past when the hunt began. It was almost like trying to find and identify one particular drop of water in Lake Erie. But through his connection as an attorney with some matters in the South, in which Ames was also concerned, Drew believed he had a trace. He followed it, or tried to, but it amounted to nothing. A voluminous correspondence between him and Colfax, continuing four years, is in existence.<sup>1</sup> Twice Colfax paid three

1. Mr. Colfax wrote Mr. Drew May 15th, 1873, as follows: "I have read your statement several times over, and the oftener I read it the more I hope and pray you may be able to find the man you saw Mr. Ames pay that twelve hundred dollars to in June, 1868. I see plainly enough that you have a suspicion as to who he is, as you say his initials were not S. C., if you are correct. And you heard 'New Orleans' in their conversation. If I had known of this statement of yours, I would have insisted, when Ames's memorandum-books were finally before the committee, on an examination of them as to the point to whom he paid twelve hundred dollars about that time. He would only allow a public examination of the particular pages on which he had Credit Mobilier entries, but the committee made a private examination of the books. In the settlement of Mr. Ames's estate, I suppose this financial transaction of his with this unknown person might be got at, unless it is all squared up ere this. But probably in five years it was settled up.

"I am convinced, on reading this statement of yours, that Ames was being pressed by this man for money on some New Orleans transaction of theirs, possibly some kind of a partnership; and that, knowing I had abandoned the stock to him, and yet wishing to make his Credit Mobilier partners in June, 1868, believe that he had paid that dividend to all the Congressmen to whom, according to his published letters of January, 1868, to McComb, he had disposed of this stock, he drew his check, inserting the 'S. C.' as a memorandum, cashed it, and paid it to this man, not having any other fund at Washington just then to pay him from.

"I do not think, at that time, he intended to do any injustice to me, and he swore in December he did not remember having paid me any dividend; but when he was required to bring his books, checks, etc., before the committee, he had either to acknowledge that the initial checks were frauds, or swear as he finally did. He took receipts for the checks with names [written in] in full; but when he found, after a thorough search, he

hundred dollars—once toward the expense of an agent to New Orleans, and again to Liverpool. Drew would accept no compensation for his labors. He died in 1879, having amply proved his sincerity and disinterestedness.

The author called on the sons of Oakes Ames and others of his Boston friends in March, 1885, and was led to the conclusion that Oakes Ames's estate disclosed nothing on the subject ; that whatever record of this matter ever existed was in Ames's diary of 1868, which was taken from Judge Poland's committee-room by Horace F. Clark, and has never since been seen ; that whatever knowledge, if any, was treasured in Ames's mind about it perished with him ; and that unless the man who received the money be some time found, with contemporary written evidence, the truth, as between Schuyler Colfax and Oakes Ames, must rest for all time on their respective credibility, bearing in mind their lives, their characters, and their circumstances.

If they were both honest men—both were so held by their life-long neighbors, the supreme test of character—one of them must have been in error ; and if either of them was in error, their respective circumstances and characteristics favor the belief that it was Oakes Ames, and not Schuyler Colfax. Ames's business enterprises were immense and coextensive with the Union ; men were in almost constant waiting on him during the sessions of Congress for business direction or consultation ; transactions like this, involving at most but a few hundred dollars,

had no receipt for any of these initial checks—for which receipts were far more necessary—I think he must have realized that he had, intentionally or unintentionally, done cruel injustice to me, and that I had stated the truth.

"I need hardly add, if there should be any expense in finding that unknown man, I would cheerfully pay it. I should think he would be willing to testify. But whether he is found or not, I shall always feel grateful to you for your statement, and shall always consider myself your obliged friend."

The last letter of the series, on Mr. Colfax's part, is dated May 5th, 1877, and is as follows : " You remember you promised to write me what you effected in England in my case ; or, if failing, as I feared, what obstacles were in the way. I had no hope from the Vermont clergyman who undertook it, and to whom I believe you said you paid the three hundred dollars I sent. But I have had no report as to what he did. You, with your indefatigability and personal interest in the matter, I had more hope from. Please write me all about it."

Mr. Drew was himself in Europe at this time, and probably never got this letter. At all events, he never replied to it.



were of very little importance among his vast and widely-scattered concerns. Colfax's business, on the other hand, was limited to keeping about fifty thousand dollars profitably invested, and he was by nature a man of details. He could not have received the money and forgotten it.<sup>1</sup> It is conceivable that Ames might have cashed the check and used the money, and afterward have forgotten it. Only upon this theory can the direct clashing in the testimony of these two distinguished men be reasonably reconciled.

Colfax was of the opinion, although in some moods he took a less charitable view of it, that this was probably the true explanation. In a letter of April 22d, 1873, to General Clinton B. Fisk, he says :

" I am as certain as I am of my existence that that initial check to ' S. C. ' was a memorandum check. I know I never received it, or anything else from him. My conviction is that he drew the money on it himself ; thought it possible I might conclude afterward to still keep the stock, when he expected to pay it to me. Or he, perhaps, thought when the McCombs scare was over, which he expected would be in a little while, he would laugh at me for being frightened out of it by a lawsuit, and *then* pay over to me according to the entries in his memorandum-book. When he failed, however, and I told him to let the money go that I had paid, he regarded it then as certainly and finally abandoned ; but his own troubles and embarrassments, perhaps, drove the details of a small matter like this out of his mind. His testimony before the committee seemed to me to show that this was really running in his mind, vaguely perhaps ; but he preferred to testify by his memorandum-book. During the investigation, the newspaper syndicate, which attacked me so bitterly and unjustly at the Philadelphia Convention—my mother's dying condition for years had closed my house, and they took it I felt lifted above them, and hence did not treat them as before—were around Mr. Ames, night and day, encouraging him to testify against those out of whose involvement they could make sensational telegrams. I think he scarcely realized how

1. Mr. Joseph Medill writes the author: " Mr. Colfax was a man of remarkably retentive memory, especially for pecuniary matters. He used to take business for my paper, and I have often had reason to marvel at his memory for details. He began life with nothing, in a locality where money was scarce, and where it is still scarce. His business was sustained by receipt of small sums. His mind seemed to grasp and retain his business to the minutest detail. He was actually a poor man until some years after he retired from public life. He filled high positions for many years on scanty pecuniary resources. It is impossible, as he said, that he could have had an addition of twelve hundred dollars to his income and forgotten it ; and receiving, and remembering it, he was from temperament the least likely of any man I ever knew to have volunteered a denial of it in the face of the whole world, on the slender chance that Oakes Ames might have forgotten it, and that it could have occurred and left no trace."

he was urged on by them. It surprised me, for I had testified the exact truth, and his talk about my testimony with Crouse, Alley, Scott Smith, and others show this."

The Hon. George W. McCrary, of Iowa, who was a member of the Poland Committee, and who resigned a United States Circuit Judgeship to be chief counsel for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé Railroad Company, was, and is, of the same opinion. Judge McCrary wrote the author, May 22d, 1885, as follows :

"My own confidence in his [Colfax's] integrity was not in the least shaken by the testimony before the Poland Committee in the investigation in question. I believed then, and I believe still, that Mr. Ames was mistaken as to the fact of having paid a dividend on Credit Mobilier stock to Mr. Colfax. The positive testimony of the latter, that upon investigation he resolved to decline the stock, and that he never received any dividend upon it, was, in my opinion, the truth. Mr. Ames may have forgotten the particulars of what, to a man of his great fortune, must have been a small matter. But Mr. Colfax, who was a man of small means, could not have forgotten the fact, if he had actually taken the stock and received the sum of twelve hundred dollars on it. It was impossible for me, at least, to doubt the truth of his statement on this subject ; and while I am equally confident that Mr. Ames meant to be truthful, I can understand very well how he may have forgotten the facts and been misled by his loose memoranda."

This idea occurred to other business men of wide experience, and had the public mind been in its normal state, would undoubtedly have met with general acceptance. For example, Mr. Jay Cooke, the Philadelphia banker, wrote him :

"Has it ever occurred to you that Oakes Ames really believes he has paid you the money? Methinks the statements of both parties can be reconciled. You certainly never received it, and have accounted satisfactorily for all your receipts. He evidently thinks he handed you the money he got on that check ; but we who observe his loose way of doing things account for it in this way—that he put the money in his pocket, intending it for you, but used it in other ways and has forgotten all about it."

And the Hon. William D. Kelley wrote him :

"I have heard many things said of you among our best citizens and most competent accountants that would be pleasant for you to read. Mr. John Welsh, brother of William Welsh, the Indian Commissioner, told me that he had studied your case closely, and had been satisfied by Mr.

Ames's testimony and his resort to an initial check, the common practice of his firm and other business houses when accounts had been abandoned by the failure or rescinding of the contract, that your statement was correct."

He received many such suggestive letters, and hundreds expressive of confidence and sympathy. He suffered intensely. "God knows my innocence," he wrote a friend in the darkest hour; "whether I can convince the world of it remains to be seen. But I could never have borne what I have if heart or conscience told me I was guilty." An observer says :

"I watched Mr. Colfax through all those troublous times. I had frequent interviews with him, and saw him in an agony of labor and grief in the effort to recover the missing links in the chain of forgotten circumstances. I have seen him literally crushed to earth at the thought that, perhaps, even his friends might lose faith in him. In one of the dark, dank basement rooms of the Senate end of the Capitol, where the gas-light brings only a dismal flicker in the brightest day, all through the progress of that investigation Schuyler Colfax spent every vacant moment he could find. He was looking through the numerous trunks of letters, saved from the accumulated correspondence of many years, searching for something which might help explain the terrible mystery in connection with that now famous twelve-hundred-dollar check."

Writing him soon after the adjournment, General Fisk copied into his letter the following passage from "The Old Curiosity Shop," apropos to Kit's having been imprisoned by the conspiracy of Quilp and others :

"Let moralists and philosophers say what they may, it is very questionable whether a guilty man would have felt half as much misery that night as Kit did, being innocent. The world, being in the constant commission of vast quantities of injustice, is a little too apt to comfort itself with the idea that if the victim of its falsehood and malice have a clear conscience, he cannot fail to be sustained under his trials, and somehow or other to come right at last; 'in which case,' say they who have hunted him down, 'though we certainly don't expect it, nobody will be better pleased than we;' whereas the world would do well to reflect that injustice is in itself to every generous and properly constituted mind an injury of all others the most insufferable, the most torturing, and the most hard to bear; and that many clear consciences have gone to their account elsewhere, and many sound hearts have been broken because of this very reason; the knowledge of their own deserts only aggravating their sufferings and rendering them less endurable."

To which Mr. Colfax replied :

“ You cannot realize what a blessed letter to me is the welcome one from you I have just read. You are so kind to make that long quotation from Dickens—nothing could be more apposite. I have been as sensitive as to my character as a woman, and being innocent, I have felt this terrible and pitiless storm of vituperation a thousand times more than if I had been guilty. When my distressed wife and I have gone to the Throne of Grace, night and morning, I have asked : ‘ Why cannot my entire innocence be made known as Thou knowest it ? ’ But it seems I am to drink the cup to the dregs. It has taught me how weak is human aid ; and, perhaps, I needed that lesson. But it has taught me also how precious is that friendship that is unchangeable when the hour of trial comes. With all my heart I thank you for your words of confidence in public assemblies. I have heard of them twice from friends who were present. God bless you for it, my friend ! ”

His services in aid of all good causes were sought neither more nor less than usual this winter. The Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, of Brooklyn, wrote him 15th February : “ You have been announced for three weeks past to speak on Temperance in my church on Thursday evening, March 13th. Do not, on any account, fail to come. ” The *Baltimore American* of February 1st was “ happy to announce that Vice-President Colfax will deliver his promised address on Sunday afternoon at Masonic Temple, on the occasion of the great Temperance demonstration which has been for some time in preparation. We can promise him a hearty and cordial reception—such a reception as has never been awarded to him in Baltimore—one that will convince him that popular sentiment here is not influenced by libellous charges of the financial hucksters of Washington. The feeling of unbounded confidence in his purity of character, truth, and personal integrity has been rather increased than diminished by this effort to crush him. ”

This was shown on the occasion of his address before the Young Men’s Christian Association at Philadelphia, January 28th. In allusion to this reception, the *Philadelphia Bulletin* complainingly exclaimed :

“ The enthusiastic expression of the moral and religious forces of the community culminated upon the person and presence of the Vice-Presi-

dent of the United States. Mr. Colfax's appearance on the stage and his introduction to the audience were the occasion of an outburst of excited applause, which seemed to affect and sway the whole assembly with uncontrolled emotion. Not the 'young men' alone swelled this chorus of welcome. 'Young men and maidens, old men and children,' praised the name of Schuyler Colfax, as if he alone were excellent, and his glory were above all in the earth. Grave and reverend divines, the leaders, clerical and lay, in many of the best works that have been done in this city for the cause of true religion and pure morals, rapped and clapped, and waved and raved, tramped and stamped amid the thunderings that greeted Vice-President Colfax, arriving, weary and worn by his rapid travel, from the committee-room of Judge Poland to the boards of the Academy of Music."

While moral assassins were making money by robbing him of his reputation, it naturally occurred to a New York thief that it was a good time to rob him of his purse, and his wife and sister of their jewelry. The tin box in which he kept his securities had been sent on from South Bend. He had hoped to find a certain very important letter in it. About the 20th of February, while he and his wife and sister were at the Capitol, the thief, who had been hanging around the hotel for some days, broke into his rooms, and stole the tin box and whatever else he could lay his hands on. Colfax immediately filed a schedule of the contents of the box with the Chief of Police. The property was recovered by detectives while in transit to Philadelphia in an express-car. It consisted almost entirely of registered bonds, worthless to any one but the real owner. The hostile press made this affair the pretext for fresh falsehoods. The amount stolen was multiplied by two; it was alleged that he smothered the matter as much as he could, and neglected to prosecute the thief, because the property itself was evidence of his corrupt practices; would, indeed, have proved him guilty of the worst charges pending against him. "All this [the robbery] sinks into insignificance," he wrote Mr. Witter, of Denver, "compared to the attacks recently so malignantly made, and apparently so largely believed against my character, as to which I have always been as sensitive as a pure woman would be to reflections on her virtue." Why should he prosecute

the thief who merely stole his bonds, even though they represented the accumulated savings of a lifetime of hard work and economy, while the thieves of his reputation were not only beyond the reach of the public or private prosecutor, but were able to pose in the eye of mankind as the peculiar if not exclusive exemplars of civic virtue? It is needless to say that, distracted as he was, he would have prosecuted the thief if that individual had not escaped detection.

Near the end of February he wrote as follows to Mr. Alfred B. Miller, of the *South Bend Tribune* :

“Accept my hearty thanks for the noble and true manner in which you have stood by me through this terrible trial, which would have killed me if I had not been innocent. If I had been a murderer, I think these hostile correspondents here could not have pursued me more malignantly. You don't know how it disgusts me with public life, its malicious plots, its wicked injustice, and its downright falsifications. Your letter, and Dr. Humphreys', and others received to-night gladdened me more than you can imagine. It gratifies me, too, to hear Senators talk about it. Some few, I have heard, think I may have forgotten—that is impossible, but it is the worst I have heard from any Senator—but a very large majority have expressed to me, personally, their unabated confidence. I have an invitation to a public dinner at Philadelphia from leading men.<sup>1</sup> But is it not better for me to go home first, where I expect to live and die, and from whence I have had a hundred welcome and cordial letters the past month? Telegraph me if you think so.”

The House of Representatives adopted the following resolution :

“That the testimony taken by the committee of this House, of which Mr. Poland is chairman, be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, with instructions to inquire whether anything in such testimony warrants articles of impeachment of any officer of the United States not a member of this House, or makes it proper that further investigation should be ordered in his case.”

1. Mr. W. J. P. White, President of the Merchants' Exchange, conveyed this invitation in the following letter :

“Notwithstanding the assaults of your enemies and the misrepresentations of the envious, thousands of men and women in this city desire to manifest their continued confidence in your patriotism, honor, and veracity ; and I am requested to inquire of you whether your arrangements after the adjournment of Congress will permit you to accept of a public or private dinner in this city, the day to suit your convenience. We should prefer to have ladies participate, and the dinner to be under proper restrictions. Please favor us with an early reply.”

The Judiciary Committee reported, February 27th, that the power of impeachment was remedial and preventive only ; that so far as receiving and holding an interest in the Credit Mobilier was concerned, there was nothing in the testimony submitted which would warrant the impeachment of the Vice-President. To him this was an additional misfortune, for in the trial of an impeachment a competent tribunal would have passed judgment on the testimony against him. He asked an investigation by the Senate, but this was impossible, for he was not a Senator. If the Poland Committee could have summed up his case, and rendered a verdict against him, as they did against Garfield, it might have raised a presumption in his favor. But the Poland Committee confined its findings to the cases of members of the House, and so the whole matter, so far as he was concerned, was left at loose ends.

Noon of the 4th of March having arrived, the Senate unanimously adopted a resolution of thanks "to the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, for the able, dignified, and impartial manner in which he has discharged the laborious duties of the Chair during the term in which he has presided over the deliberations of the Senate." The Vice-President said :

"Senators, the time fixed for the dissolution of the Forty-second Congress has arrived ; and with a few parting words I shall resign the gavel to the honored son of Massachusetts, who has been chosen by the people as my successor.

"Administrations terminate and Congresses expire as the years pass by, but the nation lives and grows and prospers, to be served in the future by those equally faithful to its interests and equally proud of its growing influence among the nations of the earth. To be called by the Representatives of the people, and afterward by the people themselves, to the responsible duty of presiding successively over the two Houses of Congress for the past ten years, from the era of war through the era of reconstruction to the era of peace, more than fills the measure of an honorable ambition.

"Looking back over these ten exciting years, I can claim not only that I have committed no act which has proven the confidence misplaced that called me to this position, but also that I have striven in its official duties to administer the parliamentary law with the same impartiality with which the upright judge upon the bench decides questions of life and

liberty. To faithfully protect the rights of the minority, as well as to uphold the rights of the majority in the advancement of the public business ; to remain calm and unmoved amid the excitements of debate ; to temper and restrain asperities, and to guard against personal antagonisms ; to perform acceptably, in a word, the complex and often perplexing duties of the Chair without partisan bias, has been my constant endeavor. It is gratifying, therefore, that of the many hundreds of decisions made by me, often on the instant, none has been reversed and scarcely any seriously questioned.

“ How much I owe to the uniform kindness and support of the members over whom I have presided is difficult to express in words. It has been bounded by no party lines and controlled by no political affiliations ; and I rejoice that I have been able to attest my appreciation of this support. While zealously defending principles before the people, this defence has never been coupled with personal assault on any of the eminent public men with whom I have differed. No aspersions on their character have dishonored my tongue ; no epithets or invective have fallen from my lips.

“ But the clock admonishes me that the Forty-second Congress has already passed into history ; and wishing you, Senators, useful lives for your country and happy lives for yourselves, thanking you for the resolution spread on your journal, and invoking the favor of Him who holds the destinies of nations and of men in the hollow of His hand, I am ready to administer the oath of office to the Vice-President-elect, whom I now introduce to you.”

The Washington correspondent of the *Utica* (N. Y.) *Herald* wrote :

“ There was a world of pathos in Colfax's brief farewell. It was in the manner of his speaking that he filled the soul of every listener with infinite sympathy. The voice and manner of Mr. Colfax were an unconscious appeal to his hearers for a kindly judgment on the long public life to which he was adding the last finishing touches. But the words were the reverse : a challenge, meant for the world, an invitation to scrutinize his whole record, and with just enough tint of bitterness about them to indicate that he believed himself to have been most foully misjudged in these last days.”

Mrs. Mary Clemmer Ames, Washington correspondent of the *New York Independent*, wrote :

“ He is the very Schuyler Colfax that he was when his name gave such magnetism to the ticket of 1868. The Vice-Presidency was the flood-tide of his favor. The popular Representative, the lionized Speaker, once ensconced in a place without patronage, irrevocably possessed by a wife, secure in his own castle, suddenly ceased to be in the public thought



the happy, hail-fellow-well-met, the fêted, followed, lauded lion of the hour. In that hour of supreme success, did he forget his fellows, the men and women who had pushed his triumphal car with steadfast, untiring, unselfish hands to its final goal? I know not. I only know that of the sin of ingratitude he is loudly accused, and remains to-day unforgiven. My own belief is that what seemed ingratitude to many was the result of new conditions, and not of deliberate will. No less, from that hour he has been pursued and punished by the press.

“ We hear so much about the power of the press ! Well, it is a fiendish power so far as it represents personal enmity and private spite. It is terrible to contemplate that a man’s character may be filched away from him in type, because Jackanapes, who penned it, is enraged that he was not invited to his victim’s house to dinner. He missed the dinner, but not the revenge ; not he ! Honest Job and Jemima read the paragraph in their isolated home. They ponder over it in sorrow. Their newspaper says it. Meanwhile Jackanapes crows to his cronies in ‘ Newspaper Row : ’ ‘ He didn’t invite me to dinner ; but I can write him down. We’ll bring the gentleman to his level. He’ll feel the power of the press to his sorrow.’

“ Yes, he felt it at the Philadelphia Convention. The newspaper men and his own sad lack of reticence made Schuyler Colfax’s renomination impossible. But it should have been a malicious crime, one of which he is by nature incapable, to call out all the personal animosity exhibited there. ‘ After his election to the Vice-Presidency he would not look at a newspaper man.’ This is the standing and supreme accusation hurled against Schuyler Colfax for four years. It has deepened the color and pungency of every other. *The root which nourishes to such malignant life the worst suspicions of to-day is personal animosity.*”

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CREDIT MOBILIER (CONTINUED).

1873.

RETURN TO SOUTH BEND. — GREAT OVATION. — “AFFECTIONATELY YOURS, U. S. GRANT.” — VERDICT OF THE LEADING DEMOCRATIC JOURNAL OF THE WEST. — LETTERS RECEIVED. — MUSTER OF HIS MOTLEY ASSAILANTS. — HIS DEFENCES THROWN DOWN BY HIS SOUTH BEND SPEECH OF 1872. — BUT WITHOUT INTENT. — HIS EXPLANATION. — GUILTY OF ALL, OR INNOCENT OF ALL. — SENSITIVENESS TO A STAIN ON HIS HONOR. — HIS STRUGGLE THAT OF A HERO. — LETTER TO HIS WIFE AND SON, CARRIED NINE YEARS. — REWARD FOR TWENTY YEARS GIVEN TO THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY. — PRESS COMMENTS.

THE ex-Vice-President returned home by way of Chicago. The following account of his reception is taken from the *South Bend Tribune Extra* of March 11th, 1873 :

“Except for a raw west wind, which at times blew almost a hurricane, the weather on Saturday last was all that could have been wished for the Colfax reception. The sun came up brightly in a clear sky, and threw its genial rays upon scores of flags and banners floating from buildings throughout the city ; upon roads lined with teams ; upon streets filled with people from the farm, workshop, and office, who began to gather at an early hour to join in the great ovation to our distinguished fellow-citizen. About eleven o'clock crowds of people began to move toward the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern depot ; and before noon the passenger-house, the walks around it, and the yard space far out toward the streets was one solid mass of humanity, while South Street for a long distance either way was completely jammed with vehicles. Not even in the early days of the Rebellion, when companies and regiments embarked here for Southern battle-fields, had such crowds been seen. Yet for all the vast throng at the depot, the streets down in the city were more crowded than they usually are at any political rally ; and in the Court House Square, where, on account of the high wind, it was determined to have the reception speeches, in the shelter of the Court House walls, there was gathered an assemblage that would have gladdened the heart of any political orator. Never before have we witnessed such an outpouring of the

people, and all without regard to party ties or affiliations, anxious to do homage to the man whom they so dearly loved and admired, and who had been so foully wronged."

After describing the informal but hearty demonstration of welcome by the people of La Porte, where he was also met by the Mayor and many prominent citizens of South Bend, the *Tribune* continues :

"At precisely ten minutes past noon the train bearing Mr. Colfax steamed into the city and halted in front of the passenger-house. So packed was the crowd, and so eager were they to get a glimpse of Mr. Colfax, that it was impossible for any one to effect a landing from the cars. A way was finally broken through the crowd down to the carriages, which he at last reached, after passing a long gauntlet of hand-shaking. The vehicles were formed in procession by the Marshal, Leighton Pine, who, with the assistant marshals, occupied the first carriage. Next followed the band wagon, with the South Bend Cornet Band in full uniform ; then came a barouche, drawn by four white horses, wearing plumes, in which was seated Mr. Colfax, Mayor Miller, ex-Mayor Humphreys, and W. H. Beach. Following it was a long line of carriages and vehicles of all kinds. The procession moved out South Street to Main, and directly down Main to the Court House. The streets on either side were closely lined with people ; flags and handkerchiefs waved from the residences along the route ; the band discoursed its most stirring music ; the bells of the city rang out joyfully from Court House, churches, engine-houses, and factories ; the steam-whistles of the workshops shrieked merrily ; and cheers for Colfax, and shouts of ' We'll stick to Schuyler,' rent the air as the vast procession and the crowd that surged after it drew up at the Court House Square."

After much delay, on account of the crowd and another long gauntlet of hand-shaking, Mr. Colfax, accompanied by the Mayor, Dr. Humphreys, and Hon. Tom Underwood, of Lafayette, at last reached the platform on the Court House steps. Three rousing cheers were given for Mr. Colfax, and Mayor Miller addressed him as follows :

"MR. COLFAX : On behalf of your townsmen and friends, it is my pleasant duty to speak the words that but faintly express your welcome home. The city, county, and district, of which from childhood you have been a resident ; the constituency you have so long and worthily represented ; and the friends who, from youth to manhood, have looked with pride upon your success in life, all bid you welcome, and bid me to express to you their continued confidence and undiminished regard. You are no stranger here. The citizens who first saw and appreciated the struggles, perseverance, and honorable ambition of your early life ; who have had a

long association with you as a neighbor and a fellow-citizen ; who have with jealous pride seen and felt the results of your constant efforts on the side of the principles of justice and of right, as their immediate Representative, conceive themselves best qualified to give the estimate of your character, and render a just verdict on your conduct. That verdict has been by them freely, promptly, and justly given. Neither the insinuations of insidious foes nor the charges of open enemies can change it ; nor can calumny or detraction rob you of the well-deserved esteem of your friends and neighbors. That confidence in your integrity, ever felt by them, and now, by [reason of] a consistent, blameless, and serene private and public life, cannot be destroyed by the machinations and artifices of scheming hucksters to impair or impede your course of usefulness to your country, and your future advancement to the highest honors by the Republic to its worthiest citizens. We shall ever, as heretofore, whether as a public Representative, a private citizen, or the future recipient of still higher honors, gladly welcome your return to us, keeping unimpaired our full trust in your character for truth, integrity, and patriotism, which has been so well merited, and retaining that affection for your person and character that has led, and will ever lead us, to proudly call you our own Schuyler."

Three more cheers were given for Mr. Colfax as he rose to reply, and when the enthusiasm subsided, he said :

"MR. MAYOR, NEIGHBORS, AND FRIENDS : My heart would be cold and callous indeed if it did not throb more quickly and happily at such a welcome home as this one with which I am honored, and the gratitude for which it would take a lifetime to exhibit. Here you have known me from childhood. My goings out and comings in have been before your eyes. My character has been formed among you, and you know whether for a paltry sum of money I could be induced to shipwreck it. When you come hither, therefore, by the thousands, spontaneously, and, as I am glad to be told and know, not my political friends alone, but prominent and life-long political opponents, to honor me with unmistakable manifestations of your unabated confidence and affectionate regard, I feel it due to you, as well as myself, to expose the utter injustice of the cruel charges on which I have been arraigned during the past winter.

"If I had been a confessed and wicked criminal I could not have been pursued with more malignity by a portion of the American press and their Washington correspondents. Day after day, every possible circumstance has been exaggerated and telegraphed as absolute proof of guilt. Day after day, it has been demanded that I should explain this, or that, or the other point ; and, when explained, the same malicious enemies have tortured and perverted and misrepresented the explanation ; determined that the reputation of the man they hated should be destroyed if possible ; and as day by day they poisoned the public mind, they rejoiced

with shouts of exultation at having effected, as they hoped, their work of ruin. The frank exposure of all my financial affairs did no good. The disclosure of the sacred confidences of the dead only gave them fresh opportunities for cavil and falsification. The testimony of my stepfather and sister, unimpeachable as you here know them to be, was denounced as unworthy of belief. These enemies were determined on having their victim ; but, conscious of my entire innocence of this cruel and wicked charge, and confident that He who knoweth all things will in His own good time make that innocence manifest to all, I have stood unmoved amid this tempest-storm of vilification and injustice, willing to bide my time for the complete vindication I know is certain to come.

“ Let me read from the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* of September 26th, 1872, an extract from the speech I delivered here the previous day. It was made, you will remember, in reply to the charge that I was one of the ‘ twelve apostles who sold out to the Credit Mobilier, at twenty thousand dollars apiece ;’ who had been bribed by gifts of stock on which enormous dividends had been paid, and for which certain legislation had been enacted :

“ ‘ Never having in my life a dollar of stock that I did not pay for, I claim the right to purchase stock in the Credit Mobilier, or Credit Immobilier, if there is one ; nor do I know of any law prohibiting it. Do I need to add that neither Oakes Ames nor any other person ever gave or offered to give me one share, or twenty shares, or two hundred shares in the Credit Mobilier or any other railroad stock ; and that, unfortunately, I have never seen or received the value of a farthing out of the two hundred and seventy per cent dividends or the eight hundred per cent dividends, in cash, stock, or bonds, you have read about the past month ; nor one hundred per cent, nor the tenth of one per cent. I have said that if twenty shares could be purchased at par, without buying in to a prospective lawsuit, it would be a good investment, if as valuable a stock as represented. But never having been plaintiff or defendant in a court of justice, I want no stock at any price with a lawsuit on top of it.’

“ Although I thus publicly claimed the right to purchase this very stock, and avowed frankly my willingness to buy, own, and hold twenty shares of it, if I could do it without buying into a lawsuit, and thus accepted all the odium that could attach to purchasing it, as I then understood it, I have been charged with prevarication, because I did not go on and state that I had withdrawn years before from an incomplete contract to buy twenty shares, losing what I had paid on account. If I had supposed that a denial or explanation of an entirely different charge than that I was answering would be required of me, I should certainly have made it, as it would have strengthened, instead of weakening, what I was stating ; but that I could not foresee. An eminent divine once said, rather irreverently : ‘ If man’s foresight were only as good as his hindsight, he would be but a little lower than the angels ;’ and my policy in speaking has always been to discuss and explain pending issues, and not to discuss or explain those that were not pending.

“ But let us test this by an illustration, a method which often brings out a disputed point more vividly than argument. Suppose any one of you had been charged with having been given shares in a woollen factory ; that from these shares you had received enormous dividends ; and that as a payment for these gifts and dividends you had aided corruptly in carrying through legislation in regard to the duties on wool ; would you not regard it as a sufficient answer to such charges to tell the public that you had been all your life publicly advocating the scale of duties alleged to have been carried by corruption ? That, besides this, their enactment had been years before these alleged gifts ; that you had never owned *any* stock in woollen factories, or in anything else that you had not paid for ; that your shares had never been given you, and that you had never received any such dividends ? Now, if you had voluntarily withdrawn, as I had, at a pecuniary loss, over four years before, from an agreement to buy such stock in a woollen factory, you would regard what I have supposed as a sufficient refutation of a charge, that you had been bribed by gifts of stock and enormous dividends. But if you had added to this the frank statement that you had said you would be willing to buy this very factory stock at par, and to hold it, if it would not involve you in litigation, would you not think that your answer was full and thorough on every practical point that the wanton calumny required you to state ? No one could have been misled by my speech, on the vital point, that though no such stock was ever given to me, I publicly avowed my willingness to bear all the reproach that could attach to an investment of my money at par, as I then understood it.”

The ex-Vice-President cited leading opposition papers in proof that he was thoroughly understood at the time, and then went over the investigation in detail, so far as it concerned himself. The speech was universally published by the press. He ended as follows :

“ Here I must close. From first to last I have stated all the leading practical points in this transaction in identical and unchanged language, and I am not responsible for the malicious perversions and twistings of these statements with which the newspapers have been filled. In the confidence of the family circle, before you here in a public speech, and in the committee-room at Washington I have stated what is the fact—that I never received a dollar of dividends on the Credit Mobilier or the Union Pacific Railway from Mr. Ames or any one else—on all occasions. I have stated that while I would be willing to buy it at par and to hold it, as I understood it in 1868, no prospect of liberal dividends could induce me to buy into a lawsuit. For over four years, by Mr. Ames’s own testimony, although we have both been at the Capitol, there has not been a word exchanged between us as to dividends on this stock. Could there be stronger confirmation of its abandonment ?

“ I stand before you conscious of no wrong-doing in this matter in thought, word, or deed. As it was represented to me by Mr. Ames, I agreed to buy twenty shares ; afterward, and within a few months, on my own convictions, I abandoned it, preferring to lose what I had paid than to hold it. Mind and heart and conscience all acquit me of the unjust imputations to which I have been subjected. My record has never been stained with dishonor or falsification ; and this extraordinary manifestation of unshaken confidence and unchangeable regard by old friends who have known me from boyhood answers a thousand malicious attacks, and thrills my heart with a gratitude I cannot express in words.

“ I come back now to live and die in this town of South Bend, that I love so well ; for no temptations of large salaries or widespread spheres of usefulness have induced me, in the few months last past, to accept even enormous salaries, and turn my back upon the people who have loved me so long and so well, and whose tears I know will be dropped upon my coffin when I am buried in the City of the Dead on yonder hill. I come back to you to be welcomed with open hearts and willing hands, testifying, as to-day, your confidence in and your regard for me. In the sphere of private life—moving in and out in the peaceful circle of your households ; day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, if God spares my life ; as I sit around your family tables ; as I visit back and forth, and meet you in the marts of business and trade ; here, in this Court House Square, in the various public meetings we may have—never, while this heart continues to beat, never shall I forget the warm, the generous, and enthusiastic manner in which you have given me this welcome home to-day. God bless you all !”

A burst of cheers followed the close of this address. When it subsided, Dr. Humphreys presented the ex-Vice-President a memorial, to which was appended the signatures of fifteen hundred of the citizens of St. Joseph County, to wit :

“ HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX : We, the undersigned, desire, on your retirement from the incumbency of the second highest office in the gift of the people of the United States, to express to you the gratification and honest pride we have felt in the purity of personal character you have always maintained and the honorable success with which you have invariably administered all the trusts committed to your care during the many years you have passed in public life ; and having as dwellers in the home of your youth and mature years studied your character and life thoroughly, we, without regard to our political views, wish especially at this time to place on permanent record an expression of our hearty sympathy with you in the terrible ordeal to which malice, misrepresentation, and falsification have so unjustly subjected you, and of our unabated and complete

confidence in the honesty, truthfulness, and purity of your personal, official, and business life and character."

After the recipient of this testimonial had made his acknowledgments, the following resolution was adopted :

"That in welcoming Schuyler Colfax home to-day, after his twenty years of arduous public service, in which he has been excelled by none as a model statesman—temperate, judicious, and faithful to principle—we do so with undiminished confidence in his honor and integrity, both as a public man and a private citizen."

At the close of the meeting the procession was reformed, and the ex-Vice-President escorted to his residence, where an hour was spent in shaking hands with the crowds who called to give expression to their pleasure in meeting again their old friend and neighbor. And so ended this ovation. With the report of the ex-Vice-President's South Bend reception, the following letter was published :

" EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., March 4, 1873. }

"MY DEAR MR. COLFAX: Will you do me the favor and come over to dine at four, an hour near at hand? We will have no company except our own family and some of our friends who came on to the inauguration. The dinner is early, and will give you time to take an early train for Baltimore. Allow me to say that I sympathize with you in the recent Congressional investigations; that I have watched them closely; and that I am as satisfied now (as I have ever been) of your integrity, patriotism, and freedom from the charges imputed, as if I knew of my own knowledge your innocence. Our official relations have been so pleasant, that I would like to keep up the personal relations engendered through life.

" Affectionately yours,

" U. S. GRANT."

Also the following double-leaded editorial paragraph from the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, the leading Democratic paper in the West, was telegraphed to the country :

"We have taken the trouble to review, carefully, the case of Mr. Colfax, as recorded in the Congressional investigation, and to compare it with the elaborate defence delivered by the late Vice-President at South Bend last Saturday. The result of our researches is that he has given a successful and satisfactory explanation of the entire matter. It will require a closer analysis than we are capable of making to alter our opinion that in this business Mr. Colfax has been very much abused and wronged ;



and we are the readier to allow this, since we have not been tempted, and could not be induced, to sacrifice the private character of any man to a partisan interest or prejudice. In doing what we believe to be an act of personal justice, we desire to be full, explicit, and ungrudging ; and therefore we shall not shadow the congratulations which we have to offer a conspicuous adversary by any of those minor disparagements that might be sanctioned by a less generous criticism."

Referring to this "act of personal justice" on the part of the Kentucky paper, the Newark (N. J.) *Times* said :

"There is much of the dignity and manliness of true journalism in this utterance, and it will be the final verdict with all except mean minds. There is another vindication in the dropping of the name of Mr. Colfax from the controversy by nearly all the press which has most severely criticised him. There is consciousness of a great wrong done to a pure name ; a reasonable doubt whether so good a name could have been sold at a price so cheap as stated by Oakes Ames in the 'S. C.' bargain ; and the further doubt as to whether the interpretation of two letters in a check drawn payable to bearer constitutes anything which a reasonable man would call evidence."

*Harper's Weekly* of March 29th, 1873, said :

"The reception of Mr. Colfax by his old friends, neighbors, and political supporters shows the advantage of an honorable reputation. For twenty years he has stood before his countrymen with an unblemished fame as a citizen, a politician, a parent, relative, and friend. His regular and unspotted life, his temperance and moderation, his freedom from all those errors which so often taint the politician's career, his labors in the cause of virtue and good morals, will now be remembered and become the more conspicuous in the midst of the abuse of the envious and the clamorous virulence of the corrupt. Nothing, indeed, so excites the envy of the vicious as the possession of an unblemished fame ; and the rash haste with which several of the opposition journals have ventured to impute to Mr. Colfax their own chief failings will serve only to expose them more plainly to the people. Falsehood, avarice, indifference to moral laws, Mr. Colfax has never exhibited. His whole political course has been marked by truthfulness and consistency, by singular moderation in his conduct toward his opponents, by a firm adherence to republican principles ; and as he labored for the preservation of his country in those sad hours when they who now assail him were plotting its destruction, so he has shared in all the triumphs of freedom, and has been one of those whom his countrymen delighted to honor."

After summing up the case, as left by the investigation, and declaring "that neither affirmative nor negative proof exists against Mr. Colfax," *Harper's* continues :

*This has  
highlighted  
during  
Johnson's  
abolition  
for paper  
the  
by Eugene  
reference*

“ It is not unreasonable, therefore, that the people of Indiana should welcome their eminent statesman with new zeal while his enemies strive to cover his fame with calumny and destroy the well-earned reputation of a laborious life. Nothing would gratify his assailants more than to reduce Mr. Colfax to a level with themselves. Had he betrayed the principles of freedom, entered into treasonable combinations, striven to undo the honorable progress of the past, and throw the nation back into anarchy and despair, no whisper of disapprobation would have escaped from the men who now assail him ; he might have been their favorite leader. His chief crime is that he was true to the interests of freedom in the recent campaign. The highest proof of his rectitude and honesty for posterity will probably be the characters of his chief assailants ; from his more honorable opponents he is receiving a thorough vindication. And it is certain that no reputation will pass to future years more spotless or enviable than that of Schuyler Colfax.”

A large book might be filled with similar press comments, published then and afterward, which Mr. Colfax took the trouble to preserve as they fell in his way. Out of hundreds of friendly letters from old friends and from strangers ; from women ; from Senators and Representatives ; from national and State officers ; from judges, lawyers, and the clergy ; from editorial writers ; from bankers, railroad, and business men—from all classes, in short, a few only can be given, to wit :

From the Hon. Samuel F. Miller, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States :

“ As for myself, and I believe I speak the sentiment of all your true friends, my confidence in your integrity, your honor, and veracity is unimpaired by anything that has occurred in the remarkable investigation ; and if you think it worth having, you do have my esteem and friendship fully and without reserve.”

From Senator William Windom, of Minnesota :

“ Will you do me the favor to send me half a dozen copies of the *Extra* containing your speech at South Bend ? Your vindication is conclusive, and when the public mind becomes sane, it will be generally accepted as entirely satisfactory. I hope you are enjoying the quiet of your South Bend home. God bless the people of that city for the kind and hearty manner in which they received you. I shall always love them for their friendship to you. Among such friends as those you can afford to sit down and wait patiently until the storm of calumny shall pass away. It surely will pass away, and in the calm sunlight of the coming time all honest men will believe you to be what I know you are—honest and truth-

ful. The change in public sentiment has already begun. A just God will not permit you to go down to posterity under such a fearful load of calumny as you have borne for the last few months. Courage, my dearest friend! Your best friends have never wavered in their confidence, and others will soon believe as they do."

From Mr. H. E. Sargent, office of the Michigan Central Railroad :

"As one among the multitude of your friends who have been made familiar by the press with the unprecedented persecution to which you were subjected during the late session of Congress, I desire to express my sympathy with you in the distress it must have caused you, and my entire faith in your long-tried integrity. In saying this, I but speak the sentiments of very many of my personal friends who have not the honor of your acquaintance."

From Governor Samuel H. Elbert, of Colorado :

"Permit me to assure you that I have not been indifferent, either in feeling or in speech, to the assaults that you have of late been withstanding; and I take great pleasure in assuring you that your many friends in Colorado have not abated in the least their respect and esteem for one who has been so long and so prominent in our national councils."

From the Hon. J. S. Golladay, of Kentucky :

"I do most honestly and sacredly believe every statement you have made, and I greatly deprecate and condemn the mean spirit of the press and people who circulate, adopt, and believe any charges whatever against any public man, which, even though unsustained, are held as 'confirmations strong as Holy Writ,' against the record of a life of probity and unsullied honor. Much of this unfortunately grows out of political rivalry and hate, though very much more grows out of the innate consciousness of their own corrupt and venal hearts. You will pardon this humble tribute of friendship from a political opponent, who was very much impressed with a sense of gratitude and regard by your invariable kindness and politeness while an M. C. of the Fortieth and Forty first Congresses. The statement of members of your family, personally known to me, as to the twelve hundred dollars, is conclusive to my mind, and seems to me the only way to prove a negative. I deeply sympathize with you in your trials, which I know must be terrible to any sensitive nature like yours, conscious of the rectitude of his life."

From the Rev. Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage, pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle :

"Nobody believes it. A group of political loafers cannot destroy a reputation for integrity for twenty years building. But you are no better

than your Master, and they *killed* Him, showing what they would do with God if they could get at Him. May the Lord keep you in good heart and plenty of backbone ! Take this little political preachment from one who loves you very much, the only political disappointment of my life being the fact that you were not renominated."

From Mr. Benson J. Lossing, the historian :

"I have watched the progress of the matter from the first atrocious charges, made by the opposition for vile electioneering purposes, to the conclusion of the investigation ; and I have never, for one moment, doubted that your integrity, honor, and transparent truthfulness would form a triumphant defence against the most shameless and wicked assaults upon the hitherto untarnished character of a public officer and private citizen to be found in history."

From Senator Henry B. Anthony, of Rhode Island :

"I called at your lodgings Tuesday, after the adjournment, and they told me that you would not return. I went back to the Capitol, but you had gone. I had nothing to say to you but to give you that with which you are already loaded—my best wishes for your health, happiness, and prosperity ; to repeat my undoubting confidence in your full integrity ; my sympathy for you in the cruel trials you have experienced ; and my faith that you will be completely vindicated in the judgment of the American people, whom you have so long and so faithfully served, and who will again call you to trusted and high employment."

From ex-Lieutenant-Governor Andrew Shuman, of the *Chicago Evening Journal* :

"No man has ever been the object of a more cruel persecution or of more cowardly and brutal injustice. The better portion of the people, those who love justice for its own sake, and who have sense enough to discriminate and to form an intelligent opinion of their own, have not one whit less respect for or confidence in you, in consequence of the Credit Mobilier assaults on your fair name, than they had before. I am in a position to judge, and you may rest assured that in this which I say I report to you faithfully the feeling of the only class of people, and a very large class it is, too, whose good or ill opinion is worth considering at all, the people of reason and an enlightened conscience."

From the Hon. John F. Potter, of Wisconsin :

"MY DEAR OLD FRIEND : I have had a mind to write you a word for some two or three weeks past, just to say to you that there is not one of your old friends, who knows you, that has for a moment distrusted you, in the dust and smoke of investigation. I am quite sure I have not, and now, since your very satisfactory explanation of your private money ac-

counts, I don't know how anybody can, excepting always political enemies, who, for some hidden and most mysterious reason, are ever more bigoted, more unreasonable, more unfair, unkind, uncharitable, and inhuman than all other enemies combined. They think that if they can pull you down they thereby bring with you all their opponents. I congratulate you upon your near retirement from a stormy public life to the peace and quiet which God gives those who have worked for Him."

From Mr. Henry Carey Baird, the writer on Political Economy :

" Without the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, I cannot resist writing to you to express my intense satisfaction—more, my joy—at your vindication, which I regard as complete. You have been on my mind and in my thoughts for a month past, but I never lost faith in you, and I told every one you would come out unscathed, as you will, or, as I think, have already."

From the Rev. J. Spencer Kennard, pastor of Pilgrim Baptist Church, New York City :

" Though personally a stranger to you, I am prompted, in view of the reckless judgments pronounced by the partisan press, to express to you the hearty sympathy and unfaltering confidence which is felt toward you, not only by myself, but by a large majority of the best men with whom in my profession I am brought in contact."

From Senator John Sherman, of Ohio :

" I have read with great interest and sincere satisfaction the report of your reception and speech at home. You know I have felt all winter that gross injustice has been done you, in the eagerness of sensation writers to exaggerate every imputation against a public man ; and I have felt all along that if you had remained perfectly quiet, answering nothing and explaining nothing, until the precise accusation was made against you, and then have met it with the open frankness of your recent speech, you would have been saved much of the injustice that has been done you. As it is, I believe that in a short time public opinion will settle down to the judgment fairly stated by the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and that you will be in public estimation the same Schuyler Colfax who for eighteen years won and wore the highest honors of the nation, esteemed and respected for personal integrity by men and women of all parties and creeds. After travelling a boisterous road together, we have both reached that period of life when the coveted honors of public life are tinged with ashes, and I hope we have also gathered the wisdom that will make us indifferent to passing criticisms."

Many things combined to make this passage in his life a *Via Crucis* for the retiring Vice-President. The most in-

ments before the committee to his disadvantage, and make them the basis of new charges of moral turpitude. But for this unfortunate personal reference in his South Bend campaign speech, the boundless trust of the people in him could not have been shaken, even for a moment; the testimony and the "memoranda" of Oakes Ames would have weighed naught against his unsupported word; the utmost efforts of his detractors to injure him would have fallen to the ground upon which they grovelled as ineffectual as arrows shot at the sun.

In view of its consequences to him, any one can see that his reference to himself in his South Bend speech was a mistake, while but few see *that it was a mistake only because what he said on that occasion, not what he failed to say, was challenged by Oakes Ames before the Committee of Investigation.* Obviously, if the truth of what he actually said had not been questioned, his failure to say everything that might have been said would never have been criticised.

But such as it was, he did not make this mistake because, as Senator Pratt reports the people as saying, "he lacked faith in the people to readily pardon him." He was not seeking pardon; he was not even under conviction. He referred to the scandal, as he said in the speech itself, "not to put myself on the defensive—far from it—but that we may see out of what worthless stuff campaign charges are manufactured." To his friends and neighbors of South Bend and St. Joseph County, on his return home in March, 1873, he said:

"If I had supposed that a denial or explanation of an entirely different charge than that which I was answering would be required of me, I should certainly have made it, as it would have strengthened instead of weakening what I was stating; but that I could not foresee. An eminent divine once said, rather irreverently: 'If man's foresight were only as good as his hind-sight, he would be but little lower than the angels;' and my rule in speaking has always been to discuss and explain pending issues, and not to discuss or explain those that were not pending."

He wrote to General Clinton B. Fisk, of New York, April 22d, 1873:

“ The speech I made here last September, in which I have been unjustly charged with prevarication, was not made for my own vindication, for I was not a candidate ; but specially to answer and refute and annihilate the charge against him [Ames] that he was bribing members of Congress in 1868, or needed to bribe them. I send you a copy of my speech to prove this to you.”

In a letter to his wife and son on this subject, which he had carried with him nine years, and which only reached them with the news of his death, he says on this point :

“ When in 1872 the country was filled with the charge that Ames had bribed a number of Congressmen by giving them this stock, and then paying them enormous dividends on it, for which legislation was enacted, I was urged by my political friends to explain it in the interest of the party, as I was so familiar with the Pacific Railroad legislation. I did so in a speech at South Bend in September, 1872, in which I showed that the legislation charged to have been effected by bribery had been enacted in 1864, four years before 1868, when Ames was charged with bribing it through Congress by gifts of stock. *At first I did not intend to refer to myself at all*, as I was not a candidate, and had never had any of the stock or any of its dividends. But, out of abundant caution, I added, as I proved before the Congressional Committee, that while I had never had any of the stock given to me, nor a cent of its dividends, I would certainly have been willing to purchase and hold it, as I would any other stock, if I so chose, and if I did not thereby bring myself into a lawsuit, which was the exact statement of the facts of the case.”

He was concerned to refute the current calumnies against his party, which had patriotically given the Pacific Railroad to the country. But keenly sensitive to any imputation of personal wrong-doing, it was natural that, in the excitement of speaking, he should be led to deny, on his own account, “ the allegation of the Hon. Oakes Ames that in 1868 he [Ames] bribed one member of Congress from Indiana, and that member was Schuyler Colfax.”<sup>1</sup> True, there was no need of it ; the brutal charge was beneath contempt ; but his sensitiveness respecting his good name was a matter of temperament against which he was powerless to contend. Under the circumstances, being what he was, it was inevitable that he would be carried into a personal reference, without previous intention. But the personal reference was not the burden, it was only an

1. The *New York Sun* of September 28th, 1872.

offensive man of his eminence ever in American politics, he was in this strait treated the most shabbily. His pure private life and his unsullied public record were ignored ; his guilt was assumed, and he was required to prove his innocence, although it involved his proving a negative. Old friends, now estranged, as well as political opponents and personal enemies, in control of great journals, denounced him in concert for practices of which many of them personally knew him to be incapable. By his own act, primarily, he was leaving public life, yet his influence with the people was still almost unbounded. Nothing, probably, but the prestige of the conqueror of the Rebellion had kept him from the White House these eight years, and that would be wanting the next eight years. Any other Republican might be beaten, but not Colfax. Not only to shelve him for the future did the wolves of politics howl upon his track, but to pay off old scores. Since 1854 no man had stood more squarely and immovably in the path of the upholders of slavery, South and North. He was not and had never been a favorite with the "workers" of his own party. He was not their style of man. To the "strikers" of men who were supposed to be Presidential possibilities, his downfall was desirable, because he was ahead of their favorites in the line of succession. The world of free livers, to whom his upright life was a standing reproach, had wearied of his praises. He was hated by all low minds, to which it is a delight to think and call an eminent man a "thief" or "scoundrel," because it is an easy assertion of equality and a cheap way of gratifying at once vanity, spite, envy, and hatred of all excellence. He had the hostility of a clique of Washington correspondents. "After his election to the Vice-Presidency, he would not look at a newspaper man," they said.

The path of a public man in a democracy is not a flowery path. Every step he takes is over prostrate rivals, who from that moment are his open or secret foes. The higher he climbs the more numerous, the more merciless, the more interested are his critics. With his happy temperament, Schuyler Colfax had made few enemies in reaching



the high positions which he so long honored. But when, upon his election to the Vice-Presidency, he declined to become a general office-beggar, he made them so fast as to soon have his full quota. When, afterward, he voluntarily stepped out of the line of promotion, those who had adhered to his fortunes merely in the hope of bettering their own deserted him, and became the parasites of some other and still rising man. Forced into a second candidacy, and beaten by a "scratch," when this storm smote him, he was virtually a private citizen, his career of power and helpfulness already run and finished. The clubs in the orchard show which are the best apple trees. The bitterness and persistence of his motley assailants were proportioned to the strength of his position and the necessity they felt that he should be dislodged from it.

His own word would have been ample defence but that he had unwittingly impaired its power. In refuting the charges of the campaign at South Bend the previous September, he had been carried by the excitement of speaking into a personal reference which stopped short of "telling the people just the extent of his connection with the Credit Mobilier."<sup>1</sup> It was a part of the brutality of the epidemic of detraction which accompanied the investigation to charge this casual omission as a purposed sin of commission; to impute it to the Vice-President as an intentional concealment, evasion, or prevarication; and upon the strength of this imputation to discredit his word, to decide all doubtful points and suspicious appearances against him, to pervert and distort his successive state-

1. Senator D. D. Pratt, of Indiana, wrote him:

"I have thought that he [Ames] was honest in his statement of his memory of the transaction, while I never doubted for a moment that he was mistaken, and that your version was the true one. Such, I have little doubt, will be the ultimate judgment of all, as it already is of most. It is a matter of great satisfaction to see the clouds of obloquy rolling away in the distance, and to know that the great majority of your friends retain a steadfast confidence in your integrity and honor.

"Will you pardon my freedom for repeating what I hear every day said by them? 'Colfax is all right; the only mistake he committed was in the beginning, when last fall he did not tell the people just the extent of his connection with the Credit Mobilier. No one would have censured him at all if he had made a frank disclosure of how far he went, and the reason why he went no farther. He erred in his lack of faith in the public to readily pardon his mistake.'"

incident of the speech. It shows for itself that it was unconsidered, introduced on the spur of the moment. "At first I did not intend to refer to myself at all, as I was not a candidate, and had never had any of the stock nor its dividends." He did not think of himself as in the confessional. In view of the demands of the occasion, as they evidently appeared to him at the time, the speech was a perfectly frank utterance, although it was afterward perverted to his discredit and damage, and made the pretext and justification of untold wrong to him.

This misjudgment should cease, particularly in the mouths of men who do not mean to be unjust, but who thoughtlessly repeat what they hear other men say. If Mr. Colfax ever received Credit Mobilier stock or dividends, he not only purposely concealed something in this speech—he told untruths. If he never received Credit Mobilier stock or dividends, there is no ground for the charge of evasion or concealment to stand upon, for he had nothing to evade or conceal. He must be either adjudged guilty of all, or absolved of all. He denied receipt of the stock or dividends; the stock-broker admitted that he had never received the stock; and while claiming that he had received part of the dividends, was unable to furnish any evidence of it.

It is easy to say he should have defied, not defended. A man may defy the political assaults of his political opponents. It is the practice of politicians to assail one another. But the political assaults of political associates have been known to kill. What else killed Webster or Greeley or Sumner? Personal integrity is an infinitely more precious and delicate plant than political integrity. A stain on one's personal honor is like a wound; it may heal, but it leaves a scar. With his reputation for personal honor seriously impugned, whether by enemies or friends, political or otherwise, and really suspected, life becomes a burden to an honorable man, unless he can clear himself from the imputation and kill the suspicion. General and President Grant paid no attention to military or political assaults. But when that phenomenal Wall Street operator, Ferdi-

nand Ward, under cover of Grant's name, stole seventeen millions of other people's money, although, instead of the worst being assumed and charged, as in Colfax's case, all men hastened to assure Grant that suspicion did not and should not attach to him, the imperturbable Grant, whom the shock of armies failed to move, went into a decline, and within a few months sank down to his final rest. The blow broke his heart. Sensitiveness to a stain on one's honor is inseparable from any sense of honor. Colfax alive was Colfax defending his good name, if attainted, at every point.

His struggle with this calamity was that of a hero. He neither struck down his accuser, as many men would have done, nor put an end to his own life. He did not die in the storm or from its effects. He breasted it with all his powers, he weathered it. It cast a shadow over his later years, but he did not permit it to embitter him. Of phenomenal sweetness of temper and of high aims, he grew sweeter in temper and loftier in aim the longer he lived. Not by the breadth of a hair did it lessen his loyalty to any obligation. And when the people recovered their senses, he was given to understand in a thousand ways that they held him in the same high estimation as before this tempest momentarily swept them from their moorings.

After his death a sealed letter was found in his travelling-bag, where he had carried it nine years, superscribed : "Mrs. Colfax. For her and Schuy. Written at Boston, December, 1875." It reached them only after news of his death, which was sudden, and away from home. The letter begins :

" BOSTON, MASS., December 8, 1875.

" MY DEAR WIFE : I have often thought, with the risk of accident, travelling so much in my lecturing tours, I would write a full and connected statement of facts, with which you are so familiar, for yourself, and especially for our little boy."

He tells the story as he always told it, and closes as follows :

" When our little boy is old enough to understand all this, if he knows anything then of the base and wicked calumnies to which his

father was subjected by enemies and ingrates, he will realize what a faithful and honest public servant received for twenty years of the prime of his life given to the service of his country. And all that sustained me in that wild storm of calumny that raged about me was the knowledge that God at the last day would make my honesty and truthfulness known of all men, and that my dear wife knew it and confided to the uttermost in her loving and devoted husband,

“SCHUYLER COLFAX.”

The *Boston Advertiser*, speaking of this “epidemic of calumny,” as it terms it, says :

“One mystery unexplained suggested another ; one difficulty led to a score of new ones ; and that mighty agency, the press, seized upon every petty insinuation and every scrap of idle gossip smirching the character of men whose names were of any value, and spread them before the country as proofs of universal public corruption. With many the line between truth and falsehood became in this way utterly obliterated.”

Commenting on the action of the House, the *Boston Journal* said :

“It was as fair and reasonable as we had any right to anticipate under the circumstances. The mere fact of a member’s owning stock amounts to nothing in itself. No man in these times can own property which *may* not be affected by legislation, and, on the other hand, a legislator may officially act with regard to a particular class of property without being in the least affected by the fact of his ownership in it. It is outrageous to *presume* corruption in any such case ; that is only to be deduced from the clear evidence of wrongful votes or other reprehensible action.”

The following are the concluding comments of the *New York Commercial Advertiser* on the action of the House :

“No crime or guilt is found, and a vote simply of censure is passed, which was extorted rather from the deference of Congress to an assumed public sentiment than from its sense of justice. The matter has derived its whole importance from the agitation of outsiders, from the clamor of a partisan press, and from the timid policy pursued by members of Congress when the charges, so perverted by malice, were brought against them. Much more importance has been given to this matter than it deserved. No one can believe that men like Henry Wilson, Colfax, Dawes, Garfield, and Kelley, who have had opportunities during the last ten years to make tens of thousands of dollars by the scratch of a pen or a nod of the head, could at this late day engage in a corrupt bargain with Oakes Ames in his picayune transaction of ten shares of Credit Mobilier stock. Every man at all familiar with the affairs of Congress understands that Dawes, as Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, if a

venal man, would not be chasing around Washington inquiring how to invest one thousand dollars, so that it would pay more than seven per cent. The same is true of Garfield, Colfax, Wilson, and Kelley. These men, from the positions they held on committees, if dishonest men, would not have engaged in any such paltry transaction, when thousands were to be made in a different direction. The whole affair has been magnified by political demagogues and newspaper Bohemians. The press is too ready to pounce upon every public man as venal. The public accept the views of the political and sensational press, and thus we have an unhealthy sentiment. The House acted properly in the course it adopted."

"The three papers from which we quote these extracts," says the *Baltimore American*, "are among those that have not had their editorial sanctums invaded by Washington Bohemians, who have entered into a conspiracy to destroy all those leading men of the country who are known to be too pure to lend themselves to their corrupt purposes. It was this Bohemian combination that deluded Mr. Greeley into the acceptance of the Cincinnati nomination, ultimately driving him to insanity and a premature grave, and they are now making their first move for the next Presidency. That many able and honest journals have been deluded by their clamor and slander is much to be regretted, but we still have confidence that they will make haste to undo the evil and make amends for the wrong they have done to some of the purest and best men of the nation."

The following review of the Credit Mobilier scandal is from the *Philadelphia North American* of August 16th, 1873 :

"We suppose that not many intelligent people were led into the error of believing that the extraordinary clamor that greeted the Credit Mobilier revelations was due to any moral shock imparted by those revelations. If anybody fell into such an error, he may as well disabuse his mind without further ceremony. The tone of the outcry was peculiar from first to last. The spirit of the press did not differ at all from the spirit actuating verbal comment upon any neighborhood scandal, cases of which are so common that every adult person is perfectly familiar with the phenomenon. It is a mean, low, and utterly contemptible spirit at best, born of an overwhelming desire to believe the worst. It is a spirit that invests vague rumor with all the importance of well-ascertained fact and elevates mole-eyed surmise to the dignity of undisputed truth. The motive of the press generally, interpreted by its action, was not so much to set the seal of condemnation upon the disreputable transactions of the Credit

Mobilier managers, as to drag reputation in the mire and create the impression that the best of men are little better than whitewashed scoundrels. It was altogether the most painful exhibit of the failure of journalism to conserve public morals ever made in this country.

“ It ought not to be forgotten that the scandal was bred in the nameless ferment of political quarrel ; and this fact should have made men cautious in receiving and accepting the thousand and one rumors certain to arise upon formal investigation. But it did not. No sooner did rumor involve any individual than the press made haste to amplify and elaborate the rumor, until the public was in a way compelled to accept informal accusation as tantamount to formal conviction. The press seemed to resolve itself into an army of prosecuting attorneys, intent not upon justice, but upon gaining the case it had volunteered to prosecute. All the minor tricks known to fourth-rate lawyers were resorted to, and that the American people, sitting as jurors, were not reduced to a condition of hopeless embarrassment must be counted to their credit. Though the principal witness prevaricated to an extent that would have put him out of court in any other case, the jury was continually instructed that all that this witness let drop in its nature and terms adverse to the accused was to be accepted as irrefragable. No sooner did insinuation brush the garments of any publicist than he was at once declared guilty, and challenged to prove his innocence. Proof of a negative is often easy enough, yet the purest man sometimes makes the essay and fails. He is placed at a disadvantage in the start, and a shrewd attorney has it in his power to maintain that disadvantage to the end. Unlike the professional rogue, he has never contemplated himself as an occupant of the prisoner’s dock. The situation is new to him, and all his available resources may, perhaps, be summed up in conscious innocence. Not one man in a hundred can out of head recall the transactions of a life in detail and show their connection and bearing to be adverse to the theory of guilt put forward by his accusers.

“ How much bitter and irretrievable wrong was inflicted upon individuals by the press during the Credit Mobilier investigation may never be exactly determined. The case of Mr. Colfax, however, attracting most attention from first to last, chiefly by reason of his previous high standing, will serve to show that there may be more than one side to an investigation into character. The evidence offered to prove that he knowingly or intentionally profited by any Credit Mobilier transactions was never, calmly considered, of much account. But for alleged coincidences the charge must have fallen to the ground early in the investigation. And of late the public has been informed in certain particulars which go far to prove that the alleged coincidences were not coincidences at all. The testimony of Mr. Dillon was that he paid the check in dispute to Mr. Ames to the best of his knowledge and belief. Mr. Drew, absent and in Europe during the investigation, declares that he saw Mr. Ames present and receive the cash for a check for twelve hundred dollars payable to

'S. C.' And now General Fisk publicly declares that Mr. Ames admitted to him that he was satisfied that Mr. Colfax never saw the check alluded to. These witnesses are said to be reliable, and no doubt they tell the truth. At all events, they are as worthy of belief as Mr. Ames ever was. Admitting the testimony to be credible, some idea of the wrong inflicted upon Mr. Colfax may at once be comprehended.

"Of course it is possible to inflict such injuries without malice. But there was malice, and a very wicked quality of malice, in the crusade against Mr. Colfax. There was besides malice a superserviceable eagerness on the part of Republican politicians to seem willing to punish a member of the political family. Such persons mistook their eagerness to punish, before conviction, for Roman virtue. Alas! Roman virtue is only a tradition; but such as we have any account of was the reverse of self-conscious. It was stern and unyielding; the very essence of self-denial. The traditional Roman did not hand over his own flesh and blood to the executioner upon vague rumor, nor as a matter of self-glorification upon any proofs whatever. Justice can wait upon proof always without detriment to public morals. But the opportunity to degrade a man of exceptionally upright life proved a too powerful temptation for such of our journalists as affect Roman virtue. Goodness and badness are relative. An exceptionally good man in a community rather below than above the average of goodness, and an exceptionally bad man in a community rather above the average of goodness, become equally the objects of jealousy and suspicion, and both may be lynched in a moment of public frenzy.

"But were the innocence of Mr. Colfax made as clear as the sun at noon, the public injury inflicted upon him could never be repaired. The press is nothing if not infallible. 'It may be disgraceful to steal, but it is infamous to be detected,' was the maxim of a noted criminal. So one kind of journalism appears to hold it infamy to acknowledge a blunder. And the press of this country has most certainly blundered in its treatment of Mr. Colfax. We shall see whether it can rise to the level of the occasion."

## CHAPTER XV.

### OUT OF OFFICE.

1873-1885.

BUSIER THAN EVER. — OVERRUN WITH CALLS FOR SPEAKING. — A SERIES OF POPULAR OVATIONS. — RECEPTION IN MINNESOTA, IN THE WEST, IN NEW YORK, IN NEW ENGLAND. — A UNANIMOUS ELECTION TO CONGRESS TENDERED, AND DECLINED. — THE PEOPLE'S ANSWER TO HIS DEFAMERS. — RECEPTION IN COLORADO. — TRIBUTE TO LINCOLN AT THE CAPITAL OF ILLINOIS. — ADOPTS LECTURING AS A PROFESSION. — RECEPTION IN CANADA. — TRIBUTE TO HENRY WILSON. — WHY HE DID NOT WRITE A BOOK. — HIS TWELVE YEARS' WORK. — APPOINTMENTS HE DID NOT LIVE TO FILL.

AT home the ex-Vice-President was soon busy in a Temperance revival, speaking in the churches in South Bend and in adjacent towns. He received invitations from thirty places to address the Odd Fellows on their April anniversary. He accepted an invitation from Greencastle, Ind., and a second from Erie, Pa., the latter on a postponed date. Passing through Lafayette on his way to Greencastle, the Odd Fellows gave him a public reception. In June he addressed the college societies of Otterbein University, near Westerville, O. The University conferred upon him the degree of LL. D.<sup>1</sup> On the 1st of July he lectured on Odd Fellowship at St. Joseph, Mich., and having a similar address to make the next day at Big Rapids, Hon. Alexander H. Morrison, builder and President of the Lake Shore Railroad, organized an excursion party to escort him thither. "The trip was a perfect ovation to the distinguished guest from all parties," said a press dispatch. Word was sent on in advance, and the people of the towns and vicinity were gathered at every station to

1. Mr. Colfax had received this distinction from the Indiana University at Bloomington in June, 1869.



greet him, one party, with a band, coming into Fremont Centre from Hesperia, twelve miles distant. He spoke briefly at every station on the line. In a 4th of July oration at St. Joseph, he discussed the railroad question, the *Indianapolis Sentinel* publishing his remarks, and saying that "consideration of them would steady the theories of those who believed in railroad control by the people." Caught in Evanston, Ill., on the Sabbath, a little later, he addressed the Presbyterian Sabbath-school in the afternoon. "Long before the hour of commencement the church was crowded, every foot of standing room being occupied, and a great number compelled to turn away." The Rev. George C. Noyes gave him a reception in his parlors Saturday evening, which was thronged by the foremost citizens of Evanston.

In August, in company with his friends, Mr. S. M. Shoemaker, wife, and daughters, of Baltimore, the ex-Vice-President and Mrs. Colfax visited Minnesota as the guests of Senator Windom. From Winona, Senator Windom's home, they were accompanied to Minneapolis by Mr. and Mrs. Windom, the *Minneapolis Tribune*, in announcing their arrival, saying: "Thousands of friends and admirers give to the Hon. Schuyler Colfax an earnest welcome to Minnesota." The party "were charmed with the beauties of Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Minnehaha, of Lake Harriet and Lake Calhoun, of the Dalles of the St. Croix, and with the hospitality and courtesies extended to them by our citizens." Mr. Colfax took part in the dedication of a new Odd Fellows' Hall in Minneapolis. Receiving some agreeable additions to their party, they visited Duluth, and ran out on the Northern Pacific to Bismarck. Ascertaining when they would return, the people about Detroit Lake collected by hundreds, captured the party, banqueted them, and gave them a sail on the lake.

September 1st Mr. Colfax wrote Mr. Sinclair: "I find it hard to get rid of speaking, for I have already declined over two hundred speaking invitations this season, but acceptances are actually extorted out of me until I find I have one to three engagements per week through Sep-

tember and October from your State to Minnesota." These months were largely taken up with speaking at agricultural fairs. Extraordinary crowds were drawn together to hear him. He discussed semi-political questions—transportation, tariff, finance—as well as farm topics. "After Mr. Colfax had finished his address," said a Freeport, Ill., dispatch, "thousands pressed forward to take him by the hand. At night he was serenaded by the Freeport Band, and waited upon by a great concourse of citizens, among them Mayor Krohn and Mr. Patterson, leading Democrats. Mr. Patterson introduced the ex-Vice-President in a warm and eulogistic speech, and the scenes on the fair grounds were re-enacted."

At Valparaiso, Ind., "old friends clustered about him, wrung his hand, and assured him of their unalterable friendship, as if he were a brother of them all, and had been grossly slandered and ill-treated." At Charlotte, Mich., "after the speaking," said the *Leader* [Democratic], "a genuine old-fashioned hand-shaking took place, and for half an hour the crowd pressed forward to shake hands with one on whom the country leaned with confidence in the darkest hour of its history." At Monticello, Ill., "ex-Vice-President Colfax addressed one of the largest crowds that ever assembled in Piatt County. At the close of the speech hundreds of people of all political sentiments made a grand rush to the front to shake the hand of this man." "Ten thousand people were on the fair grounds to-day," ran a Galesburgh, Ill., dispatch. "The principal event of the day was the address of Hon. Schuyler Colfax, in which he discussed the relations of the farmers and the railways in a manner to win the commendation of the whole farming community." Of his appearance and reception at the fair of St. Lawrence County, N. Y., the *Potsdam Courier & Freeman* put the following on record :

"The affection of the people for ex-Vice-President Colfax could not have been more positively shown than it was here last week. His address held the large audience as under a spell ; and as soon as the address was concluded there was a pressure from all directions to reach him. The crowd standing on the ground rushed up to the sides of the stand,

and compelled him to reach down and shake with both hands as they passed. When he came to the platform of the grand stand the rush was so great that the foundation gave away, and many were precipitated to the ground. When he reached the end of the stand, he was forced to halt and hold an impromptu reception on the spot, which was continued, without a moment's rest, until he took a carriage for the train. During the address an old Republican who became liberalized, and who voted for Greeley, heard the speaker about twenty minutes, and said to his neighbor: 'I wanted to vote for that man for President.' The speaker went on, and the hearer paid close attention for twenty minutes longer, when he turned to his neighbor again, saying: 'I declare, I want to vote for him for President now.'"

He was the favorite lecturer at the dedications, installations, anniversaries, and festal reunions of his brethren of the Mystic Tie. In Cincinnati this November he addressed five thousand Odd Fellows and their friends at Exposition Hall. Many of these audiences outside of the large cities came together from a wide region, and were equalled in numbers only by the assemblages at the county agricultural fairs. At Lyons, Ia., twenty lodges participated; the procession formed in Clinton and marched to Lyons in the rainy, chilly weather, "a distance, as marched, of four miles," said the *De Witt Observer*. The speaking was to have been in the Odeon, but the building could not contain one fourth of the people. So the orator stood in a window, and sent his voice far up and down the thronged streets. The fraternity of all North-eastern Iowa assembled at Charles City, some of them travelling sixty miles in wagons. "The announcement of an oration by Schuyler Colfax brought in large delegations from all the neighboring places," said a Mattoon, Ill., dispatch. "The procession was long and imposing, and in spite of the intense heat Mr. Colfax held the audience of thousands for an hour and a half with an able and engaging discussion of the principles of the Order." At Paxton, Ill., although "it was the hottest, dustiest, busiest day of the season, seven thousand assembled to hear Brother Colfax. He spoke for more than an hour, and then, at the urgent appeal of all, fifteen minutes on the condition of the country. Notwithstanding the thermometer was one hundred degrees in the

shade, the vast audience remained deeply interested in the able speech, and wanted more. When he closed thousands went forward and shook his hand. Delegates from twenty lodges were present." At Yorkville, Ill., Dr. Ussher welcomed him, saying :

" Your visits to this section have been so far apart that our hearts incline us to kill the fatted calf and rejoice as a happy family at the arrival of our favorite brother. Would that I had the eloquence of Homer to express the hearty welcome of the Fraternity who greet you here to-day. Watched from boyhood by many of us who now surround you, the promise of your early life has been fulfilled. With feelings of exultation, we have seen you climb the ladder of fame ; we have heard your eloquence ring out over the land ; we have watched you in authority, swift as an eagle, grapple with wrong, and hand-in-hand with Justice walk in the paths of rectitude. Wreathed with the talisman of Friendship, Love, and Truth, you have entered into that Holy of Holies, that dwelling place of God, that sanctuary—the human heart. Above its portals we have written the words, ' None but the pure can enter here.' To you, our brother, the portals of our hearts are ever open. We gladly welcome you among us, and thank you for the distinguished honor of your visit."

At Elizabeth, N. J., Colonel James W. Woodruff gave him a reception at his residence in the evening before the speaking. " A large number of the leading citizens of the town called and were introduced to the distinguished visitor." Many members of the Order from New York City attended the lecture. At Poughkeepsie, N. Y., he was received at the depot by a delegation of the brethren, banqueted at the National Hotel, escorted on a visit to Eastman College, where " he made a short speech, which was received with rounds of applause." The Opera House was packed from pit to dome in the evening to listen to his lecture. " The Odd Fellows cannot but be gratified at the reception given their orator," said the *News* (Democratic). At Oneida, N. Y., " the crowd gathered around Mr. Colfax after the speaking, anxious to take him by the hand," said the *Roman Citizen*. " The most enthusiastic compliments greeted him on every hand, and no one who witnessed the scene could doubt that the distinguished gentleman's hold on the popular heart is as strong as ever it was in the past."

At Springfield, Mass., he was received with a great street demonstration, procession, and music, and entertained by Colonel Thompson, who gave him a reception at his residence. The *Springfield Union* said: "Mr. Colfax was greeted last night at the Opera House with much of the old enthusiasm. The hall was crowded, and the address was followed by a general hand-shaking." At New Haven, Conn., the people thronged the depot and its approaches; hardly could a landing from the train be effected without the aid of the police, and crowds filled the sidewalks all the way up to the New Haven House. "Used as he has been to ovations," said the *New Haven Union*, "he could not have been otherwise than pleased by the spontaneous cordiality with which he was received."

Speaking of Odd Fellowship on this occasion, he said:

"Its altars are consecrated to the purest morality, its walls profaned by no bacchanalian orgies. It stands a beautiful temple, its base resting on the grand principle of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, recognizing one nation, the earth, and one race, mankind, governed by the injunction to deal justly and love mercy. Charity, too, and hospitality, hope, benevolence, and friendship are inculcated by Odd Fellowship, and stand as pillars in the great temple of our Order. Standing amid these pillars, we look up to the great dome over us, whereon is inscribed 'TRUTH,' and to the roof sheltering us from bigotry, and we see the first and greatest principle of our Order, the Golden Rule. To comfort the sorrowing, cheer the broken-hearted, and wipe away all tears—these are the objects of Odd Fellowship, and their faithful accomplishment is the proudest reward we can ask, the highest meed of praise that we can ever gain."

At Bridgeport the *Bridgeport Standard* said: "Mr. Colfax was seated in an open carriage, with distinguished members of the Order, and the procession moved through the streets amid the plaudits of thousands of spectators until they reached the Sterling House. In the evening the Opera House was filled with those anxious to hear the renowned orator and statesman discourse upon the character and merits of a benevolent organization whose good works are generally very inadequately understood." On behalf of the lodge, the Rev. Mr. Briggs, chaplain, presented him a gold-headed cane, saying: "This gold is emblematical

of the purity and brilliancy of your character ; the steel ferrule illustrates the firmness and trueness of your principles ; while the wood represents the perishable nature of the calumnies uttered against you." Returning to the West through Pittsburg, Pa., the *Commercial* of that city noted a marked improvement in his health " There are few public men," it said, " who have ' worn the white flower of a blameless life ' in as knightly a manner as Mr. Colfax has, or respecting whom that fierce light which incessantly beats upon them, blackening every blot, has revealed so stainless and clean a breast. He has nobly won his laurelled rest."

On the 15th of January, 1874, his stepfather, Mr. Matthews, followed his mother into the land of shadows. Without doubt he died many years sooner than he would but for the assiduity with which he nursed his wife through her four years of living death. Almost all the years of Colfax's life they had been companions, and he missed his stepfather exceedingly. He wrote Mrs. Hollister : " I feel more and more as the days pass by how intertwined he was with my life and thoughts ; how I need to talk to him about so many things ; how I miss his affectionate counselings, his loving face at the table, in our sitting-room, and all. He did love me, the dear good friend of my youth and manhood. No father could have loved me more, and I loved him so much." Esquire Matthews was a man of refinement and culture, genuine, stanch as the hills. Mr. Colfax settled his estate, attending to its distribution among the Squire's own children, declining any part of it himself, or pay for his services as administrator.

February 5th, 1874, he wrote Senator Anthony as follows :

" I hope you are enjoying the winter at Washington, with its gayeties, as you generally do, presiding at Republican caucuses, and often in the Chair of the Senate, saying pleasant and complimentary things to the ladies, and basking in their smiles, as is your happy fate. As for myself, I have realized that the truest happiness is not in belonging to the many-headed public, but to your family and yourself, and I wonder how I could have remained in it twenty years. My old constituents in great numbers insist that I must go back to the House from my old district, in which

many Democrats join ; but I can imagine no temptation or emergency that could induce me to return to public life again."

Participating in the ceremonies of Decoration Day at South Bend, he said :

" While at the grave we should bury all enmities and antagonisms, I cannot concur with those who insist that the graves of those who died fighting to destroy their country should be decorated equally with those who gave their lives for the nation's preservation. This annual testimonial is not merely a tribute of affection, or we should include in it the graves of mothers, wives, children, and friends, very dear as they were to us, with which our cemetery is filled ; but it is intended as a commemoration of patriotism, as a manifestation of gratitude to those who sacrificed so much for their country's preservation, and as an inspiration to the youth around us to act similarly, if the dark days should again dawn on our country. I am willing to forget and forgive, and to acknowledge that those on the other side fought sincerely, and with a bravery and devotion worthy of a better cause. While in Congress I voted for amnesty to all who would seek it. But Decoration Day will lose all its significance and meaning when, if ever, it shall include those who fought, however mistakenly, for the country's destruction. In that case, to be consistent, we should honor the flags of the Rebellion in the War Department, as we do the Stars and Stripes ; and we should place by the side of the picture of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, in the rotunda of the Capitol, a picture of the signers of the ordinance of secession which inaugurated the Rebellion."

In a letter to the Patrons of Husbandry of Wabash County, after saying that two years before, in a 4th of July oration, he had pointed out the evils which the Grange organization was principally intended to remedy, he continues : " The just ground on which all just men can unite, is that railroads should be common carriers for all on common grounds, and at equitable rates, without unjust discrimination or favoritism." He commended the admission of women to the Order, and its firm stand for Temperance. Independence Day saw him orator at Ypsilanti, Mich. The multitude gathered on that occasion was estimated at twenty-five thousand. He discussed " the resistless and victorious power of Right, as illustrated in our national history."

He had no sooner reached home on his retirement from office than his return to Congress from his old district be-

gan to be agitated. The *South Bend Tribune* of April 26th, 1873, thought it was forcing the season, since the nominating convention was a full year in the future, but admitted that in view of recent events the agitation was inevitable. "The feeling is general," it said, "not only in the district and State, but outside of the State, that Mr. Colfax should be returned to Congress again. We have before us letters from several States asking if it will be done, and urging it in the strongest terms." The *Tribune* republished the following from the *Baltimore American* of April 21st, 1873 :

"Mr. Colfax has retired to private life with the full confidence of that vast constituency which honored him with the second place in the national Government—a confidence which has not been weakened by the assaults which have been made on his integrity. At the time when the fiercest storms beat upon his good name, we expressed our opinion that the home community which first sent him to the Congress that elevated him to the dignity of its presiding officer would only record the verdict of the nation, if they should reply to his accusers by returning him as their Representative at Congress."

Referring to the strong desire to do this manifested by his district—a desire not by any means confined to his own party—the *Baltimore* paper continued :

"Mr. Colfax is one of those men whom we cannot spare from public life. An intelligent, conscientious, and diligent application to public affairs entitles him to a position which he should accept for the sake of the country. And there is the other consideration that it would be the most crushing reply to the slanders which have been heaped upon him. He owes it to himself to hold out his hand to this vindication which is offered to him. We earnestly hope that he will permit himself to be returned by his district by the largest majority it has ever given."

The *Tribune* was unable to encourage the hope that he would again accept office. The *St. Joseph Valley Register* of April 17th, 1873, said :

"Mr. Colfax has been on our streets every day for the past six weeks, in our office nearly every day, and has conversed with hundreds of all parties. The fact that the *Valparaiso Messenger*, *Goshen Democrat*, *Ligonier Banner*, *Warsaw Union*—Democratic papers of Northern Indiana—have urged that he should be sent back to Congress from his old district, has, of course, caused considerable conversation about it. But we have heard him reply repeatedly and uniformly that he did not want any office of any kind ; that for the first time in twenty years he belonged to his



family and himself instead of the public, and enjoyed the rest and quiet it brought him too much to think of consenting that his ownership should be changed."

The time had now come round for the nomination (spring of 1874). The Hon. David Turner, of Lake County; Messrs. Thomas Jernegan, of La Porte County; Mark L. McClelland, of Porter County; C. W. McPherson, of Carroll County, and other prominent gentlemen of the district, united in a letter urging him to accept the nomination. He thanked them for their kindness, but declined to accede to their wishes. He said in part:

"My old constituents must pardon me for insisting that in their future Congressional canvasses I must be counted only as a voter and under no circumstances as a candidate. If public life can be ranked as a duty not to be evaded, I have certainly performed a full share of that duty. If, however, as is generally considered, it is regarded as a pleasure, I have certainly had of that pleasure more than any one citizen had a right to claim or expect."

If he had yielded to the general wish of the people of Northern Indiana at this time, he would have been returned to Congress without opposition from the Democracy, for many of their leaders and journals were committed to it, and urged it as strongly as the Republicans.<sup>1</sup> A unanimous

1. "His nomination to the office would be equivalent to an almost unanimous election, for we doubt if the opposition would put up a candidate against him."—*Mishawaka Enterprise*.

"Many of the best citizens of all parties have cherished a hope that Mr. Colfax would have overcome his repugnance to public life, and that he would listen to the request of the people and make the race this fall."—*Valparaiso Vidette*.

"With many others, we hoped, for the harmony and success of the party, that Mr. Colfax's decision would have been otherwise, notwithstanding the fact that he had all along declared his intention of permanently retiring from public life."—*Michigan City Enterprise*.

"The *Register* is in possession of letters from influential Democrats, resident in all parts of the district, giving assurance that if Mr. Colfax could be made the Republican nominee, no nomination would be made by the opposition."—*St. Joseph Valley Register*.

"We have no doubt he would receive the almost unanimous vote of his district, for those who have the most intimate knowledge of his home life and character have the most perfect faith in his integrity."—*Albany Evening Journal*.

"We knew there were strong influences at work to induce Mr. Colfax to become a candidate, but we had no idea at any time that he could be induced to consent. No man in the district would go over the track with as much ease as he would."—*Winamac Republican*.

"It is believed that were he to consent to become a candidate, he would be elected without opposition even from the Democrats."—*Chicago Evening Journal*.

"This will disappoint thousands of people of both political parties, who had nursed

election was virtually tendered him. Almost without exception his personal friends desired and urged him to accept it. "In most things," he said, "I am as wax in the hands of my friends; in this I am adamant." He was speaking every second day to thousands of people at all sorts of gatherings, and declining four out of five of his invitations, because he could not be in five places at once. Intending to visit Colorado this summer, he wrote Mr. Witter, July 16th :

"Of course I do not expect to make any political speeches, for, parodying Greeley, 'the way to get out of politics is to get out of politics.' And I must be home between the middle and last of September, for I have a number of engagements to speak which I could not find time for this summer. They insist on them. I have declined more than one hundred invitations a month, but the 'exceptions' I have had to make have engrossed all my time, so that the last month I have been busy as in a canvass. My crowds have been larger than when in public life."<sup>1</sup>

Among these declined invitations were twenty to speak at college commencements. The Young Men's Christian Association of Cleveland were obliged to postpone their

the hope that Mr. Colfax might once more be their Representative in Congress. We have received scores of letters from all over the district, urging that South Benders should use every exertion to induce him to run. One of the most prominent and far-seeing politicians in the district writes us : 'If Colfax will consent to a candidacy he will have a clear field—not even any opposition from the Democracy.'—*South Bend Tribune*.

"The country at large would be benefited by his election, and it would be glad to know that his objections had been overcome, and that his services were once more at the disposal of the public."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean*.

"The letter will be read with mingled feelings of regret and pleasure—regret that the public are to be deprived of services of so much value, and our district of the honor of again being represented by him; pleasure in the thought that, though bitterly abused by politicians of all parties who hated him for his pure life and clear record, he should be the first choice of his old constituents, in spite of all the schemes that human imagination could invent for his political destruction."—*Crown Point Register*.

1. From the *South Bend Tribune* :

"Mr. Colfax spoke Thursday afternoon to an audience, of which the *Logansport Star* said: 'Thousands of people thronged the streets to watch the procession, which numbered over twenty-seven hundred persons;' and later in the day, at the laying of the cornerstone of the Logansport High School, to another great crowd. After delivering the anniversary address before the Young Men's Christian Association, at Cleveland, he returned home yesterday morning. He leaves to-morrow morning to fill the following appointments, the three first being collegiate : Madison, Wis., June 16th; Olivet, Mich., June 17th; Indianapolis, Ind., June 18th; Stamford, Conn., June 20th and 21st; Elizabeth, N. J., June 22d; Paterson, N. J., June 23d; Lebanon, Ind., June 26th; St. Joseph, Mich., July 1st; Big Rapids, Mich., July 2d; East Saginaw, Mich., July 3d; Ypsilanti, Mich., July 4th; Paxton, Ill., July 6th; Mattoon, Ill., July 7th; Charles City, Ia., July 9th; Davenport, Ia., July 10th; North Liberty, Ind., July 18th; soon after which he starts with his family for the Rocky Mountains of Colorado."

anniversary from May 14th to June 12th, the only day he could give them. Twenty Colfaxes could not have met the demands on the one. Such was the answer of the people to the attempt to crucify this man on the Credit Mobilier cross. In his address before the Young Men's Christian Association at Cleveland, he said:

"The sphere of the members of this body is daily to go forth to relieve the sick, the fallen, and the destitute. However degraded or dishonored they may be, they are God's creatures. They were born in His image, and are under His protection. The members of this association find their highest delight in taking their fallen fellow-men by the hand and leading them back to virtue, sobriety, and prosperity here on earth, and guiding them to a brilliant hereafter. Man derives his greatest happiness not by that which he does for himself, but by what he accomplishes for others. This is a sad world at best, a world of sorrows, of suffering, of injustice, and falsification—men stab those whom they hate with the stiletto of slander—and it is for the followers of the teachings of our Lord to improve it, to make it more as Christ would have it. The most precious crown of fame that a human being can ask is to kneel at the Bar of God and hear the beautiful words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' The wealth of many good deeds performed is more valuable than all earthly possessions. It is the most priceless heritage you can leave to your children. These deeds will be immortal."

The press of Colorado greeted him cordially on his arrival in Denver. "We welcome him to Colorado in the sincerest good faith," said the *Denver Tribune*. "We are proud of him and his record. Whether in office or out of office, we have always found him the same honest, open, fearless, true-hearted man." Said the *Denver Times*: "Our people recognize in him a zealous, conscientious friend. They welcome him again, not with noisy display and hurrah, but with quiet satisfaction, and the earnest wish that his visit may prove pleasant and beneficial." The *Georgetown Miner* said: "We acknowledge the pleasure of a call from plain Schuyler Colfax. We omit the 'Honorable,' for it cannot add to the lustre of true manhood or heighten the esteem which a nature kindly in sentiment, true in instinct, broad in scope, generous in sympathy, and genuine in all its moods and manifestations, invariably awakens." The prominent men of Col-

orado joined in doing him honor and in making his stay agreeable. Receptions and social entertainments were given him in the larger towns. Excursions to points of interest on the new railroads were arranged for his pleasure. He was offered "a very beautiful tract of land as a present, if he would make Colorado his residence."

Although declining to accept office, he retained all his interest in politics. Returned home, and presiding on the 10th of October at a political meeting, he contended that Republican ascendancy was, if possible, more important to the nation than to the party itself, because the Republican Party was the party of ideas and progress. Reviewing the twenty years through which we had come since the era of political intimidation, outrage, and assassination opened in Kansas Territory, he said he thought it was time for that era to close, and for every citizen, North and South, to be protected in his rights.

On the same day he wrote as follows to Mr. John T. Drew :

"Won't you write me a long letter, and tell me what you have been doing through all this long interval, how your health is, etc.? I have been overwhelmed with speaking invitations of all kinds, political, educational, collegiate, agricultural, Odd Fellowship, and Temperance ; and though I have declined one hundred per month, the exceptions have kept me talking a good deal from New England to beyond the Mississippi. I had a splendid reception [public, with music], and a large audience at Springfield, Mass., Bowles's town—he was away at the time—and also at New Haven and Bridgeport, Conn., and have just returned from a two months' ramble with my family over the mountains and plains of Colorado, whither I went to get rid of speaking, and to enjoy their scenery and invigorating atmosphere. I declined nearly all the invitations received there, but spoke four times to large crowds. Since my return home I had to decline an urgent invitation from the Montreal Odd Fellows—it is too far off, and didn't have the time. But I wanted to go.

"I have not made any political speeches except one to my townsmen here since my return home. I send you a copy of it, as you may not otherwise see it. Our canvass is all mixed up in the State, although looking better than a month ago. My old constituents insisted on my running again for Congress, and offered to nominate me unanimously (as all the Republican aspirants proffered to yield in my favor), and to elect me by thousands, as hundreds of Democrats were openly for me. But as I had been in Congress eighteen years, I had no ambition for it, and

insisted that I must be excused. I have enjoyed the independence and absence of responsibility for public affairs the last year hugely. And I shall never forget the obligations of gratitude I owe to you for your willing testimony, so bravely given. Do let me hear from you, and believe me very truly yours.

“SCHUYLER COLFAX.”

In a letter to Mr. A. N. Eddy, son of his friend, the Rev. Dr. Eddy, written when the latter died, in October, 1874, Mr. Colfax says :

“You say truly that no man ever had a warmer, truer friend than your father was to me. How sadly I realize this I cannot adequately express. His was a life-long friendship, too, without variableness or shadow of turning. It surrounded me and encompassed me and inspired me all through my public life. I turned to it at every hour of anxiety and trial, as one turns to the heart of the woman who loves him, and I never returned to it in vain. I could always drink deeply there of affectionate regard, of true-hearted devotion, of wisest counsel. All who are near and dear to me know that I valued that friendship to its full worth. And it saddens me now inexpressibly, as if I were of his kith and kin, that I am never to see him again, never to feel the warm grasp of his hand and see in his face and hear in his words the cheery welcome he always gave me. But his is a better, happier land than ours. Death is sad, indeed ; but when we realize that only through it can we see God, our sorrow should be for the stricken ones, not for the victorious Christian who has gone before.”

This fall the Indianapolis Real Estate Exchange first occupied their new hall in the Martindale Block. The ex-Vice-President delivered the inaugural address. “He was received,” said the *Indiana State Journal*, “with an honest, hearty welcome by a crowded assemblage of the leading business men of the city.” It was a felicitous occasion, set off with a striking array of figures, illustrating the growth and commercial prosperity of the city. The orator contributed to its success by contrasting the Indianapolis of his first recollection with the Indianapolis of the occasion. He exhibited Governor Ray’s railroad map of a former day—the butt of his contemporaries—now exactly realized by railroads in successful operation.

A monument to Lincoln was unveiled at the capital of Illinois in this month of October (1874). Called out of the audience, the ex-Vice-President spoke as follows :

“ MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS : I came hither to-day from my Indiana home, to participate with you in these sadly interesting exercises, with the understanding that I was not to speak ; but when you call on me so earnestly at the close of these ceremonies, so honorable to you and honorable to the country as well, I cannot forbear occupying a few moments in bearing testimony to the life, to the character, to the services, and to the undying fame of him to whom the nation and the world owe so much.

“ Cruelly maligned and wickedly vilified as he was while living—compared even to Nero and Caligula and the other tyrants whose dark deeds blacken the pages of history—yet when the bullet of the assassin hurried him to the grave, the whole world stood as mourners at his tomb. Without a single dissenting voice, history now declares upon its adamantine tablets that in ancient, as in modern times, no ruler ever wielded power more leniently than Abraham Lincoln. No man who held in his hand the keys of life and death ever pardoned so generously and so mercifully. Unselfish, and more than unselfish—self-forgetful—he was of all men I ever knew in public or private life, large-hearted, even-tempered, sympathetic, free from malice, and absolutely incapable of revenge.

“ But while I have been listening with you to-day to these eloquent tributes to his life and services, the sentiment of that greatest of American speeches—delivered by Abraham Lincoln himself at the Gettysburg Cemetery—has been uppermost in my mind. May I not paraphrase his own words, and say, *We* cannot dedicate or sanctify or hallow this ground. He whose remains slumber here till the resurrection morn has, by his services to this nation, consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what he did for us. Let *us* rather be dedicated here to the cause for which he gave the last full measure of devotion—that we may here highly resolve that he shall not have died in vain ; but that our government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall become in our hands the joy, as it is the hope, of every lover of liberty throughout the world.

“ And let all our young men who are stepping on the threshold of manhood find inspiration in the life and deeds of one who, though born in the humblest walks of life, by his own merit, by his own industry, by his own unexceptionable habits, by his own devotedness to patriotism, and his elevating principles, raised himself to the highest position in the civilized world ; and then, when death came at last, ‘ from the top of Fame’s ladder stepped to the skies.’ ”

This speech fitly closed the ceremonies. After the prolonged applause subsided, ex-Governor Palmer, President of the day, said : “ Now, not another word ! Let us all rise and close by singing the Doxology.”

Mr. Colfax was besought to return to Springfield, and treat the subject more at length. Mrs. Colfax urged him to do so, because it was in his line, would give him occupation, and he would enjoy it. He recast his tribute of 1865 into a lecture, which he was at once overwhelmed with invitations to deliver. It was thus that he was led to the adoption of lecturing as a profession. He subsequently rewrote and occasionally delivered his Overland lecture, laid by in 1867; but the Lincoln lecture was his main reliance. With the lecturing he continued those addresses on miscellaneous topics and occasions which began with his entrance into active life, and had never been wholly suspended. Senator Anthony wrote him in January, 1875 :

“MY DEAR COLFAX : I hear of you not ‘a wanderer in many lands,’ but in all parts of our own land, everywhere drawing great crowds of admiring listeners and everywhere proving that your great popularity is undiminished. I have often thought in these troublous times what might have been the effect if you had carried out your intention of taking charge of the *New York Tribune*, making that great power a tower of strength to the Republicans instead of a stronghold of the Democracy. I look upon the defeat of [Zachary] Chandler as a blow at the Administration and at the party. His strong will and aggressive temper made him a representative man. He bears it well. Says that he was beaten by ‘sixty odd Copperheads, three soreheads, and three wooden heads’—that everything was done that could be done, but that there is no insurance against lying; and that men voted against him who, as a condition of their election, pledged themselves to support him.

“Our friends here regard the situation as eminently grave, yet by no means hopeless. The Republicans are not so much depressed nor the Democrats so exultant as I expected. The wisest Democrats see plainly the difficulties before them, and the trouble that they will have to hold the North, with sixty rebel officers howling in the House and their friends killing negroes in the South. It is impossible to predict what our friends will do on Louisiana or on the transportation question. I think that Colorado will be likely to get in—New Mexico more doubtful. Not much is said about the taxes. But I suppose that [a tax on] tea and coffee and the restoration of the ten per cent that was taken off the imports are more likely to be adopted than an addition to the tax on whisky.”

To Mr. Henry Wetherbee, of San Francisco, Mr. Colfax wrote in May, 1875 :

“I have been enjoying the most delightful winter and spring I have realized for twenty years, and have taken a new lease of life. I can see

now the last three years I was Vice-President I was on the down-grade. I was troubled with insomnia, was haggard and careworn, and a year more would have taken me to the cemetery. With my out-of-door life, I have the appetite and sleep of a laborer. You never saw one more completely cured of all desire for public life, or even willingness to accept its honors with its trials. I refused to listen to the appeal of my old constituents who wished me to return to Congress, and decline all political discussion, telling every one that I vote the straight Republican ticket, but give no explanations and ask no questions. The outlook ahead isn't as pleasant and serene politically as I could desire, but all our reverses and imminent dangers have arisen from the lack for the last two years of united and harmonious and consequent powerful political leadership at Washington. With the shepherds divided and antagonizing, what wonder that the sheep have gone astray? In what road were they certain they should walk, when their leaders could not or would not agree as to the true pathway? Hence they stray into pitfalls.

"I have been literally overwhelmed with speaking invitations—a seven-thousand-dollar block in our city built out of proceeds of one year's talking to colleges, fairs, Odd Fellows' anniversaries, etc., and for the past six months far more than this for lecturing, with a most delightful round of dinner parties and hearty welcomes all over. Besides all this, the freedom from official care and responsibility makes my spirits buoyant and elastic as my health is firmer and more robust than for many years."

He wrote Senator Anthony later in the same month :

"Wife and I have just returned from a delightful visit of a week in Canada—speaking at Toronto, Hamilton, Whitby, and Niagara—flags of both nations intertwined everywhere, balls, banquets, receptions, speeches, carriages, music, and sight-seeing, till we were almost killed with kindness. One Tory paper tried to stem the tide, but only intensified the enthusiasm of the demonstrations. At the palatial residence of Mr. Perry, of Whitby, on the north shore of Lake Ontario, the Stars and Stripes were unfurled for the first time in Mr. Perry's life, and the crowd, they said, was twice as large as when the Prince of Wales was there. Representatives were present from so far off as Windsor, two hundred miles west, and Montreal, three hundred miles east, and a steamer full across the lake from Rochester. At Toronto a magnificent collation followed the speaking, and we could not get away from it and our enthusiastic friends until two, although we had to rise at half-past five to go to Hamilton and be similarly banqueted there, under the flags of both nations, from nine to eleven in the morning, when we got off to the Falls, where I only had to speak once at night in a crowded hall, instead of three times a day, as before. I enclose you some slips, to give you some idea of it. They seemed to want to make it international.



“ I have had the jolliest and most independent and most money-making winter of my life ; have had over six hundred invitations, accepted about one fifth—at just the points I wanted to visit—have had larger audiences and more general and hearty welcome than when in public life, and have received ten thousand dollars besides. My engagements last to June 21st, though all the other lecturers are out of the field, and I commence in October again, having more invitations now than would fill every night next winter, if I accepted them. But ‘ I go a-visiting ’ more than a-lecturing.

“ I note what the papers say of your opinion as to Southern affairs and I agree exactly, as we always did. Grant has been a better Republican the last two years than Congress (though I am not for third term). If we had a political weather ‘ Prob., ’ I should advise him to say, ‘ Cautionary signals—Look out for squalls ! ’ I was disappointed in not seeing you while I was at Washington. But I knew there was a good reason for it—there was a caucus that night. I had a pleasant talk of half an hour with the President. He said he would invite thirty old friends to meet me at dinner next day if I would stay. I told him I could not afford it, as it would cost me a hundred dollars to stop over a day (my lecture fee), and he laughed heartily at the idea.”

Press notices of the Lincoln lecture often ran into notices of the lecturer. “ Throughout the changes of a wonderfully brilliant and distinguished career,” said the Alton (Ill.) *Telegraph* in January, 1875, “ not surpassed in the history of American politics, his genial courtesy and sterling integrity remained unchanged. The people believe in and trust his honesty, purity, and patriotism, notwithstanding the slurs and slanders which envy and malice have cast upon him.” “ I have the honor and pleasure,” said Mr. C. M. Nichols, of the Springfield (O.) *Republic*, “ of presenting to you to-night an eminent Christian gentleman—a man of blameless life and of stainless name—the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, of Indiana.” “ Nor is it detracting from the merit of the dead statesman and patriot to declare that his name receives fresh lustre in its commemoration by his justly distinguished eulogist,” said the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*. The *St. Louis Democrat* said : “ The lecture was a most remarkable one, worthy of the fame of the man who gave it, and of his fame to whose memory it was devoted.” “ Schuyler Colfax can be elected Governor of Indiana by twenty thousand majority,” said the *Rockville Republican* ;

and anxiously inquired, "Will the Republicans nominate him?" "They may," replied the *South Bend Tribune*, "but he will not accept."

He spent August with his wife at Martha's Vineyard and Newport. Early in September he addressed an audience of eight thousand on Odd Fellowship at Three Rivers, Mich. This multitude was treated to a free dinner. In the evening he delivered his lecture on Lincoln in a church. The day, according to a press dispatch, "was a continuous ovation of hand-shaking and kind words for him," and this was a typical day. November found him at Springfield, Mass. The *Republican* said :

"Schuyler Colfax, in his lecture on Abraham Lincoln last night at the City Hall, met a notably cordial welcome. Springfield gave him a substantial, responsive audience, noticeable for its diversified, respectable character. There were people seldom seen on such occasions, though hardly as many black faces as might have been expected. The lecture was, of course, in the highest degree, an intimate, appreciative review, full of intelligent discernment of the life, character, and labors of the late President Lincoln, brimming over with those famous stories. Many people pressed forward to greet Mr. Colfax after his talk, and the succeeding Odd Fellows' reception at their hall was an enthusiastic compliment to their distinguished brother, and the rooms were completely filled with the members of the Order and their invited friends. After being generally introduced to the audience by Mr. T. Chubbuck, Mr. Colfax spoke at length upon the general principles and duties of the Order, its growth and advantages, enlivening his remarks by pleasant anecdote and incident; applause and good feeling were abundant, and personal introduction and conversation followed for an hour."

On the occasion of Henry Wilson's death, Colfax, who was then at Syracuse, N. Y., prefaced his lecture with the following tribute :

"I need hardly say to you how sincerely I sorrow with you and the people of the United States over the death of Vice-President Wilson. Born like the distinguished citizen of whom I am about to speak to-night, in obscurity and poverty, he rose like him, step by step, by his own energy, industry, and fidelity to principle and duty. Without scholastic culture, and without the aid of wealthy or influential relatives, he passed through nearly every grade of official distinction till he attained the second office in the gift of the people. Always a willing worker, always laboring with heart and soul, with tongue and pen, and with an energy

that knew neither rest nor relaxation, for principles he so thoroughly believed in, he died at last from overwork at his post of duty. And millions of our people, for years to come, will mourn the loss of so faithful a public servant, so unselfish a patriot, and so true-hearted a citizen as Henry Wilson."

Every word of this compact eulogy might at his death have been spoken with appropriateness of him who uttered it.

The Lincoln lecture grew in popularity. "Mr. Colfax had a very large and enthusiastic audience," said the *Boston Post* in December, "and the platform was occupied by many distinguished citizens. Mr. Colfax spoke informally, as though familiar with his subject; and though his voice was hoarse and husky kept his audience in rapt attention to the end of the lecture." A Lecture Bureau made him tempting offers to deliver the lecture one hundred times in the East, while requests for it from the West steadily increased in frequency. Within one hundred and forty days of its preparation he delivered it ninety-four times in thirteen States, passing meanwhile twenty times from the Mississippi Valley to the Atlantic seaboard, or *vice versa*. Writing to Mr. Wetherbee in December, 1876, he says: "I have lost thirty thousand dollars in the shrinkage of values, break-down of investments, etc., in the past three years, although my investments were scattered some five thousand dollars in a place. This was almost half of what I was worth. By what seems to me a lucky accident, I have made up my losses by lecturing, including what I shall realize this season." In 1878 he wrote his wife's sister: "I am really very tired of it, and nothing but its revenue keeps me from quitting it, save in exceptional cases." In 1880 he wrote the author: "I have quit working at the high pressure speed of the last few years; limit myself except in January, the high-tide of the lecture season, to two or three lectures a week; and hence am at home about three days per week instead of Sundays only."

The next year, the Lincoln lecture having been modified to include Garfield, he wrote: "Am awfully busy this season—a perfect flood of invitations to lecture—season

nearly full now [October 30th], lecturing four times a week." In 1882: "I had a delightful week in Kansas; spoke to several thousands at a fair, and had a banquet given me by the Indianians around there, attended by six hundred, some coming thirty miles to attend." In April, 1883: "I am still wandering over the country, devastating it with lectures, but the season is almost ended. Wife asks me sometimes, 'When does it end, really?' But I tell her there are always a few more ahead. How can you refuse when she wants a Worth dress, and the associations shake their money at you, and urge you to come?" In a letter to Mr. Eddy, of Chicago, written December 5th, 1884, he says:

"Publishers have urged me to undertake some kind of a work, which you also so kindly suggest. But I lack the taste and the ambition. I have even declined very lucrative offers for one hundred nights of a lecture on 'My Twenty Years in Congress,' for many reasons, a few of which are that I am drawing my lecture absences from my family into a narrower compass (but two or three per week, so as to spend half the week besides Sundays, as of old, with my wife); that it would look egotistical to me, if it did not to others; that it would seem like copying the idea struck out by another; and that I have made so much money lecturing (over one hundred thousand dollars), I really don't care for any more, strange as that may seem.<sup>1</sup> But my business investments since I have been in private life have generally turned out well besides. My present life is a very enjoyable one. It is wonderful to me how my lecture wears, as I supposed it would long ago have been exhausted. But the demand still continues, far greater than I am willing (and able) to supply. It prevents me from rusting out, gives me plenty of travel and adventure, a series of delightful visits over the country, tea-parties with old Congressional and political friends, and as here [Geneseo, N. Y.], I am compelled to return a second time to the same place. At Huntington, Pa., last week, I had the largest lecture audience ever known there, and found a table full of old friends I had never met before. But I am not a book-maker, have no taste for it, and could not work up any such thing *con amore*. I am under engagement to furnish the *Boston Congregationalist* with articles, at fifty dollars each, but the spirit doesn't move me to write half a dozen a year. I enclose you the last one. I fear my roving, wandering life has made me lazy!"

1. The appraised value of his estate, after his death, was one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

Like his politics, his lecturing was always to be laid down that he might enjoy rest and quiet with his family at home. But "quiet to quick bosoms is a hell." Partly from choice, partly from necessity, lecturing was not abandoned. He died in the act. Managing for himself involved a heavy correspondence. He entered the minutes of it all for twelve years on about thirty sheets of note-paper, which he carried with him. It is so closely written and so much interlined, and he used so many signs known only to himself, that it is almost impossible to decipher it. But part of it is a summary, recording the appointments filled, when, where, and what the occasion. May 1st, 1883, he summed up the lectures delivered as follows: "Illinois, 137; New York, 114; Iowa, 106; Michigan, 103; Indiana, 92; Ohio, 90; Pennsylvania, 71; Wisconsin, 39; Massachusetts, 22; Kansas, 22; Missouri, 18; Minnesota, 14; Nebraska, 12; Colorado, 8; Connecticut, 5; Vermont, 5; Rhode Island, 5; Canada, 4; Maine, 3; Maryland, 3; West Virginia, 3; District of Columbia, 2; California, 2; New Hampshire, 2; Virginia, 1; Delaware, 1; Utah, 1; Kentucky, 1; Dakota, 1;—thirty States and Territories—total, 910." Afterward, as near as can be made out, he lectured just one hundred times.

His addresses at Odd Fellows' anniversaries and festivals; at foundations, dedications, college commencements, temperance, day and Sunday-school gatherings, soldiers' reunions, political meetings, farmers' and mechanics' fairs, in aid of churches and charities, in response to serenades, and his 4th of July orations, exclusive of his lectures proper, numbered full three hundred in these twelve years. And these figures give but a faint idea of the work involved. One must take the list and a map, and trace him over his whole field, at least once every month of the lecture seasons. Each one of the thirteen hundred lectures and addresses represents, perhaps, three hundred miles of travel. He always made it a point to spend the Sabbath at home; he never missed an appointment unless his train was delayed; he never met with an accident in his hun-

dreds of thousands of miles of lecture travelling. Following are the last four entries on his programme :

- “ Chicago, Ill., Thursday, January 8th, 1885 ; Business College..... 40
- “ Rock Rapids, Ia., Tuesday, January 13th, 1885 ; Mr. H. B. Pierce. 75
- “ Olivet, Mich., Monday, January 19th, 1885 ; G. A. R., W. A. Barnes. 60
- “ Ithaca, Mich., Tuesday, January 20th, 1885 ; W. R. Wright..... 60”

The last three he did not live to fill.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### OUT OF OFFICE (CONTINUED).

1873-1885.

DECLINES TO RUN FOR CONGRESS IN 1876.—RECEPTION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF THE UNITED STATES AT INDIANAPOLIS.—CONTESTED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.—THE WHITE MEN OF THE NORTH ACCEPT THE BADGE OF INFERIORITY.—DEMANDS THE REMONETIZATION OF SILVER.—ALWAYS AGAINST POLYGAMY.—PRISON LABOR.—SIX WEEKS' CANVASS IN 1880.—INDIANA WINS THE PRESIDENTIAL BATTLE.—DECLINES TO RUN FOR UNITED STATES SENATOR.—MURDER OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD.—RECEPTION BY THE TWO HOUSES OF THE INDIANA LEGISLATURE.—DECLINES TO RUN FOR CONGRESS IN 1882.—CAUSES OF THE REPUBLICAN REVERSES.—TRIBUTE TO SENATOR MORTON.—UNIVERSAL CENSOR.—IN THE FAR NORTH-WEST.—IN COLORADO, FAMILY REUNION.—LAST POLITICAL SPEECH.—ON BLAINE'S DEFEAT.—IN NEW YORK.—HIS DEATH.

THE Centennial year was also the Presidential year. The Republican Party, through defection in the North, had been substantially suppressed in the South. Under the lash of the "Liberal" Republican press, the lower House of the Forty-third Congress had refused to sustain the Administration in protecting the Southern loyalists. President Grant had therefore been unable to do more than keep the peace while the reactionary party effected a counter-revolution in the South. The Forty-fourth Congress met in December, 1875. The House of Representatives elected a Democratic Speaker for the first time in twenty years. Mr. Blaine infused a little spirit into his moribund party by his attack on the proposition to amnesty the ex-rebels, inclusive of Mr. Jefferson Davis, yet under the ban of political disability. But the outlook for the Republicans was not brilliant. Indiana held her election in October, a month in advance of the general elec-

tion. Indiana was always a close and doubtful State. Consequently, there was a stronger desire than usual to get the ex-Vice-President into the canvass. Mr. Friedly, Chairman of the State Republican Committee, wrote him : " Your abilities as an able and powerful speaker are well known to our people, and your presence among us will do us great good. Let me make a series of appointments for you at once." Judge Turner and other gentlemen of Lake County solicited him by letter to again run for Congress. He replied : " Thanks to the good friends of your noble county for their good wishes, but if a unanimous election to Congress were tendered me I could not accept it." Upon this the *South Bend Tribune* said : " We hope this will suffice as an answer to the scores of friends of Mr. Colfax all over the district who are urging his intimate friends here to use every argument to induce him to run. This desire is not confined to his old district or to his State. Newspapers from all parts of the United States have expressed the wish that he might be induced to enter the Presidential canvass."

It was in May of this year that the town of Schuyler and the county of Colfax in the State of Nebraska were named after Schuyler Colfax. The *Omaha Bee* of about May 20th said : " He lectured there to an immense audience last Thursday evening. He charged them nothing, but the sum realized was applied to a fund for the building of a Town Hall at Schuyler. The citizens gave him a grand banquet and reception."

At the reception of the Grand Lodge of the United States at Indianapolis in September (1876), Governor Hendricks, Senator Morton, both Odd Fellows, Mayor Caven, and Mr. Colfax made speeches of welcome. After specially welcoming Past Grand Sire Milton J. Durham, of Kentucky, and Grand Secretary Ridgley, Mr. Colfax said :

" Welcome to the Past Grand Sires, who come hither to give us the aid of their wisdom and experience in devising what shall be best for the good of the Order and for suffering humanity. Welcome to all our officers and representatives—from the South, the land of the orange grove and magnolia, where hearts are warmed by their tropical sun, and where



the flowers bloom in perpetual spring ; and from the North, whose wintry blasts toughen sinews and muscles, while they remind us of the sublime inculcations of charity amid the wintry storms of adversity. Welcome from the East, with its teeming and busy hives of industry, its ocean ports, where the masts of our commerce are like the trees of the forest ; and from the West, ' so far and yet so near ' to our hearts, whose hospitality, as this grand body so well knows, is as peerless as its mammoth trees and its magnificent Yosemite, and which ' opes to the sunset a pathway of gold.'

" Welcome to this central State of the Republic, within whose borders is the centre of the forty-five millions of English-speaking people of this continent. Welcome to its capital, which, with its banners and music, and, better still, with throb of happy heart even more than beat of sounding drum, welcomes this senate of Odd Fellowship to her joyously proffered hospitality. Welcome to this jurisdiction of the Order, rejoicing in its own prosperity at home and proudly sharing in the prosperity of our organization in every other region and clime where its altars have been reared. Welcome to you, as you come hither from the battle-fields of humanity, where you have achieved the victories whose trophies we hang in our halls as the proudest to be won in the brief lifetime God has given us to use. Victors over destitution and anguish ! Victors over misery and woe ! Victors at the bedside of the dying brother, where you have striven to pour oil, if possible, into the expiring lamp of life ! Victors at the grave, where for the humblest equally with the highest the evergreen upon the coffin betokens our undying remembrance and regard ! Victors over the vices which would ensnare and corrupt and perhaps destroy the unguarded orphans of our departed brethren ! Victors over the demons of want and poverty, of loneliness and temptation, that so often crouch at the hearth-stone where the bereaved widow pines ! Welcome from labors and from triumphs like these, known often only to the All-Seeing Eye ! Welcome, in the name of Friendship, Love, and Truth ! And, with heart and hand, with speaking lip and beaming eye, we exclaim with the sincerest fraternal regard, Welcome, thrice welcome, one and all."

Writing to Mr. Witter in June, he said : " I am glad you like the nominations [Hayes and Wheeler]. I have not heard from Todd, but I suspect the Blaine fever which swept the country captured him. I could not but admire his dash and audacity myself. But had he been nominated, we should have had a Henry Clay campaign—fireworks at the commencement, explanation and defence all through, and defeat at the end. I am not so sanguine about the result unless the Democrats blunder at St. Louis. Hard times will lose us thousands of votes ; and if we do

not obtain the six Southern States we are fairly entitled to, we shall have a close run. But our ticket is the strongest we could have put in the field."

He presided at a ratification meeting at South Bend in July, and made the principal speech. He spoke occasionally during the summer at home meetings, and gave October entirely to the canvass, speaking in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin to large audiences, four fifths of whom waited to shake hands with "our Schuyler" and wish him back in office again. At Racine, Wis., a wigwam holding eighteen hundred was so inadequate that an adjournment was taken to the chilly open air; and there, without seats, twice eighteen hundred listened to him for two hours as they had in "the times that tried men's souls."

The returns gave the Presidency to the Republicans by a majority of one Electoral vote. The returns were disputed. The Constitution says: "The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and the House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted." If incomplete, Congress ought long before to have perfected this mandate, but it had not done so. The Republicans generally held the Constitutional provision to mean that the President of the Senate should himself count the votes, the two Houses being present only as witnesses. The President of the Senate was a Republican. Public excitement was steadily rising over this complication, when the Democrats in Congress, assisted by about one third of the Republicans, the President approving, created a Commission of Fifteen to pass upon the validity of the disputed Electoral votes—to wit, of Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. The Electoral Commission, consisting of five Representatives, five Senators, and five Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, awarded the Presidency to the Hon. Rutherford B. Hayes.

Mr. Colfax approved of the seating of Mr. Hayes, but not of the surrender of the two Southern States which had saved him. This was the final abandonment by the North

of its faithful allies in the South. It completed the surrender of the only important result of the war, which, when Colfax left public life, had not been placed beyond the possibility of such a catastrophe—namely, equality of representation between the two sections. Under the Constitution the Southern white men had always enjoyed representation in national politics for three fifths of their slaves. This advantage over their Northern brethren the war had brushed away. Now it was practically re-established, increased by the other two fifths of their slaves; for, so far as self-representation was concerned, the emancipated race were about as far from it as ever.

The Northern people contended manfully for their right of equality in this vital matter down to 1872. Upon the defection of Greeley and Sumner they began to cower, and they cowered more and more throughout President Grant's second term, until, in trading off Louisiana and South Carolina for the Presidency, in 1876, they gave up the contest.

In his Augusta speech following his defeat in 1884, Mr. Blaine said: "It is, therefore, evident that the white men in these Southern States, by usurping and absorbing the rights of colored men, are exerting just double the power of the white men in the Northern States. If that is to be quietly conceded in this generation, it will harden into custom until the badge of inferiority will attach to the Northern white man as odiously as ever Norman noble stamped it upon the brow of Saxon churl." Very true, but just ten years too late, and the Republicans had only themselves to blame for it. In 1872, and even as late as 1874, they still had the disposition of the matter in their own hands by virtue of the right of conquest. No party at any time in our history has occupied so advantageous a position. But by submitting to the infliction of an injustice upon themselves, they inflicted a double injustice on the emancipated race. By their personal dissensions they lost their advantage of position, they dissipated all their advantages, and thereby manifested their relative "inferiority" as a ruling race.

Except in one heroic moment the Northern people have

always been willing to be governed rather than take the trouble to govern. After the War of Independence closed they accepted a plan of Confederation, under which sixteen delegates out of thirty-nine present were able in 1784 to defeat slavery restriction. They conceded a disproportionate share of political power to the Southern minority, in order to secure the adoption of the Constitution. Their superiority thus conceded and imbedded in the Constitution, the Southerners grew so arrogant in the course of nearly a century of rule that the people of the North revolted. Outnumbering them two to one, and being five times as wealthy, they finally overpowered their old masters in the field. The latter, laying aside their ineffectual arms, at once assumed their former tone, and persisting, through the sympathy and assistance of part of the Northern people, were at length enabled to resume their briefly interrupted rôle. In the present (Forty-ninth) Congress there are one hundred and ten chairmanships and second places on the House Committees. Thirteen Southern States, which in 1884 cast one million six hundred thousand Democratic votes, hold sixty-five of these important places, while twenty-five Northern States, which in 1884 cast three million three hundred thousand Democratic votes, hold but forty-five. It must be confessed that, as compared with their Southern brethren, the Northern people are lacking in spirit. Only allow them to attend to their money-getting, and they seem to care not who governs them—the Southerners, through the negroes whom the Northern people freed but have abandoned, or some sort of a Board of Examiners.

Instead of yielding South Carolina and Louisiana as a consideration for the Presidency, Colfax would have had Congress provide for new elections in these two States. These elections would have been supervised by the press of both parties, and watched by the whole civilized world. If every voter had cast his ballot, the result would have been Republican, and that would have confirmed the President's title. If intimidation had caused an adverse result, the Presidential question would not have been

affected. Such, he said, was the true way of settling this, and, indeed, all other political complications.

Possibly the best thing that was left the Republicans to do, under the circumstances, was done; but that the Southern white man should possess twice the power of the Northern white man in the Federal system is a wrong which, sooner or later, in one way or other, will be righted. The true way to right it is for North and South to join hands in educating and elevating the blacks until they are able to assert and maintain their natural and Constitutional right to self-representation.

Mr. Colfax took part in the commencement exercises of Oberlin College in 1876. A correspondent of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* writes :

“ This evening Hon. Schuyler Colfax delivered the address to the literary societies at the old and immense Congregational Church, where the famous and eccentric President Finney so long and so eloquently preached. Mr. Colfax’s audience was an overflowing one and a pleased one. The address was bright, hearable, and useful, as Mr. Colfax’s utterances are apt to be. It was an invocation to nobler aims, to loftier aspirations, to a higher life in that great world into which the graduates were about to enter; whose trials they were to endure, whose wrong they must rebuke, and to whose uncharitableness and injustice they must rise superior. He said: ‘ The victim of habits of selfishness and indifference, which though at first like threads of silk become gyves of iron on older limbs, stands in striking contrast with him whose heart and deeds radiate the sunshine of active benevolence and a warm and generous humanity.’ ”

He discussed “ Hard Times and their Cure ” at Beloit, Wis., in September. His speech was published in full in the Chicago papers. Lecturing a little later at Macon, Mo., he was received with all possible distinction: escorted in procession by the civic and military organizations of the place from the depot to his hotel. The Mayor, a Democrat, welcomed him in a complimentary speech, and tendered him the freedom of the city. At Winchester, Pa., in November, his lecture was the event of the season. “ Floor, platform, and galleries, aisles, and open spaces,” said the *News*, “ were all packed. People came from forty miles distant to hear him, and the proceeds paid the expense of the entire course of lectures.”

In a letter to the *Chicago Advance* he discussed the silver question, basing his argument for the remonetization of the white metal on the popular will. A proposition to demonetize silver, he said, would not carry in a single Congressional district in the nation, and would be voted down by millions of votes. It had been demonetized without the knowledge of the people, a wrong that should be righted. Silver, equally with gold, was the "coin" of the Constitution. It was in "coin," not in silver or gold, but in both silver and gold, that our national debt was payable. After the wrong of demonetization had been righted, he would, if possible, fix the ratio of coinage, as between silver and gold, by international agreement.

Mr. Thurlow Weed wrote him in December, 1877, as follows: "Many thanks, dear old friend, for your letter and the enclosure. I deeply regret that you are not again in Congress, where your services are so much needed. I had earnest conversations last week with the President and Secretary of the Treasury, both of whom 'see the right,' but the latter is constantly inhaling a gold atmosphere. I urged the President if the Bland Bill came to him in an objectionable form to return it with a message showing how by utilizing silver prosperity would wait on resumption. I hear that you are soon to be in this State, and hope to have the pleasure of seeing you."

He revisited California in 1878, stopping in Colorado and Utah, and lecturing by the way. At the close of his lecture in Salt Lake City he renewed his protest of 1865 and of 1869 against the Mormon practice of polygamy, in violation of law. At great miscellaneous gatherings of the people which he afterward addressed, he introduced this subject, with the view of stimulating public sentiment to the point of demanding decisive action on the part of Congress. He was the principal speaker at a mass-meeting in Chicago, early in 1882, which gave the agitation an impetus that resulted in the banishment of polygamy from the lower House of Congress and in the exclusion of actual polygamists in Utah from the office-holding and elective franchise. For the suppression of polygamy he had stead-

ily wrought nearly all his life. His was a temperament to be strongly impressed with the fateful meaning of the planting of Asiatic institutions in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, thence to constrain in an alien direction the growth and development of a dozen inchoate States. He felt on this subject as he did with regard to slavery, and from early manhood had continually raised his note of warning, endeavoring to rouse the national conscience to the enormity of what was passing in the seclusion of the Great Salt Lake Valley. He now thought the people should demand that law-defying "revelations" cease. He insisted that the Government should no longer tolerate, on any pretext, the practice of polygamy. No halting, half-hearted policy would answer. To compromise was but to give time for further evasion, delay, and thwarting of the popular will. "Beware, therefore, of compromises. Let the word be, 'The national law must and shall be obeyed,' and God prosper the right!" The Edmunds Act of 1882 did not satisfy him. He wrote the author: "I regard it as only a step, and a short step, in the right direction. The future for your region [Utah] is dark to me. Some Congress will find an excuse for admission, and if we can't enforce the 'fundamental conditions' on the reconstructed States, how can we do anything in Utah, with the three great powers of Government—executive, legislative, and judicial—all arrayed, with their theocracy, in maintaining the *status quo*? Don't print this. I can't bear to think of it. But when good men and a Republican Congress hesitate about doing anything effective, after the whirlwind of public sentiment inaugurated by the Chicago mass-meeting and your Ladies' Anti-Polygamy Society, what hope is there? The monogamist Mormons, like the poor whites of the South, are as ardent defenders of the institution as the polygamists."

His remedy was a commission for Utah similar to that which under Congress governs the District of Columbia.

He received eighteen invitations to deliver Independence Day orations this year. Speaking at an Agricultural Fair at Keosauqua, Ia., in September, he discussed the

subject of prison labor. He held that the contract system should be abandoned, the convicts worked under the supervision of their officers, and their work offered in open market at current rates for similar products. The increased product would, of course, tend to depress prices; but the product of prison labor would be barely appreciable in the sum total of production, and therefore it would but slightly affect prices.

In 1880, after General Grant's return from abroad, Colfax said to a newspaper reporter :

" But I do rejoice at the remarkable ovation he has received from the heathen as well as civilized nations of the world during his tour. It is clearly the foreshadowing of history. Although we have many who lack national pride over these honors paid by the world to America's representative citizen, and who carp and sneer about it, I feel that he has elevated American citizenship by his long journey, and that our nation stands better to-day than ever before with the whole world. And although he has met kings and queens, prime-ministers and statesmen, and the governing men of the world generally, he has never caused any of us to blush for him, or to wish that some one else represented us in these wonderful receptions. And he comes back to us the same unostentatious, self-reliant man he was when he left us, and prouder than ever before of the title of an American citizen. I have no more knowledge than any one else of his desires as to the Presidency, but from what I know of him, am sure he would not accept a nomination unless under circumstances that indicated it as a duty, and that an overwhelming majority of the people desired it. He would be the last man to plan or plot for it."

When in 1880 his friend Garfield was nominated for President, and his friend Porter for Governor of Indiana, he was delighted. Of Governor Porter he wrote Mrs. Sinclair : " As in the Presidential nomination, the office sought the man and not the man the office ; and as in that case, it would have been hard to find any one worthier." The ratification " rally" at South Bend, in August, with great parade of clubs and torchlights, was the most enthusiastic political demonstration since 1868. Just returned from Dakota, Colfax was called out of the audience to speak. He said the issue was whether the National Government should be placed in the hands of those who controlled the rebel Congress at Richmond during the war or of those who controlled the Union Congress at Washing-



ton. Under the former our land would become, instead of the United, the Confederate States of America. He made a long and stirring speech. Later in the season he engaged earnestly in the canvass, receiving magnificent ovations wherever he went, and kindling unbounded enthusiasm. He discussed taxation and the tariff, reduction of the national debt, resumption of specie payments, protection of naturalized citizens, and the solid South, with its denial of a free ballot and a fair count. His pathway was strewn with marked Republican gains.<sup>1</sup>

The Democrats counted absolutely on carrying the State by 10,000 majority. When, on the contrary, the Republicans carried it by 7000, "I never saw so limp a set of men," said Colonel McClure to Mr. Colfax. "There was no work in them any more. It was as impossible to rally them as it would be to rally a lot of dead men." Colfax said afterward: "In the course of my political experience, I have never known a State election to have such an influence on a Presidential election, and I have never seen such a general outburst of gratitude as there was toward Indiana Republicans after the election of Porter. No campaign was ever more admirably managed, and the rank and file of the party did their duty nobly." The Indiana victory gave the Presidency to Garfield. Thus the people buried the falsehoods that had for years been current about Garfield, and this vindication applied equally to Colfax.

A seat in the Senate of the United States was at the disposal of the Republicans of Indiana. Many of Colfax's old and influential friends proffered him their support for

1. He writes the author:

"I worked with all my might for Garfield's election. When Maine gave us a black eye [voting in September, Maine was carried by the Democrats], and it was evident that if Indiana went Democratic all would be lost, and the State Committee appealed to me to take hold as in the past, I cancelled five hundred dollars' worth of lecture engagements, and plunged into the campaign with the old-time enthusiasm; canvassed my old district and those adjoining it in Indiana and Michigan, made hundreds of votes of old constituents and friends who had strayed off, and paid all my own expenses myself. I liked Garfield always, and he twice came to my district and helped me effectually. He has the brain, the ambition, the experience, and the adaptation to affairs, to make us an excellent President, and is perhaps intellectually the best-qualified President we have had for years."

the office if he would announce himself as a candidate. The *Chicago Times* said : " There is no longer the slightest obstacle to Colfax assuming his old position in Indiana politics, if he wants to resume it." Called upon for a speech at a jollification meeting, Colfax congratulated the city, the county, and the State on their political redemption. He said, in part : " The gain of 665 in the county and of 20,000 in the State since the last State election is almost unexampled in recent political history, and notwithstanding the charge that our victory ' was won by intimidation, fraud, and corruption,' we all know that this remarkable change was effected all around us here by actual conversions, many stating the fact publicly over their own names before the election. To these patriotic men all honor to-night."

He enlarged on the history of the canvass, and urged that the canvassing be continued with the same zeal and unity to the November election. In allusion to Mr. Story's suggestion, " that he might now take his old position in Indiana politics if he wanted to," he said : " Suppose he doesn't want to? The Republicans have scores worthy of the Senatorship—General Ben Harrison for example, who has earned the Senatorial commission by his noble campaigns of 1876 and 1880. It may not astonish my friends to learn that the *Chicago Times* is not my organ. If in twenty years it has spoken of me without disparagement, it was intended in a Pickwickian sense. I am not a candidate for any office, elective or appointive."

An old Indianapolis friend wrote him about the Senatorship. He replied : " To every one who has addressed me on the subject—members of the Legislature, editors, and citizens, including, as it happens, some of other parties than my own—I have uniformly replied that I was not in any way an aspirant or a candidate for the Senatorship, and that if I had the deciding vote, I would cast it for any of the distinguished Republicans suggested for it in preference to myself." If it is doubtful whether he could have been elected Senator, it is certain that he did not desire to be. " Ben Harrison will be the Senator," he wrote another

enthusiastic friend, "and ought to be. He very naturally prefers it to a Cabinet position, and has earned it again and again. He will honor himself and the State in that high office." Harrison wrote Colfax in November, thanking him for the pleasant things he had said about him; and after Harrison was elected Senator, he wrote again, saying: "Your course in the whole matter has been very manly and considerate toward me, and I want you to know that I appreciate it."

In the discussion by the newspapers of President Garfield's Cabinet, the Springfield (O.) *Republic* said:

"A sketch of Schuyler Colfax's life, fairly written, would be a most interesting and instructive history of the career of a clean, honest, able patriotic man, who has served his country with great industry and fidelity. A Cabinet with Garfield at its head and Blaine as one of its members would hardly be complete without Colfax. The President-elect and the Maine Senator have shared with him the storm of scandal and undeserved denunciation, and as each has been vindicated—one by the people of the country at large, and the other by the people of his own State—it would be quite proper that Mr. Colfax should be honored in something the same way. Mr. Colfax has not been known as a politician for some years, simply because he has minded his own business, and has come before the public only as he was forced to decline some nomination to a high office. To the masses of the country he has made himself well and most favorably known as a lecturer on Abraham Lincoln and as a noble and most attractive Christian gentleman."

Had President Garfield tendered to Colfax a Cabinet portfolio, which he did not, it would have been declined. He was at Hopkins, Mo., to fill a lecture appointment the evening of the day that Garfield was shot. His audience was large, many persons having been attracted from a long distance in the country by the reputation of the lecturer. He prefaced his lecture with a reference to the startling event of the morning, "couched in simple but eloquent words," said the local paper, "which went straight to the hearts of the audience and secured their attention and sympathy." At the conclusion of the lecture it was announced from the door that the President had died at seven o'clock. "The scene that followed was inexpressibly solemn and affecting. Many sobs were heard

throughout the building, and there was scarcely a dry eye in the audience. Mr. Colfax rose again, and paid a touching tribute to the character and worth of the President, the extemporaneous words called forth by the extraordinary occasion far surpassing in power the more studied effort of the evening. The audience then rose, and the Rev. Mr. Moorhead invoked Heaven's blessings on the afflicted family of the murdered Chief Magistrate and upon the mourning nation."

This report of the President's death proved to be false. He lived nearly three months, the object of alternately hopeful and despairing solicitude to the whole of Christendom. Thousands of miles from the banks of the Potomac, where the sufferer lay, people unconsciously spoke softly, as though he were in an upper chamber of their own houses. For his recovery special praise and prayer-meetings were held all over the land. Such a meeting was held in South Bend on the 10th of July, at which, after brief speeches from several gentlemen, inclusive of Colfax, the following resolutions were adopted :

" 1. That we heard immediately and with universal horror and indignation of the attempt made by an assassin to take the life of our esteemed President, Hon. James A. Garfield ; and having all the official bulletins issued since that time brought to us promptly through the enterprise of our daily press and the kindness of our telegraph manager, have followed them with our hopes and fears, our tears and smiles, by day and by night ; that we rejoice with our beloved President in the great hopefulness of his condition, and tender to him our most fervent wishes and the assurance of our heartiest prayers for his speedy and complete restoration to health and the performance of the duties of his high office ; and also tender to his noble wife our deep sympathy in her sorrow, and the expression of our warmest esteem for her wifely fortitude and devotion ; and that we assure them both that we will ever implore the Beneficent Giver of all good to continue to the nation their blessed example of domestic felicity and mutual love and helpfulness in the White House, until the end of the Presidential term.

" 2. That this action be signed by the Hon. Schuyler Colfax in behalf of this meeting, and be transmitted by him to the President and Mrs. Garfield, through James G. Blaine, Secretary of State."

Soon after this Colfax was in Dakota and said to a representative of the press :

“ I saw Mr. Garfield on the 2d of June, just a month before he was shot, and I am sure he was never happier than on the morning of the tragedy. Everything was running smoothly. Mrs. Garfield had regained her health, and they were about starting on a pleasure trip when that miserable wretch shot him. It was dreadful, dreadful! And when stretched on what he thought would be his death-bed, with a consciousness that he was sacrificing a life that promised continued honor, he never breathed a word against his slayer. He merely said: ‘ My time is come; God’s will be done.’ What a noble character was that! But the danger has passed, we all hope, and think. The President is nearer the people to-day than ever before. And what shall I say of Mrs. Garfield, as she hovered over his death-bed as she thought, in the midst of all that excitement, cool, calm, collected; never breathing a word that indicated the agony of her soul. I think we might search the world and never find two such characters as the President and his wife.”

Colfax and Garfield had always been on very intimate terms. Colfax was Speaker when Garfield first went to Congress. He did what he fairly could to bring Garfield rapidly forward, and Garfield appreciated it. “ Let me tell you, dear Schuyler,” he wrote in 1865, “ that since our first meeting you have grown on me till I feel more like a lover than a friend toward you.” He was more indignant at his friend’s assassination than at anything else that ever occurred in all his experience. He re-cast his Lincoln lecture to include Garfield, entitled it “ Our Martyred Presidents,” and devoted his few remaining years to eulogizing his two murdered friends, “ so much alike in poverty of resources and fulness of success, in humbleness of toil and splendor of achievement, in tenderness of life and dreadfulness of death.” He received a hundred invitations to repeat this lecture within twenty days after its preparation and first delivery.

What constitutes Presidential “ disability,” and how and by whom it shall be ascertained and determined, was much discussed during Garfield’s long illness. In a letter to the *New York Tribune*, Colfax suggested that, inasmuch as Congress had not settled the question by law, “ if there are pressing executive duties to be performed, as doubtless there are, the simple and safe way is for President Garfield himself to summon the Vice-President to become Acting-

President until such time as the President shall feel able to resume the duties of his office."

Passing through Indianapolis in February, 1881, on his way to the South, Colfax visited the State House, the Legislature being in session. In each House he was given a complimentary reception. A recess of a few minutes was taken, the members were introduced to him, and he made pleasant little speeches, reminiscent of days gone by and of great men passed away. In May he joined with the post-office officials and business men of Chicago in dedicating a monument to George B. Armstrong, the originator of the Railway Mail Service, whom he characterized as "a man of noble character, great originality and force, and vast executive ability." In Colfax's oration on this occasion the curious reader will find a lucid account of the germination of the idea in Armstrong's brain; of how he thought and worked it out; introduced it experimentally, and gradually brought it to an almost ideal perfection, against indifference, and even hostility, in official and railway circles. George B. Armstrong died of overwork in 1871.

In June, 1881, he wrote Senator Mahone, of Virginia, congratulating him on the hopeful indications of general Republican co-operation in the Liberal campaign in Virginia, and the auspicious results sure to follow a victory on the platform of a full vote and a fair count, with "all rights for all," in such an important Southern State. Alluding to the hesitation of some Republicans about this co-operation, he recalled the reluctance with which the Whig State Committee of Michigan and many leading Whigs gave their adhesion to the fusion by which the Republican Party was born. He says: "They insisted on calling a Whig Convention; but the rank and file, the masses of the Whig Party, saw the pathway of duty more clearly than these leaders, and the Whig Convention heartily indorsed the new movement, and approved the nomination of ex-Senator Bingham, a former Democrat, as candidate for Governor. A magnificent and sweeping victory rewarded their patriotic sacrifice. And it was fol-

lowed by a new North, as I trust and believe a Liberal victory in Virginia will be followed by similar victories in other Southern States, giving the nation a new South. When thus the menace of a solid South shall be really a thing of the past, and the Constitutional amendments shall be fully realized there, as in the North, guaranteeing not only liberty to all, but also justice to all and protection to all, every one who has participated in it, or who has ever made sacrifices to win such a victory for the right, will rejoice at his share in the great work and its great results."

In July he was in Nebraska, and told the *Plattsmouth Herald* the following story: "He was lecturing somewhere, shortly after the war, and was the guest of a man worth a million dollars. On their return to the house his host said: 'Colfax, do you know what I was thinking of when you were lecturing?' 'Why, my speech, I hope,' said Colfax. 'No; I was just thinking I would give half of all I am worth if I could master the issues of the day as you do, and know that I could throw out a little poster, saying I would lecture such a night, and five thousand people or more would rush to hear me.' 'Well, what do you suppose I was thinking of?' said Colfax. 'Of what you were saying, of course,' was answered. 'No; I was thinking of you with a million dollars at your command; you can travel as you like, purchase as you like, live at your ease, or enjoy yourself as you choose, while I travel forced marches six months in the year, barely making both ends meet, and get sick and tired of all speech-making.'

In 1882 the *South Bend Tribune* said: "There is a genuine boom for Colfax for Congress. Mr. J. Berger writes us: 'Though I am not a politician, yet in my extensive travels East and West I frequently hear people say, Where is Mr. Colfax? We ought to have him at or about the head of this nation.' Mr. F. M. Rule writes: 'During the past eighteen months I have been in all the large towns north of the main line of the Wabash & Pacific Railroad, and the one question asked, when it became known that I was a South Bender, has been an implied wish to see him [Colfax] again in public life.'" These the *Tribune* gave

as samples of letters with which it was flooded. "If Mr. Colfax will accede to the wishes of the people instead of consulting his own," said the *Tribune*, "he will represent this district in the next Congress." The tone of the outside press is illustrated by the following from the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*: "Mr. Colfax has often declined, but is just as regularly besought to accept, and so it will go on to the end. Perhaps the best way, after all, is to elect him anyhow, and then see if he will refuse to discharge what he has often declared to be a citizen's duty. If a whole Congress could be elected without their consent, it would be a model body. 'The fittest man to govern is the unwillingest unless constrained.' Remembering that, which is pretty nearly an axiom, put Colfax in, and let him consent afterward."

Mr. E. W. Halford, editor of the *Indiana State Journal*, wrote him :

"I spent a week in Washington, and while there heard a general and warm desire expressed that you should come to the House from your old district. After I came home I started the idea in a telegram to the *New York Times*. It has since been taken up, and you must be touched by the warm expressions and the decided hope that you will agree to stand. Permit me to say that my judgment is clear that you should. You owe it to yourself, your future, your friends, not to say your district and State. I know the ease and comfort of your present life, but ease and comfort are no man's prerogative in this world. You cannot be defeated. You will be the leader of your party in the State by the force of circumstances, as well as one of the leading figures in Congress. *I want you to pray over this*. I am in dead earnest. Your friends are. I believe it to be your duty."

Mr. D. S. Marsh, then editor of the *South Bend Register*, wrote him :

"The handwriting is on the wall ! Let me entreat you, by the regard you have for your personal and political friends, here and throughout the nation ; by your love for the grand old party of human rights and good government, sadly in need to-day of your leadership in the House, and which in two years more will need a Colfax for its national candidate to steer it clear of dissensions and jealousies in its own ranks ; by the demands of your manhood, which cannot be satisfied in the zenith of its powers to rest inactive from the work it is so well qualified to perform ; by all these reasons and more, not to dampen the ardor of those so en-



thusiastic and disinterested in your behalf. Don't interfere against the rising tide! The district will be a unit for you. The people, the press, and the politicians, even, express but the one sentiment, harmonious and jubilant. All that is asked is that you stand aside and see the salvation of the Lord. We shall have such an uprising in the district as you have never before seen. Stay your voice and hand from the ungracious task of depriving your people of their long-expected opportunity."

The Hon. C. H. Van Wyck, Senator from Nebraska, wrote him :

"I was just reading this Sunday evening an item—that you would probably yield to the wishes of your friends in the old district, and allow them to return you to the House of Representatives. I earnestly hope you may do so. Many, many times I have felt and remarked that you should have done this very thing years ago. If you conclude to gratify your friends, there will go up grateful acclaims from millions of warm, generous, and, I may say, loving hearts. If it requires some sacrifice on your part, make it. This much is due to yourself and the nation."

The Rev. Charles D. Nott, then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C., wrote him :

"I think you make a great mistake by persisting in your refusal to again enter public life. You may not be aware of it, but it has a bad effect not only on the public, but on yourself. Letting the former go, your action has on you the effect of deepening the impression that you are a wounded man, with a wounded spirit. It helps to cloud and sadden your life, when, my dear sir, there is no need of it. I think I am correct in saying that to an immense majority of your fellow-citizens you are an innocent man, wronged; and my criticism on your course is that you have unwisely permitted this wrong to crush, or, at least, to keep you down. You should do so no longer. It shows—pardon me for speaking plainly—a weakness that, to say the least, it is unwise to exhibit. You should show that you are made of 'sterner stuff,' and if God offers you the opportunity, you should once again stand in the sunlight and not remain in the shadow. Remember, 'My ways are not your ways,' saith the Lord. His way, for you, had in it a bitter experience, and He knew what was best. If now He is willing to set you on the rock, and put the new song in your mouth, don't you thwart His purpose. God's ways are past finding out. I don't know why He permitted you to have that sorrow—nor I don't care. He did, and that's enough. But one of the most profound truths in God's government is that while He permits such things He at the same time offers opportunities, chances, to His afflicted children. And if He in His providence is now willing to offer you one more, don't you let it go by."

These are samples of letters he was in receipt of through-

out the last ten years of his life. His friends thought that he did himself an injustice by refusing the vindication of an election to Congress by his life-long neighbors. But they could not make him see it as they did. On this occasion he replied as follows :

“ SOUTH BEND, IND., April 3, 1882.

“ *To the Editor of the South Bend Tribune :*

“ MY DEAR SIR : The unexpected demands by too partial friends, that I should return to the public service, are sincerely appreciated by me, even though I cannot respond, as they desire. All through the twenty stormiest years of our nation’s history in which my public life was cast, the unchangeable confidence and regard of my constituents was not only a shield and a buckler, but a solace which lightened many a burden and a joy which always gladdened my heart. And till my dying day, I cannot forget the cordial and hearty home-greeting by ten thousand home friends of all parties, when, at the close of my public life, I returned to South Bend as a private citizen. I determined then that twenty years of the prime of my life, given to the service of my country, was an adequate performance of any citizen’s duty ; and which, as I stated then, ‘ had been so conscientiously performed that I do not fear the severest judgment of my Creator on every act of that public life, from its commencement to its close.’

“ My heart is not a cold one, and it has been touched by the friendly and urgent appeals that I should exchange my present independent and enjoyable life as a private citizen for the toils and responsibilities of official station, as well as the indorsement of these home manifestations by so many outside of the district. But I must reply that, knowing by experience all about these labors, I cannot consent to again undertake their performance, and must therefore be allowed to decline, gratefully and respectfully, but positively and inflexibly. I have considered the question in every aspect ; and it is due to whoever may finally be selected as our standard-bearer, that I should state, thus early, that I cannot be a candidate in any contingency, and cannot accept a nomination, even if tendered with the understanding that I should not be expected to canvass at all, as in the olden time. If public service is regarded as a pleasure, I have certainly had more than my share of that pleasure. If it is regarded as a duty, have I not performed my full share of that duty ? And my only ambition now is to go in and out among my townsmen as a private citizen during what years of life may remain for me to enjoy on the earth. With sincere regard for yourself, and all other friends who have interested themselves in this matter,

“ I am very truly yours,

“ SCHUYLER COLFAX.”

Upon this the editor of the *New York Commercial Adver-*

*tiser* wrote him : " I read in the morning papers with sincere regret your determination not to accept a nomination for Congress. I trust you will reconsider. I assure you, I would rejoice to see you back in the House. Though we have differed at times, and my hot, impulsive nature has made me say things which I have regretted, I never doubted your honesty and patriotism. The old-time feeling comes back and recalls the past—you may have forgotten that our acquaintance dates back almost thirty-five years. We met first I think at Philadelphia at the Whig Convention that nominated Taylor in 1848. It is a long time to look back. By the way, I met an old friend the other day, ' Bill ' Hayes, son of old Jacob, who desired to thank me for the handsome notice I published about you in the *Commercial*. The old fellow seemed delighted with it. Arthur's veto of the anti-Chinese Bill was a great thing. To have signed the abomination would have been a serious set-back for the party of progress and humanity. Trusting you will reconsider your determination, I remain truly yours,

" HUGH J. HASTINGS."

He went on his way and kept at his work. He was " here, there, and everywhere, in the interest of every institution for the extension of light, liberty, and salvation." The Republicans were overwhelmingly defeated in the elections. A representative of the *New York Graphic* interviewed him as to the causes of this political landslide, and reports him as follows :

" Mr. Colfax thought the result due more than all else to the determination on the part of the Republican masses to convince their would-be leaders that the party was emphatically a party ' of the people, for the people, and especially by the people,' and that those only could lead successfully who, like Mr. Lincoln, respected public opinion, yielded personal preferences for the good of the whole, recognized all the varied elements of the organization, and sought to harmonize, instead of to trample upon, the conflicting sections or factions of the party. The levying of political assessments was a cause of dissatisfaction. The hue and cry against the River and Harbor Bill poisoned the public mind. Full five sixths of its appropriations were in accordance with the Republican idea of internal improvements ; but a few unwise ones, with the sweeping invectives of many Republican papers against the bill as a whole, preju-

diced scores of thousands against us. The murder of President Garfield and the accession of the Vice-President was a considerable factor in producing this adverse result.

“ Still another was the failure of the Republican Congress to reduce taxation when there was an overflowing Treasury. Every Republican Congress heretofore had given our voters solid ground to stand on in their appeals to the people ; such as restricting slavery extension, arming the nation for war, destroying slavery, establishing equality, justice, and protection to all, reconstruction on a loyal basis, maintaining and fortifying the national credit, etc. But our present Congress allowed factious opposition to defeat several bills that would have immensely strengthened us before the people. ‘ The future is not assured to us by the chastening of this defeat, as so many Republicans assume. On the contrary, I believe these figures prove that no Republican Presidential candidate can be successful in 1884, except one who has had no participation at all in these warring factions, but who is so acceptable to the millions of the rank and file that his strength with them will compel his nomination—some such statesman as Windom, of Minnesota, General Harrison, of Indiana, or, Edmunds, of Vermont ; about whom there can be so little said adversely, and so much commendatory.’ ”

In January, 1883, he said to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* : “ I suppose the reason I hold up so well is that I pass my time travelling from place to place, talking about things with which I am personally familiar. The chances for Republican success in 1884 are not so good as might be desired, but it is fortunate that the bad blood in the party has worked itself off in an off-year. Harrison, Lincoln, or Windom would receive the support of the whole party. They have taken no part in the faction fight. It is going to be a hard fight, and the Democrats will have a better chance than for many years ; still, I think the Republicans will succeed. A season of stagnation in business is awaiting us, owing to the balance of trade having turned against us, low prices for crops, extravagance of the people, and too much railroad building.’ ”

A year later he said to the *Iowa State Register* : “ It is absolutely necessary for the Republicans to nominate a man for President who can carry New York. I am in favor of keeping the Democracy out as long as the Children of Israel were kept out of the Promised Land.’ ”

Prevented by pre-engagements from being in attend-

ance at the unveiling of the monument to Senator Oliver P. Morton at Indianapolis in January, 1884, he wrote the following tribute to be read on that occasion :

"Of all the Governors whose patriotic and energetic co-operation with the Government aided so potentially in subjugating the great Rebellion, none will have a higher place on the impartial tablets of history than Oliver P. Morton. Fertile in resources, tireless in labor, sleepless in zeal, daring in responsibility, fearless of opposition, he was pre-eminently the war Governor of those times. Sacrificing his health, as he did, for his country, whose triumph he had so much at heart, I doubt not he would, if needed, have sacrificed his life for it without a sigh or a regret. As a leader in the labors, the excitements, and debates of a political campaign, he had no superior in that eventful era. Of the aggressive type of Thaddeus Stevens on the Republican side, and of Stephen A. Douglas on the Democratic side, he enjoyed the cut-and-thrust, the retort and repartee of the hustings, never happier than when charging along the entire line of his opponents. As time softens the asperities of political warfare, all parties will recognize Oliver P. Morton—Governor and Senator—as one of the great men of whom Indiana has a right to be proud."

Ten years after his retirement from office, wherever he went—and he went everywhere—Schuyler Colfax was hailed with all the demonstrations by which men seek to show esteem and affection. It was not Colfax the statesman, the source of power and dispenser of place, who was thus honored, but Colfax the man. Always on the wing, and always observant, he noted defects, suggested remedies and improvements ; he was become a sort of universal censor—of politics, of morals and manners, of business methods and appliances. His papers are full of acknowledgments of the pertinency and usefulness of his thousand suggestions, testimonials from men of all trades and professions—railroad men, national and State officials, politicians, Congressmen, editors, expressmen, authors, artists, showmen—all men who had to do in any way with the public. And farmers, mechanics, teachers, school children, college societies, divines, men of the exchange, Odd Fellows, 4th of July audiences, and politicians hung on his words as if enchanted. He seemed to know everything, and to be able to impart something of interest to

everybody. His views on topics of current interest were eagerly sought after and often widely published.

He was neither more nor less ready to turn aside to make a fellow-creature happy than in his more conspicuous days. "It greatly delighted me that you remembered a poor printer who has had nothing but the up-hill fight in life thus far; your call at our office was a pleasure and a benefit," wrote an "assistant editor" of Towanda, Pa., in 1882. An elderly gentleman of Buchanan, Mich., had heard of him for many years, but could not get out to hear him lecture. This came to his ears after the lecture, his informant supposing that would be the last of it. But the next morning, at the risk of missing his train, the lecturer insisted on being conducted to the residence of the old man, half a mile from his hotel. The recipient of this attention "cried like a child" over it. Such things he was always doing.

His engagements prevented him from accompanying Mr. Villard's party to drive the last spike of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Mr. Villard afterward placed a special car at his disposal, and with his wife and a party of friends, among them Mr. and Mrs. Theodore P. Haughey, of Indianapolis, ex-Lieutenant-Governor Bross, of Chicago, he went over the road, a trip of four thousand miles, "without a single drawback to our pleasure." In the far Northwest he and his friends were received with all possible distinction. "It was a royal trip, the grandest and most delightful of my life, and the hospitality was princely."

Just a year before he died he delivered his lecture on Lincoln and Garfield in the hall of the Young Men's Christian Association at South Bend. The hall was crowded, a hundred sat on the platform. Yet he had delivered this lecture in South Bend, for the benefit of the poor, as now, nearly every winter for ten years. It was on one of these occasions that Mrs. Christiana Foote introduced him by saying: "Knowing this audience to be already in love with the Speaker, as Priscilla was in 'The Courtship of Miles Standish,' I will but say: 'Schuyler, thee had better speak for thyself.'" At another time, young Schuyler,

then eleven, after sitting out the lecture, threw his arms about his father's neck, and exclaimed: "Oh, papa, it was as good as the minstrels!" Colfax considered this as high a compliment as he ever received. This January (1884) he wrote: "My season is so crowded I had to lecture five times this week in Missouri—large and enthusiastic audiences, and four hundred dollars." On the anniversary of the Odd Fellows in April, he was with his brethren at Marion, Ind. His 4th of July oration was pronounced at Waseca, Minn. He closed as follows: "Law and order are the pillars of the Republic, justice and honor its cornerstones. The title of American citizen is the proudest title on earth. In liberty and law, in equality and right, with education free to all, with the highest office open to the humblest citizen, let our rejoicing progress from year to year, from centennial to centennial, until a circle of republics shall surround the globe." In July he took part in the opening of the Colfax Hotel at the Colfax Springs on the Rock Island Railroad in Iowa. A longing to see once again his Western relatives having taken possession of him, October found him and Mrs. Colfax in Denver, where his sisters, living in Nebraska and Utah, joined them in a family reunion. He was never more genial and jovial, or apparently more robust. Little did they think they would never see him alive again.

He was full of the Presidential campaign. "We are all looking to Ohio," he wrote Mr. Phœbus, of Old Point Comfort, Virginia, "and hoping for twenty thousand for the right. The persistent, wicked, malignant, pitiless attacks on Blaine have affected public opinion in some localities, and occasionally I have a twinge of apprehension as to the result." The *South Bend Register* of November 3d, 1884, gives a two-column summary of his last political speech. "Mr. Colfax spoke over two hours on the history of the nation during the twenty-four years it had been under Republican rule, arguing from first to thirteenthly, that the Democratic organization had bitterly opposed every act that had redounded to the glory of the nation, and the nation's wonderful development had come to it

since the exodus of the last Democratic President from the White House. He closed by invoking the testimony of the poor of the whole world against the apostles of discontent, who go about over the land denouncing Republican legislation. He said: 'You may go around the world, from clime to clime, and from continent to continent, and wherever you ask the poor, as they eat their potatoes and salt, where they would wish to go to better their condition, from beaming eye and speaking lip will come the answer: "America, where all rule—the poor man's earthly paradise." He welcomed them if they came with their families to live and die with us with Americanized hearts; welcomed them to the gold and silver mines they could find and work in our mountains; to the free farms in our new North-west, on condition of occupancy; to our factories, furnaces, and forges; and to our cities, with the best wages that can be afforded under Republican legislation and Republican protection.' Referring to the charges against Blaine, he asked: "What vote of his in twenty years was corrupt, wrong, or unwise? Or what ruling of his as Speaker?" and answered: "Not one."

November 11th he wrote to Mr. Phœbus: "Wife and I shortened our October visit to Colorado, that I might make three speeches to my old constituents before election. See within abstract of one. Didn't do any good! No heart to talk politics." December 2d he wrote again to the same gentleman:

"I don't think the result will 'kill Blaine,' either personally or politically. The election, lost, after all, by a mere scratch, and that an accident, showed that he possessed such great elements of strength (astonishing the bolting Republicans) that if there was a convention to-day he would surely be nominated again, and stands a good chance of being the nominee four years hence. I doubt the policy, for there is a heap of meaning in that brief proverb, 'Success succeeds;' but the examples of Harrison and Jackson [both barely defeated at their first canvass] will be used by his friends, and, also, that the slanders with which the present campaign was so full could not be as effective a second time, and were proved to have been insufficient to defeat him but for an accident.

"I was not in favor of Blaine's nomination, not that these stories had any weight with me, but because I was sure they would put us on the



defensive ; and while stories against Cleveland would not affect one vote in a million even of high-toned Christian Democrats, I knew our party was so constituted that stories against a Republican would have to be explained, denied, confuted to the last letter of them, or lose him many votes. Nor did I think that President Arthur, successful as has been his Administration, disappointing millions most agreeably, could carry Ohio, and its loss in October would have been almost a fatal blow at success in November. My ideal ticket was Hawley and Lincoln, against whom nothing could have been said, no bolting, but many elements of strength."

He detailed to Mr. Phœbus his plans for the winter and spring. He intended to visit the New Orleans Exposition in March, and to return to New York by way of Florida in April. But he changed these plans, as will be seen by the following letter to Mrs. Hollister :

"ANDOVER, O., Monday, December 22, 1884.

"MY DEAR SISTER : I was very glad to receive at New York, remailed, your letter of the 4th instant ; and although you 'did not know whose turn it was to *write*,' and thought it was ours, you did *right* in *writing right* away, for Nellie says she wrote last, and I am sure I don't owe any one a letter !

"We were in New York nearly four weeks, too long for both of us, but we wanted to spend Schuy's four days at Thanksgiving with him there, and to bring him back with us to Ohio and Indiana for the two and a half weeks' holiday recess. So I put in a little lecturing (only twice a week, as that is my maximum now—getting older and lazy and more desirous to hang around home, you see) to pay expenses, and spent the balance of the time with Nellie in New York.

"She had two lunch parties ('hen parties' — calls them, but Nellie insisted on changing it to 'dove parties') at —'s ; one dinner party there that I attended also ; and one day that I was away — took her to the Obelisk, Museum, etc., as she did you ; and they talked over the delightful time she and you had there.

"Mr. — was all the time most talking about you (you are a great favorite of his), and although he had been among the most active Cleveland Republicans, he never said a word about politics to me, and only jocosely alluded to politics when he showed us a handkerchief with Cleveland's phiz in it, and said 'I guess I will send that to Kinkie,' and we all concurred.

"You said you would tell Nellie, if she would write, what Ovando gave you on the anniversary, but we found out. You wrote to some one else—can you remember who?—that 'you both were "retrenching," but that Ovando stopped long enough to give you a beautiful ring on the anniversary.'

"But to resume ! We dined out several times, went to nearly all the

theatres once, also to a grand opera concert, at which Nevada and Scalchi were both to appear. Both shammed colds, and didn't appear; but it was very good, even without them, although Nellie was greatly disappointed.

"What I remember that we saw besides was the *Private Secretary*, at Madison Square; *Congress*, with Raymond in it; *Love on Crutches*, at Daly's; *London Assurance*, with Lester Wallack himself as Dazzle; and the Actors' Fund Benefit, with one act of five different plays, the charm of which was Irving and Terry in the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, and Jefferson playing the whole of a little comedy admirably. Cleveland, the President-elect, was in the box immediately opposite us. Irving went into Cleveland's box when through, and saw in the next (an act of a comic opera) a burlesque of himself, which he seemed to enjoy.

"The Christmas shopping in New York is all, so the shopkeepers told us, for cheap things. Streets crowded, but aggregate of sales small. We were like the rest. We 'retrenched,' too! You will laugh at that after our long and expensive trip to New York, which seemed, however, a kind of necessity for us.

"We eat our Christmas dinner here, and start same afternoon at three for home, which Schuy is so anxious to see, not having been there since last May. He spends ten days there, and Sunday night, at nine, after New Year's, I start back with him to Rye. He has three days at Easter, and we have planned a week's visit to New York then, including that time. We have given up our anticipated New Orleans and Florida visit in March. It would cost a great deal and be too crowded to enjoy. Nellie will visit here and at Cleveland instead. Mrs. — promises to visit us a week or two in February. Marcia comes the week after New Year's for a few weeks at South Bend. Schuy is head of his class in Latin and arithmetic, but says there is not 'fun' enough at the Institute. We went up there twice while in New York. Love to O. J. and Elias.

Affectionately your loving brother,

"SCHUYLER."

The next day Mrs. Hollister received from him the following postal. It was the last thing she received from him, and was characteristic: "It has just occurred to Nellie and me to suggest to you to send some little New Year's card to —, even if it would not reach her by New Year's. They fear she is in failing health, and the remembrance would please her. Perhaps you have thought of it, however, yourself."

The holidays are passed, the new year has begun, winter holds the Northern country in its iciest grasp, when

suddenly it is flashed over the land and under the sea that "Schuyler Colfax is dead." A kindly face seen and a cheery voice heard for half a century in all the walks and ways of men were to be seen and heard no more. People read the news and wept, not for the statesman and popular leader, but for the genial brother and loyal friend.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### IN MEMORIAM.

1885.

SCHUYLER COLFAX DIES SUDDENLY AT MANKATO, MINN.—THE SADDEST DAY MANKATO HAD EVER SEEN.—HOW THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS RECEIVED BY THE COUNTRY.—THE FUNERAL TRAIN FROM MANKATO TO SOUTH BEND.—OBSEQUIES.—TRIBUTES OF HIS BRETHREN OF THE FRATERNITY OF ODD FELLOWS.—PRESS NOTICES.—PERSONAL TRIBUTES.—“THE TRUE VICTOR ON THE BATTLE-FIELD OF LIFE.”

“I LEAVE Monday for lecturing in North-western Iowa,” Colfax wrote the *South Bend Register*, “under engagements I regretted I could not postpone that I might attend the funeral of Mr. Burroughs, with whom for nearly half a century I have been on terms of closest friendship.” Tuesday morning, January 13th, 1885, he arrived at Mankato, Minn., where he was to change cars for his destination—Rock Rapids, in the extreme north-western corner of Iowa. The temperature was about thirty degrees below zero. He walked from one depot to the other, three fourths of a mile. Mr. W. R. Severance, the station agent, wrote Mrs. Colfax :

“After thanking my baggage-man for showing him the waiting-room, Mr. Colfax passed in, laid his valise, in company with his overcoat, on a bench, rose and looked at a map on the wall, sat down on an armed bench, crossed his legs in an easy manner, immediately turned very pale ; two other men in the room besides myself rushed to him ; he simply threw his head back, raised his eyes upward, and expired. It was then fifteen minutes to eleven.

“I immediately sent for Dr. Warner, leading physician here, and, in fact, one of the best in the State. He arrived within five minutes after Mr. Colfax was first taken, and did everything in his power to resuscitate him before pronouncing it death. Mr. Colfax died very calmly ; there was no pain, no struggle whatever. The first second he turned white we rushed for water and bathed his head, and also used spirits.

“I dislike very much to write these little incidents to you, but con-

sider it proper and necessary that you be made acquainted with them, the true facts, inasmuch as the papers neglect them and prevail upon it that he died in an out-of-the-way place and unattended. Such was not the case. It is true, he passed away in a stranger's arms, but I assure you that intimate friends could not have done more for him than we did. I sincerely hope the above will prove consoling in your great bereavement."

No one at the railroad station knew Mr. Colfax, but upon report of what had happened, people soon arrived who had known him, and letters in his pockets removed all doubt. A coroner's jury decided that "deceased came suddenly to his death from causes to them unknown." The physicians said that "his death was instantaneous, and was due to a stoppage of the heart's action." The Odd Fellows, heartily seconded by the citizens, immediately took charge of the body, conveying it to the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Harrington. It was placed in a casket, and lying in state, the people of Mankato passed through the parlors and looked upon the face, which had more the appearance of sleep than of death. Word was telegraphed to Mrs. Colfax through her friends at South Bend, to the President, and to the Associated Press. The President acknowledged the message with an expression of "deep sorrow." From South Bend came the request to send the deceased home as soon as possible. All the agencies of society in Mankato were busy throughout the afternoon and evening preparing for a proper conveyance of the remains to the depot. By nine o'clock a procession, numbering fifteen hundred, had formed at Dr. Harrington's residence to escort the hearse and pall-bearers through the intensely frosty night to the special car tendered by the North-western Railroad Company. Before setting out, brief services were held, all the clergy of the city participating. A guard of honor, Messrs. L. P. Hunt, L. Patterson, H. Himmelman, and B. D. Pay, was appointed to accompany the casket to Chicago. His neighbors who loved him could not have rendered these services with more of reverential tenderness. This relieved those nearest him of part of the pain of his sudden death away from home.

It fell to Mr. Peter E. Studebaker to break the news to Mrs. Colfax. When she appeared in the parlor in answer to his call, she had no more thought that she was a widow than when she stood at the bridal altar. Mr. Studebaker asked her a question or two—beating about the bush: Had she heard from Mr. Colfax since he left home? Where was he likely to be this morning, in Mankato? "Yes," she replied. "A stranger is said to have dropped dead there in the depot this morning," said he. Looking at him then more intently, she read it in his face—"Schuyler is dead," said she. Fortunately, it takes days and weeks to realize the full weight and meaning of such a blow. Mrs. Colfax is a woman of strong will. After a little time she was able to talk calmly with friends and neighbors who gathered in, and to go through that distressing week and the weeks following with becoming fortitude. Before the day closed she was receiving telegrams of condolence from different parts of the country, and these were followed by letters of the same tenor, General Grant writing: "Mr. Colfax and I were warm personal friends from the day of our association on the same ticket for the highest offices in the gift of the nation up to his untimely and unexpected death. I was always his defender from what I believed to be most unjust charges."

Colfax had been advised that he had heart disease, and sharp spasms of pain in the chest had admonished him several times within a few months that he held life by a frail tenure. He had settled his affairs about New Year's, made his will, appointed executors, and had dropped some significant hints to his son, his wife's brother, and intimate friends, but had kept it from his wife, knowing the intimation would banish the sunshine from her life. Hence his sudden death was a complete surprise to her.

The unexpected announcement produced a painful shock in South Bend. The *South Bend Tribune* said: "Death is occurring every day in the midst of us, but never has his shaft struck down one who will be so universally mourned in this city as Mr. Colfax. It is a calamity

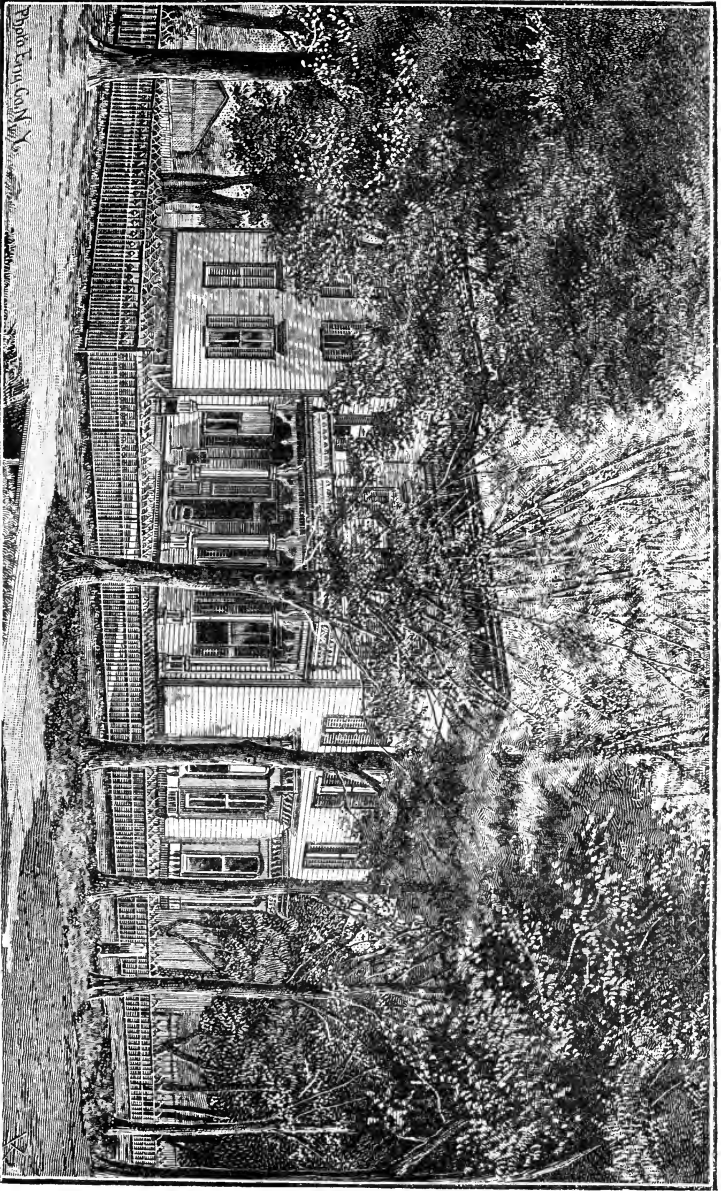


Photo Engraving

RESIDENCE OF SCHUYLER COLFAX, SOUTH BEND, INDIANA.





that extends from his own loved hearth-stone to all others here, and to thousands throughout the country, where he was known so well in his old public and late private life. All will sympathize with the afflicted wife and son, and the brother and three sisters in their far Western homes. A more loving husband, a kinder father, or a more gracious brother was never lost to earth. Noble in all his traits of character, cheerful in his disposition, carrying sunshine and gladness wherever he went, it is seldom that death finds such men as Mr. Colfax to take from us."

The *South Bend Register* : "The most distinguished citizen of South Bend is dead. Schuyler Colfax has been called to his fathers. Suddenly and without warning he died almost a stranger and alone, far away from those who held him most dear. To one of his genial and affectionate nature such a fate was farthest from his desire, but he was a brave knight, clothed in the armor of righteousness, who feared not to meet the common foe on any ground. Though far from home, and in an obscure part of a distant State, it needed only the mention of his name to bring to his side, though too late to keep him had help been possible, kind hearts and willing hands, willing to pay such tribute as they might to all that was earthly of one who had endeared himself to the American people. Wherever else on this broad continent he might have received the summons, it would have been the same—such was the national fame of the man. We at his home will not be alone in our sorrow. It is a time of national grief, and from the nation will come the grandest tribute to the dead. South Bend has lost a citizen whose particular niche can never be filled. He was identified with the city and county from their earliest days, and was foremost in promoting the welfare of the community in which he resided. We mourn him as a man and a citizen."

The *Indiana State Journal* : "As a public man, with a national scope and reputation ; as an honored representative of Indiana ; as a citizen devoted to the city in which he lived ; as a member of the Christian Church, to which he gave the best service of his manhood ; as a son, hus-

band, and father, the purest, tenderest, and most loving ; as a friend, unselfish and untiring ; as a man, true and noble ; in all the relations of life without reproach, there will be profound and general sorrow everywhere over the announcement of his death."

The *Chicago Tribune* : "The telegraph this morning brings the mournful intelligence of the sudden death of the Hon. Schuyler Colfax at Mankato, Minn. As has happened to so many other of our prominent men of late, he passed suddenly away, and in his death the country loses a man who had played a very important part in its superior councils, and his friends a genial and boon companion who had become endeared to them by many personal virtues."

The *Chicago Journal* : "The announcement of the sudden death of the Hon. Schuyler Colfax has been received with popular sorrow. Of the many remarkable men who have been active on the stage of public life in this country during the past twenty-four years of our nation's history, none has acquitted himself more creditably or illustriously ; none has to a greater extent commanded popular respect and confidence ; none has exerted a better or a wider personal influence than Schuyler Colfax."

The *Chicago Current* : "The sudden death of Mr. Colfax has shocked more people than any mortuary event since the death of Garfield. He lived, after 1872, the life of a proud and upright man who had been foully accused. Personally, he was so kind a man that friends gathered around him in unusual numbers, and now, in every State, mourn him with sincere sorrow."

The *St. Paul Pioneer-Press* : "In the spontaneous honors of affection paid the dead friend of the martyred Lincoln by the city of Mankato, the public feeling of the whole State will sorrowfully participate ; and now that he is gone, the nation in whose councils he long played so honorable a part will award him the justice due to his whole life and character."

The *Indianapolis Herald* : "He was an honor to himself and friends, and the State may well take pride in his name and character. His life has been a success, and the world

has been made better by the fact that he lived and worked in it. He practised charity, forgave his enemies, and loved his friends. He toiled ceaselessly unto the last, and fell asleep by the way, without a fear. He goes to his grave mourned by a nation, and loved by all who knew him."

The *Indianapolis Review* : "In the death of Schuyler Colfax, one of the central figures of the civil forces of the war in the North is removed from us. No public man, perhaps, was as close to Mr. Lincoln as Mr. Colfax was, and much of the magnificent administration during the war period was due to his counsel and advice."

The *North-western Christian Advocate* : "When this unexpected news came, thousands fell into shocked bereavement. Legislatures and Congress adjourned out of respect ; newspapers teemed with tributes, and public men, including old political antagonists, told in interviews how much they believed in Schuyler Colfax. Years ago we went down to South Bend to witness a public reception tendered by old neighbors to their Congressman on his return home. The scene lingers in our memory as one of the most unstudied, sincere, heartfelt instances of personal and loving homage ever paid to an honored fellow-citizen and neighbor. Last week that same community received the remains of that same guest. Tears of grief flowed from honest eyes which years ago looked love into the face of the living. The death of this great man of the people could not command higher tribute than did his presence in the body. The epitaph of 1885 might have been written in 1868, and his tombstone can well afford to tell all the truth."

The announcement called forth expressions of regret almost everywhere, and of profound sorrow where he was personally well known. In Washington, although few were left who served with him in Congress, he was spoken of as a man possessed of a high order of ability, and whose kindly nature drew to him in friendly intimacy even his political opponents. The House and the Senate adjourned out of respect to his memory. In moving the adjournment of the Senate, Senator Harrison said : "He

was greatly endeared to the people of his own State, and was especially held in respect and confidence by the people of that district in his State which he so long and so ably represented in the House of Representatives. He held this affection and this confidence unabated to the hour of his death."

Senator John Sherman said : " I knew him well, and can say of him that he was generous, social, and friendly with every one ; sagacious and able in the management and control of men ; industrious always in everything he undertook ; faithful to his people and to the cause which he espoused ; a good husband and affectionate father ; and true always to his country. For twenty years he enjoyed the full measure of public honors ; repeatedly elected by his constituents, and three times honored by being chosen Speaker of the House of Representatives, and then elected by the people of the United States as Vice-President. He was known in the Senate chiefly as its presiding officer. All who remember him here will bear witness to his impartial courtesy. I wish simply to add my word of kindness to what has been said by his distinguished Senator. My respect, confidence, and friendship go with him to his grave. Honor to his memory. Peace and happiness in the future life to come."

In New York the news was published in the evening papers, and gray-haired men spoke of it while dining, recalling the troublous times in which they in common with the dead statesman had figured. Politicians paused in their discussion of State politics to refer with regret to the sudden demise of the ex-Vice-President. The feeling of sorrow at the Union League Club was very marked. The dead was spoken of in eulogistic terms and with enthusiasm. General Grant was silent for a few moments on receiving the intelligence from a *New York Herald* reporter, his careworn face taking on an additional shade of sadness. " I knew Mr. Colfax intimately," he finally said, slowly, " and held him in the highest esteem, both personally and as a public man. I am very sorry to hear of his death."

At Indianapolis the two Houses of the Legislature adjourned upon receiving the intelligence. The next evening, at a public meeting of the citizens, Hon. Thomas A. Hendricks, Vice-President-elect of the United States, said :

“ It seems peculiarly fitting that the citizens of the capital of his State should make some formal expression of respect for the memory of Mr. Colfax, for he was no common man in relation to the affairs of the country. I knew him first in 1850, when we were both members of the Constitutional Convention. It was there that I formed, and I think I may say contracted, a friendship which continued to the day of his death. At this time I shall not attempt any lengthy description of his character. I wish simply to express my profound sorrow and my appreciation of the public loss. He was a remarkably successful man, and I think that to say that a man achieved such success as he did is as much as to say that he was a man of great ability. Success does not come by chance. When he was a member of the Constitutional Convention he was regarded as a scholar, a thinker, and a strong and excellent writer. Soon afterward he became a member of the national House of Representatives, and was soon recognized there as one of the leaders of his party and a gentleman of decided ability. He was elected Speaker of the House, and I think no other man ever succeeded in giving such general satisfaction in that position as did Mr. Colfax. There have been greater Speakers, greater men in the Chair, but he gave to the body a unity of thought and purpose which was remarkable. He was afterward called upon to preside over the United States Senate, the second position in the Government, and he gave equal satisfaction there. I think I can truthfully say that in all the positions which he was called upon to fill, he succeeded entirely. He succeeded because he brought to the support of natural ability the aid of thorough training. Mr. Colfax was a great and good man. I respected him when he lived, and I lament him since he is dead.”

The Hon. W. H. Calkins said :

“ I first knew Mr. Colfax in 1856, when he was making his second race for Congress in the Ninth District. He was both my political and personal friend. For many years I lived in an adjoining county, and I knew him as familiarly and well as any man in the State. His Congressional career was marked by indefatigable industry and the closest attention to the interests of his constituents. He never allowed a private letter to go unanswered or public business unattended to. During the fourteen years he represented that district in Congress he had a remarkable hold on his party friends, and he enjoyed the most profound respect of even his political opponents. I need not speak of his public record. It is enough to say that he filled many prominent positions in the service

of his country, and he filled them well. He was identified with many measures that will last as long as the Republic stands. When he left public life, he adhered so strictly to his resolution to remain a private citizen, that I have often heard him say he declined to interfere in requests for advancement or preferment, even when made by his dearest friends. I need not give the reasons for this, but the impartial pen of the truthful historian will say that his motives were always honorable. As a husband and father he was kind, considerate, and loving ; as a citizen he was charitable, public-spirited, and enterprising. He did not escape calumny, it is true, but that he was guiltless of the charges made I firmly believe."

Ex-Governor Andrew G. Porter said :

" I was in Congress four years with Mr. Colfax, and for the greater part of that time I boarded at the same house with him, and I think that I understood his character. It might be said that he started out in life under great disadvantages, because he was the son of a widow, and was poor and friendless ; but I think that he had very great advantages in the shape of kindly feelings, sincere respect for the people, particularly the poor people, and a strong faith in the right as he understood it. He believed firmly that the right, though baffled in the start, would triumph in the end. I never knew a man of such a sweet social nature—who so loved his fellow-men. He seemed to live to do kindness to them, and in this he knew no party or faction. He was universally popular at Washington. He was a man of prodigious industry, and his only recreation was in changing from one kind of labor to another. He arose early, and spent the morning around the various departments, learning all the details of the work of each. He literally knew everything about Washington, and it was this that brought him so near Mr. Lincoln, for he was of great assistance to him. The President's door was always open to him—not his office-door alone, but that of his private apartments. He was also very intimate with Mr. Lincoln's family, and they loved him as they loved but few others. He bore no malice toward his fellow-men. He told me once that he believed true happiness could only come to a person through the happiness of others. That was the secret of his life."

Brief remarks of a similar character were made by Representative Smith, of Tippecanoe County ; by E. W. Halford, Charles Drapier, and other gentlemen ; and the meeting adjourned after appointing Messrs. Andrew G. Porter, Thomas A. Hendricks, William H. Calkins, David Turpie, and E. W. Halford a committee to draw up a suitable memorial to Mr. Colfax. Following is the memorial :

" The citizens of Indiana assembled at the capital have heard, with extreme regret, of the decease of Hon. Schuyler Colfax, one of the State's

most esteemed and distinguished citizens. In a career of long, useful, and eminent public service, Mr. Colfax shed lustre on the name of the State, and won honorable fame in the nation. Beginning life without any of the adventitious aids that are commonly supposed to assist in achieving fame, he rose to distinction by means of natural talents, a most genial temper, and a life of unremitting application to every work he took in hand. As a member of the Constitutional Convention of this State, as a Representative in Congress, as Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, he proved himself well equipped for every duty, and in each successive place he added to his previous distinction. He was a man of a fine social nature, of fervent friendships, of tender sympathies, and was singularly free from vindictiveness and resentments. Meeting as fellow-citizens and friends of the dead statesman, it is resolved :

“ 1. That we shall ever hold his memory and his public services in sincere regard.

“ 2. That we tender to his family in their great affliction our most sincere and fervent sympathy.”

The funeral train left Mankato at midnight of Tuesday, ran through Wisconsin Wednesday, and entered Chicago about seven in the evening, “ as if hurled suddenly into the city out of the arctic regions,” covered with snow and ice. The funeral car was appropriately draped, and bore on each side the inscription :

SCHUYLER COLFAX,

EX-VICE-PRESIDENT,

*Died at Mankato, Minn., January 13th, 1885.*

The Nation Mourns.

The symbols of Odd Fellowship were engraved on silver plates inlaid in the cover of the casket, also the inscription, “ Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” Over the casket was thrown the silken banner of the Mankato (Alexander Wilkins) Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, and on this rested the regalia of the Order.

A committee of South Bend Lodge No. 29, I. O. O. F., to which Colfax had belonged thirty-nine years, and a delegation of leading citizens arrived in Chicago at about the same hour as the funeral train. In company with representative Odd Fellows of Illinois, members of the Veteran Union Club, citizens and ladies, the South Bend people

assembled at the depot as the train pulled in, formed in double line, and uncovered as the casket was borne down the platform and through the depot to a hearse in waiting. The bearers were old soldiers and prominent Odd Fellows. The evening was extremely cold, the air was full of falling snow, whirled about in blinding gusts by a high wind. Five or six hundred people formed and marched in procession from the North-western to the Lake Shore depot, where a special train for South Bend waited. There were no speeches, no flowers, no demonstrations. The casket was placed on the train, the Chicago friends passed through the car and looked their last upon him, and then stood, with uncovered heads, on the platform while the train slowly drew out of the depot, carrying the South Bend delegations with their dead. The Mankato escort went on with them, and they were joined by more of the Fraternity at La Porte.

At the South Bend depot many Odd Fellows and citizens were waiting. They accompanied the procession to the family residence, where it arrived a little before midnight. The casket was placed in the parlor, opening through folding doors into the library, where Mr. Colfax when at home had passed most of his time. There was his desk, piled high with papers, where he had written a hundred thousand letters, grave or gay. There was the rack of pigeon-holes above the desk, packed full; there was the chair at the end of the desk, loaded with papers; books lined three sides of the room from floor to ceiling—everything was precisely as he had left it Monday morning. The casket was uncovered, the face still resembled that of a sleeper. His son Schuyler arrived from school the next day. The funeral was set for Saturday.

Meanwhile, both Houses of the State Legislature appointed committees to represent them officially at the funeral. Many of the leading men at the capital arranged to be present. Grand Master Wildman issued a proclamation calling on the Brotherhood of Odd Fellows throughout the State "to unite, as far as practicable, in paying a last tribute to the memory of our dearly beloved brother."



The flags on the Department buildings at Washington were placed at half-mast by order of the President. The obsequies were in charge of the Odd Fellows. The day was one of the stormiest ever known in the town. The snow was deep, and drifted ; two feet of fresh snow fell during the day ; the wind was high, and the mercury standing eleven above in the morning, sank to three degrees below zero by night. Trains were blocked, detaining those who had set out, and deterring thousands from starting. It was impossible to get about in such weather. Of the relatives in the far West, only Mrs. Witter was able to reach South Bend in time. Business was entirely suspended. The principal buildings, so often decorated for Colfax living, were dressed in mourning for Colfax dead. From eight to twelve the doors of the family residence were thrown open. Thousands passed through and took a last look of the beloved face. Two hours after noon the remains were conveyed to the First Reformed Church. On the casket, which had been changed since the arrival of the body from Minnesota, rested the regalia and equipments of the deceased, and the American flag fell from it in graceful folds.

The pall-bearers were Messrs. James Oliver and Clement Studebaker on the part of South Bend ; Joshua D. Miller, of Mr. Colfax's lodge ; Theodore P. Haughey, of Indianapolis, and Thomas Underwood, of Lafayette, representing the Grand Lodge and the Grand Encampment of the State of Indiana ; and the Hon. Mark L. McClelland, of Valparaiso, on the part of the Legislature. The other gentlemen representing the Legislature were unable to reach South Bend on account of the storm. It had been arranged that Vice-President-elect Thomas A. Hendricks, ex-Governor Andrew G. Porter, Governor Isaac P. Gray, Judge Walter Q. Gresham, ex-Senator Joseph E. McDonald, and ex-Representative William H. Calkins should precede the body as honorary pall-bearers ; but their train could not get through till evening.

The services at the church were conducted by the pastor, the Rev. N. D. Williamson, assisted by the Rev. W.

H. Hickman, pastor of the First Methodist-Episcopal Church ; by the Rev. W. C. Learned, pastor of the First Baptist Church ; and the Rev. E. W. Bower, pastor of the Christian Church. Mr. Williamson delivered the funeral discourse from Daniel 10 : 41—"A man greatly beloved." In allusion to the public career of the deceased, he said :

"We are not about to attempt the portraiture of a perfect man. Schuyler Colfax was a man, and so imperfect. He was a thoroughly manly man, and so realized and deplored his imperfections, and depended on the atonement of Jesus Christ for their forgiveness, and on the grace of the Holy Spirit for their removal. And here, once for all, I will say in reference to the only, but grave attack made on his integrity—which was in the matter of the Credit Mobilier—that he was serenely and thoroughly conscious of his perfect integrity before God and man ; and that my knowledge of the facts is such as to make me absolutely sure that when the secrets of men are revealed in the blaze of God's holiness on the great Day of Judgment, it will be seen that the Great Judge knows it to be so. Another of his innocent fellow-sufferers, the sainted Garfield, who fell by the bullet of the assassin, Guiteau, in the railroad depot in Washington, as he fell by the kindlier arrow of disease, in the railroad depot at Mankato, said to him in words that I feel free to repeat since they are both dead : 'Mr. Colfax, my first thought after my nomination to the Presidency in Chicago was of you.' They are now rejoicing together in a blessed country, where the Satan of calumny can never reach them ; and where 'they have washed their robes' from all actual sins and imperfections, and 'made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

Mentioning some of the personal characteristics that made him "a man greatly beloved," Mr. Williamson said "he was a genial man." His nature was kindly, and he had a rare gift of utterance, whether of speech or pen—felicitous, often exquisite. His large knowledge of men and events, combined with his geniality and facility of expression, made him a remarkably entertaining conversationalist. "A man of unswerving principle." Whatever position he took, political, moral, religious, was taken with full knowledge of its bearings, and adhered to without faltering. "A generous man." His benefactions were large, widespread, thoughtful, ingeniously and delicately bestowed. He was generous to the Church, generous to opponents : many of his political opponents were his warm, personal friends. "A versatile man." He was equally at

home in the Senate, the counting-room, the editor's chair, the Sunday or day-school, among the farmers and the manufacturers, before the literary societies, the preachers, and teachers. His perception was sun-like, his judgment lightning-like and infallible. His mind was a many-sided prism, every side of it clean-cut, instantly catching, dividing, and distributing the rays of light, as required by any case or on any occasion. "A studious man." His mind was full of facts, things, thoughts, gathered from books, from men, and by observation; and when he brought them forth, they had been thoroughly assimilated. He was a great student of the Book of Books. "A busy man." Witness what he accomplished—his public services, the innumerable private letters he wrote, the lectures he delivered, the miles he travelled—it must have been hundreds of thousands—and many of them were travelled that he might keep the Sabbath at home and be in his place in the sanctuary. "An honored man." Honored by the people—by the people of his town, of his county, of his district, of his State, of his nation; by election to office from boyhood; by counties and towns named after him in many States; by the esteem and attachment of a very great host of acquaintances. "A useful man." His speeches and newspaper articles were distributed by the hundreds of thousands. He rendered great service in securing the first Pacific railroad. His political services to the cause of freedom and of national preservation were immeasurable. His lecture on the life and character of Lincoln, repeated hundreds of times—who can estimate its influence in stimulating love of country? He was useful to the city of his adoption in many ways; his services were always at the call of all good causes; and no one could render more efficient service. "An eloquent man." His speech was a rapid flow of happily-expressed thought, argument, fact, and sentiment, which carried his audience irresistibly along with him. He was often eloquent. Speaking on Odd Fellowship was one of his specialties, "and I must confess," said the genial pastor, "that the wonderful care, kindness, and heartiness of Odd Fellowship in behalf of

Schuyler Colfax, dead, has given me a better insight into the reason of the enthusiasm for Odd Fellowship of Schuyler Colfax, living. From the bottom of my heart I thank you all—Daughters of Rebekah, and Odd Fellows of every degree, in Chicago, Indianapolis, South Bend, and surrounding cities and towns, and especially in Mankato—for all you have done for the illustrious dead, and, through him, for us who stand nearest to him. May the benediction of the Great Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier rest on each and all of you, personally !’

“ My personal feelings,” said the speaker, “ urge me to enlarge on his purity, piety, and warm affection for those nearest him. But on these sacred themes there is a happy unanimity in all the public and private utterances of press and people all over the land.” Alluding, then, to his last journey and its strange outcome—the meeting of the warm-hearted man and the arctic wave, the song of the angels—

“ Prisoner, long detained below,  
Prisoner, now with freedom blest,  
Welcome from a world of woe,  
Welcome to a land of rest ;”

invoking the choicest blessings on the Odd Fellows and citizens of Mankato ; thanking all who had been free in kindly offices ; the body of Schuyler Colfax, he said, would now be borne by honorable men to its burial, while universal symbols of mourning showed South Bend’s sympathies with the bereaved, and how deeply the town felt its own bereavement. He closed : “ Farewell ! noble man, parishioner, and Christian friend, whose heart has been so true, and whose lips have never uttered one unkind word, but have spoken so many words of cheer—farewell, until we meet in the land of the ransomed, where the God of mercy grant that you may by and by have all your own family with you, an unbroken band, that we may together praise the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, forever and ever.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Several editions of Mr. Williamson’s sermon were published in the newspapers. A pamphlet edition was issued by “The Vincennes Gallery of Fine Arts,” Chicago, in

The First Presbyterian Church was the scene of services of a somewhat more popular character, conducted by the pastor, the Rev. George T. Keller, and participated in by the Rev. J. H. Wilson, pastor of the Milburn Memorial Chapel, and the Rev. G. W. Bower, pastor of the Michigan Street Methodist-Episcopal Church. The building was crowded, notwithstanding the blinding snow-storm. The basement of the First Methodist Church was opened and warmed to shelter the throngs who could not get into the churches, and who were nearly perishing with the cold.

The services had been postponed to a late hour, in hope of the arrival of in-coming trains, and it was sundown when the procession formed on Lafayette Street, moved up Washington Street, and turned into the cemetery, where many people had already gathered. While the biting wind blew hard, and the shades of night drew on, the remains were lowered into the vault, lined with evergreens and flowers, in the family lot. Chaplain J. H. Wilson conducted the services at the cemetery, which were shortened on account of the cold. The Rev. Mr. Williamson pronounced the benediction, and the gathering dispersed.

The *South Bend Times* (Democratic) said :

“ To-day is laid to rest the mortal remains of South Bend's most eminent and honored citizen, one of Indiana's most illustrious sons, one of the nation's most honored statesmen. Of his remains it may be said, ‘ Ashes to ashes ; ’ of that cold, lifeless body it may be said, ‘ Dust to dust, ’ as it is consigned to the cold, damp earth ; but from our memories—from the memories of all who had the pleasure of the acquaintance of that genial, whole-souled, public-spirited man, for whom an entire people mourn—from their remembrance can never be effaced the recollection of that grand man who is so cold, so silent now. Beginning in obscurity, he gained a high place among his fellow-men ; starting from the humblest sphere in life, we find him occupying with marked ability the next to the highest office in the gift of the nation ; and then, retiring from public life, we find him still maintaining a high position in the estimation of the people. Though a staunch Republican, he laid partisanship aside as a citizen, and reckoned his friends inside and outside of his party lines. Public-spirited, of generous impulse and deed, and of a most companionable disposition, it cannot be wondered at that he held so warm a place

memory of Mr. Colfax's purchase of the first great picture of the late Henry A. Elkins, one of the founders of the gallery. A bust of Mr. Colfax is to be placed in the gallery.

in our hearts. He may have made mistakes ; let them be buried with him ; and let us keep green in our memories the honored dead for the estimable qualities that crowned a noble life."

The *South Bend Tribune* said : " This day will long be remembered, not only for its funeral appearance, in spite of the mantle of snow which covered the earth, but as one on which the whole people, irrespective of class, condition, or political preference, bowed their heads under a great bereavement, as though each particular house had been invaded by death. There was no pageant of grief, but the tokens of private sorrow were many and touching. Than such a tribute, there could be no higher eulogy. His body has been consigned to the tomb, but his words and deeds will live forever."

Eulogistic resolutions were passed by the Consistory of the First Reformed Church, by the lodges and encampments of the Odd Fellows of South Bend, and by the City Council.<sup>1</sup> Notice of their loss was taken by hundreds of the local bodies of the Order of Odd Fellows. In many of the towns of Indiana the Fraternity joined in memorial services, at which his brethren paid touching tributes to the life and character of the deceased. At New Albany Brother Lewis Russell said : " To raise one's self from the humblest walks of life to the second place in the gift of the nation is a grand achievement ; to raise one's self to the highest place in the hearts of five hundred thousand Odd Fellows is a grander achievement. The first position may be filled by a man whose character it would not be well to emulate ; the second position can be filled only by a good and true man. Brother Colfax has filled the first ; the second he fills to-day and forever."

Brother W. C. De Pauw said : " Colfax was a man of convictions. He did not ask, ' Is it policy ? ' but ' Is it right ? ' That settled, his position was irrevocably taken. There were four great questions before the people when he was young—slavery, education, temperance, secret societies. He took the right side of them all. When he left

1. Mrs. Colfax has received copies, beautifully engrossed, of many resolutions of condolence, adopted by societies and civic and religious bodies.

politics, it was with clean hands and a pure heart and 'poor as a church mouse;' but by his ready pen, a keen brain, and indefatigable energy he soon acquired a competence."

At Terre Haute Brother James Hook said: "In the demise of Schuyler Colfax the nation mourns the loss of a statesman, our State a valued and honored citizen, and our Order one of its early advocates and faithful representatives—true to every trust."

Colonel W. E. McLean said: "Brother Colfax is a model worthy of imitation—in his exemplary and temperate life, in his active and untiring industry, in his sincere respect for his fellow-men of all classes, rich and poor; a man full of the kindest attributes of a sweet social nature; one who could say with Abou Ben Adhem, to the angel, cheerily: 'I pray thee, then, write me as one who loves his fellow-men.'"

Colonel R. W. Thompson said: "Among all the public men of the country for the past half century, there was not one who performed his duties more conscientiously and faithfully than he. He was generous in his impulses and honest and honorable in all his intentions. There have not been many men in the country's history who have occupied in such a brief life so many places of eminent responsibility as he."

Colonel Nelson said: "There never was a more loyal, honest, and capable public servant. Few men were as universally beloved. He was, indeed, a most genial and cultivated gentleman, who recognized the absolute and universal brotherhood of man. He was a strong partisan, it is true, but he always treated his opponents with fairness and courtesy. His aims were lofty, his methods honorable, his heart warm and true. He never willingly wounded the feelings of any human being. He was the friend of the friendless and the champion of the oppressed. As a great American statesman and patriot, as a useful and upright citizen, as a consistent and devout Christian, as a loving son, husband, and father, as a noble, faithful, honest man,

' History will write his honored name  
High on her truth-illuminated scroll.'''

Interesting memorial exercises were held at the spring convocation of the Grand Lodge of his State. A memorial was prepared by a committee, and upon the motion to adopt, several gentlemen briefly addressed the lodge. Some of the more striking utterances follow. Brother Thomas Underwood said : " For more than threescore years he lived and faithfully labored, was a blessing to the world, a benefactor of his fellow-men, and dying, left those around the firesides of a nation to mourn his loss. More than half of his life I knew him well, and loved him with the strong affection of a brother's love. He dared to do right, no matter where or before whom he stood. His name was the synonym of truthfulness. There are those of us who have often seen the shadow of sadness settle upon his countenance when a wrong had been perpetrated on himself or others ; but none of us ever heard his lips speak harshly, but only sorrowfully, that the wrong had been committed. His love for his fellow-men was so strong and abiding, that it forbade harsh action, no matter what the circumstances."

Brother Will Cumback : " Schuyler Colfax was not only my brother Odd Fellow, but for more than thirty years has been my warm, personal friend. It is not necessary to speak of his integrity, his ability, his fine social qualities, his broad and noble manhood. They are all well known to the whole American people. I do not believe that in our history, as a nation, there has ever been a man who was personally known by as many people, and who had as many warm and earnest friends, as our deceased brother. . . . As we stand closer together, and attempt to fill up the vacant places that death makes in our ranks, with bowed heads, mingling our tears, moved by a common grief, let us hope that a deeper fraternal feeling may permeate our fellowship, and that a higher type of manhood may be the fruitage of our bereavement. We have the noble life of Colfax to guide us. Let the mantle of the departed fall on each of us."



Brother W. R. Myers, Democratic ex-member of Congress, now Secretary of the State of Indiana :

“ In the drama of life, in which he played so conspicuous a part, he acquitted himself in a manner that satisfied his most critical and zealous friends and silenced the envious tongues of his enemies. He was not a profound thinker on any subject, but he forced himself to the front rank among men by reason of the versatility of his mind and his quick perception of situations as they presented themselves. He was a student of everything passing before him ; a ready and graceful writer ; and as a pleasing and entertaining speaker he had few equals. To the rigidly logical and analytical mind, that delights to dwell in frigid and cold abstraction, he was not an ideal man. But the fervor, pathos, and ideality of his mind, when speaking, were magical, not only to the ear, but to the heart and soul of the populace ; and men were instinctively drawn to him, because his sincerity and fidelity were stamped upon his every word and gesture.

“ Until recent years his life was a tumultuous and a busy one, and his labors were Herculean. Yet, in the midst of them all, he found time to attend his Odd Fellows' lodge regularly, and to discharge with fidelity every duty imposed ; so that his name is imperishably written in the history of Odd Fellowship in this State and in this country, and will shine through the years to come as brightly as that of any name which adorns the history of our beloved Order.

“ Twenty years ago I met Schuyler Colfax in this hall. He was then in the full vigor of physical and intellectual manhood, and his name was familiar as household words to thirty-five millions of people. I have met him very frequently since—on the street, on the railroad, in the private circle, at his home among his neighbors and friends—and I always found him the same genial, frank, and generous gentleman, friend, and brother. I never heard any one that knew him personally, though he was a bitter political opponent, express a doubt of his personal integrity or fidelity to his friends and to every public trust. I never heard of his having any other than political foes. Men who were his peers differed with him on political questions, yet loved his manhood and his virtue.

“ In Brother Colfax we have one of the most striking and prominent illustrations of the possibilities in our Republic. Born in obscurity and poverty, he surmounted every obstacle, and by dint of his own intrinsic excellencies, he placed his name in the front rank of the most distinguished men this country has produced. Yet with all his achievements, he was always the plain, unassuming, companionable gentleman and brother, with a heart and hand ever ready and willing to minister to a brother in distress.”

Brother W. P. Kuntz : “ I rise to lay a single chaplet on the honored grave of Brother Schuyler Colfax. For

many years I had the honor of his personal friendship. My residence was in his district during all his Congressional career. He was a grand man. In every element of true greatness he was the peer of the foremost men of the age. He was a statesman, a philanthropist, and last, but not least, a true Christian. He shed undying lustre on our noble Order of Odd Fellowship. But he has gone from among us forever. We shall no more enjoy his genial smile, nor hear his eloquent voice. He has left a halo of glory behind him. When such a man falls, society has lost a mighty pillar. It is ours to imitate his illustrious example. I cannot now dwell on his shining qualities. Suffice it to say, that his name is deathless ;

‘ One of the few, the immortal names,  
That were not born to die.’

But lately, we beheld his sun careering high in heaven, with his shadow scarcely turned to the East ; suddenly his sun went down to rise again in new splendor on the immortal shore. In Eternity’s great day we shall meet him again.’

Brother B. F. Foster : “ I rise merely to add a passing word to the memory of one whom we all delighted to honor, and whose words of eloquence, uttered upon this stand six months ago, are still ringing in our ears. He had realized in his own life, he said, the harmonizing influences of Odd Fellowship ; and he commended it to all who would square their conduct by the Golden Rule. In all the years of his pilgrimage, he had learned to love the Order more and more, and he expressed again his oft-repeated wish—that when the messenger of death should call, he might be buried by his brethren of the Mystic Tie. How well this last wish was carried out, you all know. He has gone out from us, and his kindly voice will no more be heard in our halls. He has left for us, however, a legacy that can never be taken away—a bright and beautiful example, in which were illustrated all the cardinal virtues of Odd Fellowship. May it be ours to gaze upon that example until we shall feel its transforming

influence operating upon our own hearts and lives ; until, like him, we shall be constrained to 'go about doing good.' "

The Rev. Dr. Thomas, pastor of the People's Church in Chicago, preached upon "The Death of Colfax," "the power and beauty of his discourse," said the reporter, "at times witnessed by demonstrations of applause, subdued by considerations of time and place." Mr. Thomas said : "Mr. Colfax was a conspicuous example of the peculiar influences of our free American life. In serving his country and his age, he became great in himself. Leaving school at a very early age, he was pushed out into the thought and work of the world, and henceforth these were his teachers. From a clerk in a store and a debater in a literary society, he became a writer and editor of a paper ; and along these pathways of hard work and common-sense, and by an honest purpose and a pure life, he found his way into the national Congress and the Vice-Presidency of a great nation. He was a man of the people, clear, strong, sympathetic, active, and earnest in his efforts to serve his country well. But for such men to plead the cause of liberty, slavery would have been planted in the Territories, and the 'black laws' of Illinois been in force to-day. Our soldiers in many graves, our statesmen in many tombs, live not only in history, but as an inspiration to the present."

The Rev. Dr. DeWitt Talmage, of Brooklyn :

"Since I last spoke to you in this Friday-night lectureship, Schuyler Colfax has closed his life. To those of us who knew him well, he was the impersonation of kindness, the highest style of Christian gentleman, and brilliant as the North Star. His father died before he was born. Schuyler Colfax fought his way on up to the Speaker's Chair of the House of Representatives, the ablest officer that ever occupied that position, and moved on still further until he came within one step of the Presidency, while ten million friends hoped that he would reach that highest distinction. But American politics is merciless, and it put its paws on him, as on scores of other illustrious public men, and attempted his destruction. I never believed a word that was said against his integrity. I am glad that, at the darkest time in that attack, I stood in the Academy of Music, and before one word had been said on his side, or any explanation given, declared my full faith in him. He lived down the unrighteous assault,

and the Congress of the United States adjourned in his honor when they heard of his decease, and the Legislature of his own State sent its delegates to his obsequies, and high officials from all parts of the land stood around his casket, while his own city was filled with lamentation for the dead.

“ I have known many people in public and private life, but a lovelier man I never met. Grace was poured into his lips. The perpetual smile on his face, sometimes meanly caricatured, was the benediction of his great soul upon a world that was not worthy of him. The snows that now cover his grave are not purer than the heart resting beneath them. I cannot awaken his ear with eulogium, but I plant this one crocus at the verge of the snowbank that arches his tomb, Well done, brother, well done.

“ The generous words he uttered concerning myself during his last Sabbath afternoon on earth I shall treasure in my memory as long as memory lasts. The suddenness of his going off was no calamity to him. In the twinkling of an eye his spirit fled. Out of the atmosphere thirty degrees below zero into the June morning of God's smile. But the quickness of the transit ought to rally us to thoughtfulness concerning our own departure. Would our going be as blessed? Could we put down our satchel in a railway station, as that traveller did, and instantly rise to where the weary are at rest? I think many of you could.

“ This dying, after all, is not worth making so much ado about, if we are equipped for embarkation. This world, though so fair, is not the best world. These associations, though so blessed, are not the best associations. There is no desert to cross, no river to ford, no heights to scale. The last gasp of earth is the first inhalation of heaven. Through the pardoning grace of God let us all be ready. What a glorious group of friends we have there! They go up through all seasons. We bury them amid the cowslips. We bury them in the frosts. They go up out of cradles and out of the weary couch of the old man. Some go from under sudden paroxysm of pain, and some of them close their day of life with the long-continued splendor of a summer sunset. But they arrive by swift wing in the eternal calm—the aching void in our hearts responded to by the longing in their hearts for the day of reunion. We cannot forget them; they cannot forget us.”

A few extracts from press notices published on the occasion of his death are given below :

The *Philadelphia Press* (Republican) : “ Many of the papers that abused Schuyler Colfax during his life are fulsome in their praise of his virtues now that he is dead. Colfax belongs with the host of public men from whom justice was withheld until they lay in their coffins.”

The *Cleveland Plaindealer* (Democratic) : “ Mr. Colfax

was one of the most industrious men of our time ; amiable, kind-hearted, and intellectual. Aside from that Credit Mobilier business, his life was unblemished, and in that he was more sinned against than sinning ; and will remain an example of how much stronger impressions and prejudices are than facts."

The *Cincinnati Times-Star* (Republican) : " The unprejudiced historian who writes of war times and the days of reconstruction will have much to say to the credit of the late Schuyler Colfax, and will indulge in little disparaging comment on his career. Mr. Colfax was a self-made man. He rose to a high place by force of his ability and merit. He was a leader in the House for nearly fourteen years. Among the men who encouraged and upheld President Lincoln during the trying period of rebellion, Mr. Colfax was conspicuous."

The Rochester (N. Y.) *Herald* (Independent) : " Pleasing in appearance, graceful in action, always suave and obliging, industrious, studious, and thorough in his acquaintance with public affairs, a ready debater and an eloquent speaker, he possessed in a remarkable degree the qualities which command popular success."

The *Chicago Herald* (Independent) : " The cloud which lowered upon so many Christian statesmen in 1873, when Oakes Ames's little red book was revealing its secrets, post-dated his defeat by Wilson for renomination as Vice-President, and, therefore, had nothing to do with his retirement from active public life, though, undoubtedly, it operated to determine him never to seek entry thereon. Had he chosen to continue, his chances would have been as good as Garfield's or Blaine's."

The *Chicago Tribune* (Republican) : " He had the quality of self-control to a remarkable degree, and he attached himself to his friends very strongly. He was always genial and kindly in his intercourse, even with strangers and chance acquaintances. Without being effeminate in any sense of the word, he had the shrewd, quick feminine instincts which led him always to say the proper thing at the proper time."

The *San Francisco Chronicle* (Republican) : " He was in many respects a most remarkable man. He was a fine orator and a strong writer ; he was well informed on an infinite variety of topics ; he was heartily in sympathy with the best people on the political issues of the day ; he was an amiable man, with hosts of personal friends ; he possessed that rarest of all gifts—consummate tact."

The *New York Graphic* (Independent) : " His greatest misfortune was that in his earlier years he was a newspaper man. Perhaps this brought him his subsequent success, but it also secured for him the malice of two thirds of the newspaper men in the country, the malice growing greater the higher he went. But for the press, to which he had formerly belonged, his defence against the charges in the Credit Mobilier matter, though a little thin, would have been deemed good enough to save him to public life."

The *Springfield (Mass.) Republican* (Independent) : " His service as Speaker was all that could be desired in that responsible place. Calm, equable, genial, and thoroughly versed in parliamentary usage, he never forgot a right or infringed a privilege of a debater ; he never showed partiality to a Republican or disfavor to a Democratic member ; he was always dignified yet urbane."

*Frank Leslie's* (Republican) : " None who knew the man can doubt the sincerity of the words which he uttered but a short time before his death—' I have nothing for which to offer regrets in all my public career. Not that I did not make mistakes, as every man will, but what I made were honestly made.' "

The *Chicago Journal* (Republican) : " He was a typical American of the better class—generous, energetic, and broadly democratic in his instincts and in his life. He was profoundly patriotic and conscientious."

The *Buffalo Express* (Republican) : " As Speaker he had shown both ability and tact, and no member, though Blaine and Conkling and many almost equally brilliant lights were in the House, thought of aspiring to the Chair until Colfax had done with it."

The *Brooklyn Times* (Republican): "As Speaker in a critical period, he was one of the most successful men that ever held that trust. He was at one time Vice-President and the favorite of a large following within the Republican Party for the office of President."

The *Salt Lake Tribune* (Independent): "Of those who stood around the cross reviling, not one spoke of the sick that the dying Christ had healed; not one of the blind whom He had made to see; not one of the multitude He had fed; not one of the dead that He had raised; not one of the tempests He had stilled. The indictment ran: 'He hath made Himself King of the Jews.' Let any man by his talents and his heroic deeds make it clear that upon him and within him rests the right of leadership, because of sovereign glorious attributes, and at the first word against him millions will take up the cry, anxious that it shall prove true, and determined to hurl the offender, whose only offence is greatness, down. Partisan hate has started the slanders that have sent so many of our greatest men to the grave with broken hearts."

The *Minneapolis Tribune* (Republican): "Schuyler Colfax in 1868 occupied such a place in the popular esteem as Garfield occupied in 1880; indeed, Colfax held even a higher place as a distinguished and immaculate statesman when the Republican National Convention met in May, 1868, than Garfield held when the Chicago Convention assembled in 1880."

The *Colorado Springs Gazette* (Republican): "It is with Lincoln, and Stevens, and Sumner, and Wilson that we class Colfax, and with them he deserves and will receive the respect and honor of posterity. We shall do well to stop for a moment's homage to one who was genial and kind in private life, and in public was the friend of freedom and the faithful servant of his country."

The *Philadelphia Ledger* (Republican): "His abilities were peculiarly those of the platform orator, of the alert and active debater, of the student and master of the minutiae of parliamentary law and usage. He was an adept in the rules and practice of the House of Representatives; this

and his affable deportment made him Speaker of the House again and again, and a notably able Speaker he was."

The *Bloomington (Ill.) Pantagraph* (Republican): "The private life of Mr. Colfax, without a stain or a suspicion among the people with whom he lived as a neighbor, benefactor, and friend, for nearly half a century, will rise up to plead for him as long as party malice may utter a whisper against his name."

*Harper's Weekly* (Independent): "He had a natural taste for politics, and he was a sagacious politician. His Republican convictions were strong, and in the press, upon the stump, and in Congress he was an efficient worker. He was a kindly, pleasant man, of good impulses and generous feelings."

The *Philadelphia Times* (Independent): "As presiding officer of the House at Washington during the sessions of three successive Congresses, he was both popular and efficient. He filled the office of Vice-President in an acceptable manner, and at one time had apparently better prospects for the Presidency than any other man in public life."

The *Sacramento Record-Union* (Republican): "He was a man of broad capacity in the discharge of administrative functions, and as an executive officer has had few equals. He was the friend of freedom from youth up, and stood at no sacrifice to advocate the claims of human liberty. A large share of his life labors was given to philanthropic and humanitarian schemes, and was directed toward the unifying of men in the bonds of the common friendship of humanity."

The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (Republican): "Few public men occupied a larger share of general attention from the middle of the war period down to the close of General Grant's first Presidential term in 1873. If the trouble with Andrew Johnson had not occurred and rendered the nomination of General Grant almost a necessity, Mr. Colfax would have stood a good chance for the Presidency instead of the Vice-Presidency that year [1868]."

The *Christian Union*: "His affable manners and his genuine good-will made him friends; his fairness of spirit



won for him respect ; and his quickness of intellect rather than his grasp, his foresight, or his insight, gave him power. His hold upon the public, however, depended chiefly on his moral qualities ; the charges involving his probity, in connection with the Credit Mobilier, were never met to the satisfaction of the public, though they were squarely denied by him, and, in our judgment, were never substantiated."

The *New York Herald* (Independent) : " He possessed all the attributes of a leader. He had courage and personal magnetism. He had a fine voice, an eloquent delivery, a fluent pen, and the power of organizing his forces into irresistible columns in his campaigns. He had ambition enough to aspire to the most exalted position."

The *St. Paul Pioneer-Press* (Republican) : " After the war was ended its highest honors were reserved, indeed, for the general who had led its armies to victory ; but the most splendid distinction which could then be conferred by the people on any political leader was awarded to Schuyler Colfax, in linking his name with that of Ulysses S. Grant on the Republican Presidential ticket of 1868."

The *Kansas City Journal* (Republican) : " Devoted to liberty, brave in the defence of the poor and down-trodden, boundless in his ambition to extend the resources, the power, and influence of his country, Mr. Colfax must take a place in history as one of the great builders of free institutions."

The *Utica* (N. Y.) *Herald* (Republican) : " The hand that guided the House of Representatives through those turbulent periods of partisan controversy was not only skilful but firm. In the tact, the dexterity, the quickness, the instinctive sensing of parliamentary law, Mr. Colfax was the ideal Speaker. There is no position in the Federal Government which so tests the nerve, so tries the temper, so brings out the man, as this one. It must be said of any one who has discharged its duties with the success that marked Mr. Colfax's career in the Chair, that he possessed the essential elements of greatness. For such a success in-

volves in the largest degree the capacity for the leadership of men."

The *North-western Christian Advocate* : " In every public relation he served with vigor, honor, competency, and perfect impartiality, his enemies even being the judge. Of the people, beloved by the people, loving the people, and preferring the people, we doubt if the nation has ever produced a citizen who has more thoroughly represented the people—Lincoln and Garfield not excepted. He seldom did a pre-eminently splendid and dazzling thing, but few men amid the myriad appointed duties and multitudinous sudden calls for service, have so seldom done an ordinary thing. He seemed to know all, to be everywhere, to see all things, to have views on all things, to write to everybody, and yet never to lose any time. Quick in apprehension, exact in comprehension, fertile in resources, honest in methods, apt in speech, affable in personal presence, and clean as a girl, he is just the example to quote to American boys."

The following personal tributes are from interviews published in various papers and from letters :

The Hon. David Turpie, of Indiana : " Yes, he deliberately chose to retire. His tastes were decidedly literary. Our last meeting<sup>s</sup> was not only serene, but very happy. Business drew me to Washington while he was Vice-President. He received me with all that kindness of which he was so perfect a master. He showed me through all the Government buildings, introduced me in the various Departments, and called with me on President Grant. One day, as we were driving, he said to me : ' At the end of my term I will permanently enter private life and prepare for the life to come.' Though I did not doubt his candor, I believed him unable to do as he wished. I felt that there were other interests besides his own personal interests to be consulted. Having been so long and so conspicuously a public character, I believed that his retirement would be attended with difficulty. I may not have replied, but I remember that his observation made an impression on me."

The Hon. A. B. Nettleton, of Minnesota : " He probably made fewer mistakes of judgment as a statesman and politician than any other man of his time, and in his personal and business affairs he was equally judicious and well-balanced. But it was personally and in his capacity as a private citizen and a friend that his finest qualities came to the surface. It was his genial, companionable, sunny ways which gave him his chief hold upon the public good-will and made him so remarkably successful in public life. Of course the period of trial through which he passed in connection with the Credit Mobilier scandal of 1873 was the one pathetic episode of his life. Nobody who claims to be intelligent now believes that he was to any extent whatever implicated in that matter ; but the accusation made by Oakes Ames, and rendered plausible by attending circumstances, coupled with the malignant and persistent assaults of a part of the press, undoubtedly had the effect for a time of shadowing the good name of Mr. Colfax with many fair-minded people. His private letters, written during those days of darkness, many of which I have preserved, are singularly eloquent and pathetic."

Vice-President Thomas A. Hendricks, of Indiana : " There has always been a strong affection in my regard for him. He was as handsome a young man as I have ever known, open in his deportment, and obliging. He was a rapid and accurate writer, and he spoke with great beauty and fluency. But his industry and public spirit, no less than his exquisite social qualities, endeared him to the people among whom he lived. No man ever found a warmer place in the hearts of his neighbors than Schuyler Colfax has at South Bend. One cannot speak with those people without discovering it ; only a good man could be so loved."

The Hon. James N. Tyner, of Indiana : " Let me close by bearing cheerful testimony to the honorable traits of his character—to his kindness of heart, gentle nature, generous impulses, faithfulness to all trusts, and loyalty to friendships. I have never known a better man in all the elements of noble manhood, and I never loved a friend

more ardently. In private life he was a model of refinement and purity ; in public life he was the ideal statesman."

The Hon. Justin S. Morrill, of Vermont : " He has sometimes been ironically termed one of the ' Christian statesmen,' but I have no doubt he is entitled to wear that designation in its truest sense. I knew him well, and I cannot believe that he ever gave offence to a conscience alive to the slightest touch of wrong-doing. He will carry to the grave clean hands and a pure heart, and have more boys wearing his name than ever graced the career of any man destitute of Revolutionary fame save Henry Clay."

Brigadier-General O. O. Howard, U.S.A. : " Mr. Colfax always met me with a marked warmth of manner, and spoke with the utmost openness and freedom on all topics. It was, indeed, a great treat to me to have a half hour's conversation with him. He was my *beau-ideal* of the cheerful Christian, and I have often said that no person who knew him would hesitate to trust in his hands his every dollar, so much did his frank, honest face inspire one with confidence."

The Hon. Alexander H. Rice, of Massachusetts : " My remembrance of Mr. Colfax is very fresh. I served with him in Congress before he became Speaker of the House of Representatives, when he was one of the most industrious, studious, and influential members of that body. And after he became Speaker I was among the daily witnesses of his tireless energy, impartiality, and patience, amid the delicate and exacting duties of that high position. He was always regarded as a man of decided convictions, and fearless in their expression when occasion called ; yet there were always that candor and sincerity in his speech which took away all offensiveness, even when he was most vehement. Mr. Colfax had many friends and few enemies ; and his intimacies were always frank, confiding, and sincere."

The Rev. Dr. R. M. Hatfield, of Evanston, Ill. : " In my thought Mr. Colfax was an honest man, an unselfish patriot, an able statesman, a genial and generous friend, and a sincere Christian. He deserves an honored place

among the best citizens of the Republic. His death, sudden and distressing as it was to his friends, was in keeping with his active and useful life. Blighted by no decay, in the full strength of his manly powers, he ceased at once to work and live."

The Hon. W. R. Smith, of Maine : " For more than thirty years Mr. Colfax and myself, although politically opposed, were on terms of very friendly intimacy. While he lived I entertained the highest regard for his life and character, and now that he is removed from life, I retain an affectionate remembrance of his exalted virtues, and recur to my intercourse with him with great pleasure."

The Rev. Robert Collyer, of New York : " Since I came to know him I have loved him very dearly, and carried a picture of him always in my heart as he looked in the home at South Bend, with the treasures about him that made his life so radiant, and whose life he also made so radiant. And it always seemed as if that was one home in a dozen or so in two worlds I could go to for consolation and strength if I was stricken by a great sorrow, and be sure to find it. He was one of the not many men who make life greatly worth living."

General Clinton B. Fisk, of New York : " In his great heart there was malice toward none. His charity was all-abounding. He had fought the good fight, he had kept the faith. In public life and in private life ; in the sunshine and in the storm, his face was steadily toward the stars."

Mr. Colfax last spoke in public before the students and friends of the Metropolitan Business College in Chicago, five days prior to his death. His lecture on that occasion closed as follows : " The man who stands fearlessly for the right amid the devotees of wrong ; who stands single-handed, if need be, against evil, where injustice has its legions of minions ; who loves the good and follows in its ways because it is right, and eschews error and wickedness, however popular may be their service ; who calmly and confidently looks to the future for his vindication ; and who presses forward in the journey of life with steady

step—that man, whether in palace or cottage, is the true victor on the battle-field of life. He shall have his reward. For in that land where the streets are gold, where the gates are pearl, where the walls are jasper and sapphire, his star of victory shall shine brighter and brighter, while the laurels of sceptre and crown, of office and of fame, shall wither into the dust and ashes of which they were formed.”

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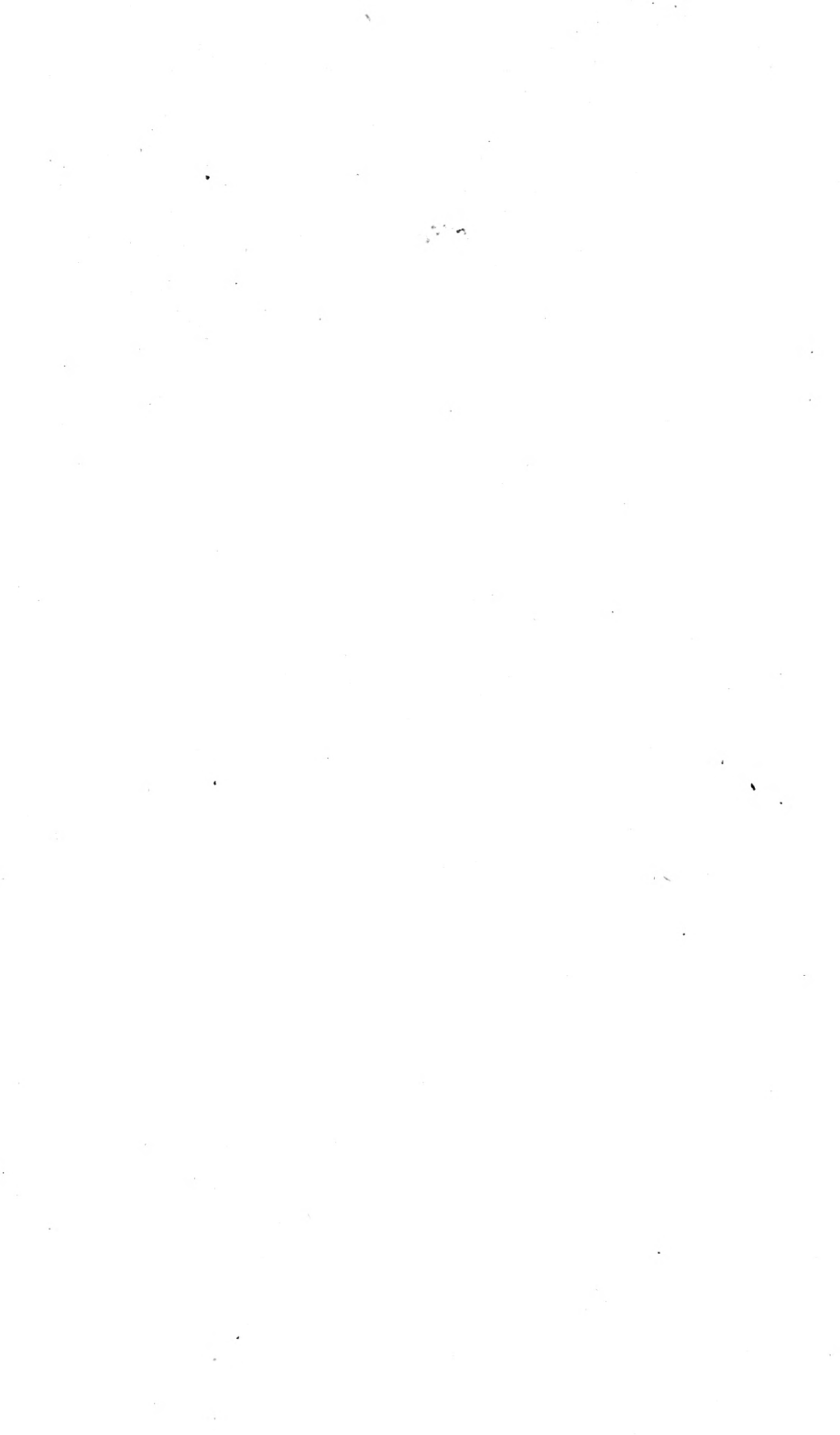
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