

# GLIMPSSES OF LINCOLN IN WAR TIME.

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REVIEWING HOOKER'S ARMY — AFTER HOOKER'S DEFEAT — EXCLUSIVE INFORMATION —  
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## REVIEWING HOOKER'S ARMY.



EARLY in April, 1863, I accompanied the President, Mrs. Lincoln, and their youngest son, "Tad," on a visit to the Army of the Potomac — Hooker then being in command, with headquarters on Falmouth Heights, opposite Fredericksburg. Attorney-General Bates and an old friend of Mr. Lincoln — Dr. A. G. Henry of Washington Territory — were also of the party. The trip had been postponed for several days on account of unfavorable weather, and it began to snow furiously soon after the President's little steamer, the *Carrie Martin*, left the Washington navy-yard. So thick was the weather, and so difficult the navigation, that we were forced to anchor for the night in a little cove in the Potomac opposite Indian Head, where we remained until the following morning. I could not help thinking that if the rebels had made a raid on the Potomac at that time, the capture of the chief magistrate of the United States would have been a very simple matter. So far as I could see, there were no guards on board the boat, and no precautions were taken against a surprise. After the rest of the party had retired for the night, the President, Dr. Henry, and I sat up until long after midnight, telling stories and discussing matters, political or military, in the most free and easy way. During the conversation after Dr. Henry had left us, Mr. Lincoln, dropping his voice almost to a confidential whisper, said, "How many of our ironclads do you suppose are at the bottom of Charleston harbor?" This was the first intimation I had had that the long-talked-of naval attack on Fort Sumter was to be made that day; and the President, who had been jocular and cheerful during the evening, began despondently to discuss the probabilities of defeat. It was evident that his mind was entirely prepared for the repulse, the news of which soon after reached us. During our subsequent stay at Hooker's headquarters, which lasted nearly a week, Mr. Lincoln eagerly inquired every day for the rebel newspapers that

were brought in through picket-lines, and when these were received he anxiously hunted through them for information from Charleston. It was not until we returned to Washington, however, that a trustworthy and conclusive account of the failure of the attack was received.

Our landing-place, when en route for Falmouth, was at Aquia Creek, which we reached next morning, untimely snow still falling. "The Creek," as it was called, was a village of hastily constructed warehouses, and its water-front was lined with transports and government steamers; enormous freight-trains were continually running from it to the army encamped among the hills of Virginia lying between the Rappahannock and the Potomac. As there were sixty thousand horses and mules to be fed in the army, the single item of daily forage was a considerable factor in the problem of transportation. The President and his party were provided with an ordinary freight-car fitted up with rough plank benches, but profusely decorated with flags and bunting. A great crowd of army people saluted the President with cheers when he landed from the steamer, and with "three times three" when his unpretentious railway carriage rolled away. At Falmouth station, which was about five miles east of the old town, two ambulances and an escort of cavalry received the President and his party, the honors being done by General Daniel Butterfield, who was then General Hooker's chief of staff.

At Hooker's headquarters we were provided with two or three large hospital tents, floored, and furnished with camp bedsteads and such rude appliances for nightly occupation as were in reach. During our stay with the army there were several grand reviews, that of the entire cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac, on April 6, being the most impressive of the whole series. The cavalry was now for the first time massed as one corps instead of being scattered around among the various army corps, as it had been heretofore; it was commanded by General Stoneman. The entire cavalry force was rated at 17,000 men, and Hooker proudly said that it was the biggest army of men and horses ever seen in the world, bigger even than the

famous body of cavalry commanded by Marshal Murat.

The cavalcade on the way from headquarters to the reviewing field was a brilliant one. The President, wearing a high hat and riding like a veteran, with General Hooker by his side, headed the flying column; next came several major-generals, a host of brigadiers, staff-officers, and colonels, and lesser functionaries innumerable. The flank of this long train was decorated by the showy uniforms and accoutrements of the Philadelphia Lancers, who acted as a guard of honor to the President during that visit to the Army of the Potomac. The uneven ground was soft with melting snow, and the mud flew in every direction under the hurrying feet of the great cavalcade. On the skirts of this cloud of cavalry rode the President's little son "Tad," in charge of a mounted orderly, his gray cloak flying in the gusty wind like the plume of Henry of Navarre. The President and the reviewing party rode past the long lines of cavalry standing at rest, and then the march past began. It was a grand sight to look upon, this immense body of cavalry, with banners waving, music crashing, and horses prancing, as the vast column came winding like a huge serpent over the hills past the reviewing party, and then stretching far away out of sight.

The President went through the hospital tents of the corps that lay nearest to headquarters, and insisted upon stopping and speaking to nearly every man, shaking hands with many of them, asking a question or two here and there, and leaving a kind word as he moved from cot to cot. More than once, as I followed the President through the long lines of weary sufferers, I noticed tears of gladness stealing down their pale faces; for they were made happy by looking into Lincoln's sympathetic countenance, touching his hand, and hearing his gentle voice; and when we rode away from the camp to Hooker's headquarters, tremendous cheers rent the air from the soldiers, who stood in groups, eager to see the good President.

The infantry reviews were held on several different days. On April 8 was the review of the Fifth Corps, under Meade; the Second, under Couch; the Third, under Sickles; and the Sixth, under Sedgwick. It was reckoned that these four corps numbered some 60,000 men, and it was a splendid sight to witness their grand martial array as they wound over hills and rolling ground, coming from miles away, their arms shining in the distance, and their bayonets bristling like a forest on the horizon as they marched away. The President expressed himself as delighted with the appearance of the soldiery, and he was much impressed by the parade of the great reserve artillery force,

some eighty guns, commanded by Captain De Russy. One picturesque feature of the review on that day was the appearance of the Zouave regiments, whose dress formed a sharp contrast to the regulation uniform of the other troops. General Hooker, being asked by the President if fancy uniforms were not undesirable on account of the conspicuousness which they gave as targets to the enemy's fire, said that these uniforms had the effect of inciting a spirit of pride and neatness among the men. It was noticeable that the President merely touched his hat in return salute to the officers, but uncovered to the men in the ranks. As they sat in the chilly wind, in the presence of the shot-riddled colors of the army and the gallant men who bore them, he and the group of distinguished officers around him formed a notable historic spectacle. After a few days the weather grew warm and bright; and although the scanty dribbles of news from Charleston that were filtered to us through the rebel lines did not throw much sunshine into the military situation, the President became more cheerful and even jocular. I remarked this one evening as we sat in Hooker's headquarters, after a long and laborious day of reviewing. Lincoln replied: "It is a great relief to get away from Washington and the politicians. But nothing touches the tired spot."

On the 9th the First Corps, commanded by General Reynolds, was reviewed by the President on a beautiful plain at the north of Potomac Creek, about eight miles from Hooker's headquarters. We rode thither in an ambulance over a rough corduroy road; and, as we passed over some of the more difficult portions of the jolting way, the ambulance driver, who sat well in front, occasionally let fly a volley of suppressed oaths at his wild team of six mules. Finally Mr. Lincoln, leaning forward, touched the man on the shoulder, and said:

"Excuse me, my friend, are you an Episcopalian?"

The man, greatly startled, looked around and replied:

"No, Mr. President; I am a Methodist."

"Well," said Lincoln, "I thought you must be an Episcopalian, because you swear just like Governor Seward, who is a churchwarden." The driver swore no more.

As we plunged and dashed through the woods, Lincoln called attention to the stumps left by the men who had cut down the trees, and with great discrimination pointed out where an experienced axman made what he called "a good butt," or where a tyro had left conclusive evidence of being a poor chopper. Lincoln was delighted with the superb and inspiring spectacle of the review that day. A noticeable feature of the doings was the martial music of

the corps; and on the following day the President, who loved military music, was warm in his praise of the performances of the bands of the Eleventh Corps, under General Howard, and the Twelfth, under General Slocum. In these two corps the greater portion of the music was furnished by drums, trumpets, and fifes, and with most stirring and thrilling effect. In the division commanded by General Schurz was a magnificent array of drums and trumpets, and his men impressed us as the best drilled and the most soldierly of all who passed before us during our stay.

I recall with sadness the easy confidence and nonchalance which Hooker showed in all his conversations with the President and his little party while we were at his headquarters. The general seemed to regard the whole business of command as if it were a larger sort of picnic. He was, by all odds, the handsomest soldier I ever laid my eyes upon. I think I see him now: tall, shapely, well dressed, though not natty in appearance; his fair red and white complexion glowing with health, his bright blue eyes sparkling with intelligence and animation, and his auburn hair tossed back upon his well-shaped head. His nose was aquiline, and the expression of his somewhat small mouth was one of much sweetness, though rather irresolute, it seemed to me. He was a gay cavalier, alert and confident, overflowing with animal spirits, and as cheery as a boy. One of his most frequent expressions when talking with the President was, "When I get to Richmond," or "After we have taken Richmond," etc. The President, noting this, said to me confidentially, and almost with a groan: "That is the most depressing thing about Hooker. It seems to me that he is over-confident."

One night when Hooker and I were alone in his hut, which was partly canvas and partly logs, with a spacious fireplace and chimney, he stood in his favorite attitude with his back to the fire, and, looking quizzically at me, said, "The President tells me that you know all about the letter he wrote to me when he put me in command of this army." I replied that Mr. Lincoln had read it to me; whereupon Hooker drew the letter from his pocket, and said, "Would n't you like to hear it again?" I told him that I should, although I had been so much impressed by its first reading that I believed I could repeat the greater part of it from memory. That letter has now become historic; then it had not been made public. As Hooker read on, he came to this sentence:

You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think during Burnside's command of the army you took counsel of your ambition, and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great

wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer.

Here Hooker stopped, and vehemently said: "The President is mistaken. I never thwarted Burnside in any way, shape, or manner. Burnside was preëminently a man of department: he fought the battle of Fredericksburg on his department; he was defeated on his department; and he took his department with him out of the Army of the Potomac, thank God!" Resuming the reading of Lincoln's letter, Hooker's tone immediately softened, and he finished it almost with tears in his eyes; and as he folded it, and put it back in the breast of his coat, he said, "That is just such a letter as a father might write to his son. It is a beautiful letter, and, although I think he was harder on me than I deserved, I will say that I love the man who wrote it." Then he added, "After I have got to Richmond, I shall give that letter to you to have published." Poor Hooker, he never got to Richmond; but the letter did eventually find its way into print, and, as an epistle from the commander-in-chief of the army and navy of one of the greatest nations of the world, addressed to the newly appointed general of the magnificent army intended and expected to capture the capital of the Confederacy and to crush the rebellion, it has since become one of the famous documents of the time.

A peep into the Confederate lines while we were with the army was highly entertaining. "Tad" having expressed a consuming desire to see how the "graybacks" looked, we were allowed, under the escort of one of General Hooker's aides and an orderly, to go down to the picket-lines opposite Fredericksburg and to take a look at them. On our side of the river the country had been pretty well swept by shot and by the axmen, and the general appearance of things was desolate in the extreme. The Phillips House, which was Burnside's headquarters during the battle of Fredericksburg, had been burned down, and the ruins of that elegant mansion, built in the olden time, added to the sorrowful appearance of the region desolated by war. Here and there stood the bare chimneys of houses destroyed, and across the river the smoke from the camps of the enemy rose from behind a ridge, and a flag of stars and bars floated over a handsome residence on the heights, just above the stone wall where our men were slain by thousands during the dreadful fight of December, 1862. The town of Fredericksburg could be thoroughly examined through a field-glass, and almost no building in sight from where we stood was without battle-scars. The walls of the houses were rent with shot and shell, and loose sheets of tin were fluttering from the steeple of a church that had been in

the line of fire. A tall chimney stood solitary by the river's brink, and on its bare and exposed hearthstone two rebel pickets were warming themselves, for the air was frosty. One of them wore with a jaunty swagger a light-blue United States army overcoat. Noting our appearance, these cheerful sentinels bawled to us that our forces had been "licked" in the recent attack on Fort Sumter; and a rebel officer, hearing the shouting, came down to the river-bank, and closely examined our party through a field-glass. On the night before our arrival, when Hooker had vainly looked for us, a rebel sentry on the south side of the Rappahannock had asked if "Abe and his wife" had come yet, showing that they knew pretty well what was going on inside the Union lines. The officer inspecting our party, apparently having failed to detect the tall form of President Lincoln, took off his hat, made a sweeping bow, and retired. Friendly exchanges of tobacco, newspapers, and other trifles went on between the lines, and it was difficult to imagine, so peaceful was the scene, that only a few weeks had passed since this was the outer edge of one of the bloodiest battle-fields of the war.

One of the budgets that came through the lines while we were at Hooker's headquarters inclosed a photograph of a rebel officer addressed to General Averill, who had been a classmate of the sender. On the back of the picture was the autograph of the officer, with the addendum, "A rebellious rebel." Mrs. Lincoln, with a strict construction of words and phrases in her mind, said that the inscription ought to be taken as indicating that the officer was a rebel against the rebel government. Mr. Lincoln smiled at this feminine way of putting the case, and said that the determined gentleman who had sent his picture to Averill wanted everybody to know that he was not only a rebel, but a rebel of rebels—"a double-dyed-in-the-wool sort of rebel," he added.

One day while we were driving around some of the encampments, we suddenly came upon a disorderly and queer-looking settlement of shanties and little tents scattered over a hillside. As the ambulance drove by the base of the hill, as if by magic the entire population of blacks and yellows swarmed out. It was a camp of colored refugees, and a motley throng were the various sizes and shades of color that set up a shrill "Hurrah for Massa Linkum!" as we swept by. Mrs. Lincoln, with a friendly glance at the children, who were almost innumerable, asked the President how many of "those piccaninies" he supposed were named Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln said, "Let's see; this is April, 1863. I should say that of all those babies under two years of age, perhaps two thirds have been named for me."

## AFTER HOOKER'S DEFEAT.

THE President returned to Washington not only invigorated and refreshed by his short outing, but somewhat cheered and comforted by the general appearance of the army and the indications that the coming battle, when it should be fought, would result fortunately for the cause of the Union. The world now knows how great was the disappointment that fell upon him and upon the nation when the battle was actually fought and lost at Chancellorsville, a few weeks later.

I was at the White House on Wednesday afternoon, May 6, and the President, who seemed anxious and harassed beyond any power of description, said that while still without any positive information as to the result of the fighting at Chancellorsville, he was certain in his own mind that "Hooker had been licked." He was only then wondering whether Hooker would be able to recover himself and renew the fight. The President asked me to go into the room then occupied by his friend Dr. Henry, who was a guest in the house, saying possibly we might get some news later on.

In an hour or so, while the doctor and I sat talking, say about three o'clock in the afternoon, the door opened, and Lincoln came into the room. I shall never forget that picture of despair. He held a telegram in his hand, and as he closed the door and came toward us I mechanically noticed that his face, usually sallow, was ashen in hue. The paper on the wall behind him was of the tint known as "French gray," and even in that moment of sorrow and dread expectation I vaguely took in the thought that the complexion of the anguished President's visage was almost exactly like that of the wall. He gave me the telegram, and in a voice trembling with emotion, said, "Read it—news from the army." The despatch was from General Butterfield, Hooker's chief of staff, addressed to the War Department, and was to the effect that the army had been withdrawn from the south side of the Rappahannock, and was then "safely encamped" in its former position. The appearance of the President, as I read these fateful words with trembling voice, was piteous. Never, as long as I knew him, did he seem to be so broken, so dispirited, and so ghostlike. Clasp his hands behind his back, he walked up and down the room, saying, "My God! My God! What will the country say! What will the country say!"

He seemed incapable of uttering any other words than these, and after a little time he hurriedly left the room. Dr. Henry, whose affection for Lincoln was deep and tender, burst into a passion of tears. I consoled him as best I could, and while we were talking together,

and trying to find a gleam of sunshine in this frightful darkness, I saw a carriage drive up to the entrance of the White House, and, looking out, beheld the tall form of the President dart into the vehicle, in which sat General Halleck, and drive off in the midst of a pouring rain. Immediately after, an attendant came to tell us that the President and General Halleck had gone to the Army of the Potomac, and that Mr. Lincoln would return next day, and would like to see me in the evening.

The wildest rumors were at once set on foot; but it was known that the President and General Halleck had gone to the front, taking a special steamer at the navy-yard at four o'clock that afternoon. It was commonly believed that Hooker was or would be put under arrest; that Halleck would be placed in command of the Army of the Potomac; that Stanton had resigned; that Lee had cut Hooker to pieces, and was approaching Washington by the way of Dumfries; that McClellan was coming on a special train from New York, and that Sigel, Butler, Frémont, and several others shelved generals had been sent for in hot haste. The crowd at Willard's Hotel that night was so great that it was difficult to get inside the doors. The friends of McClellan, and the Copperheads generally, sprung at once into new life and animation, and were dotted through the gloomy crowds with smiling faces and unsuppressed joy.

Of course these fantastic stories speedily passed away like mists before the sun. Hooker was not removed, and although he never again commanded the Army of the Potomac in any great battle, his withdrawal from his high post was accomplished later on without any such disgrace as would have attended his dismissal at that time. When he was finally relieved of the command of the Army of the Potomac, a few days before the battle of Gettysburg, and while Lee was on his march to invade Pennsylvania, Hooker went to Baltimore to wait for orders, very much as McClellan had gone to Trenton to wait when he had relinquished his baton of command. No orders went to Hooker, and, becoming impatient, he came to Washington to ask for orders. He sent his card to my rooms, and I called on him at his headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue, opposite Willard's Hotel. He did not in the least exhibit that chastened spirit which I expected to see in him, but evidently regarded himself a greatly abused man. He could not speak in moderation of any one of his generals; and as for Halleck and Stanton, no words at his command could express his hatred and contempt for these, whom he regarded as the authors of all his misfortunes. He asked me what the President had said about

him. I hesitated, but when he pressed for a reply, said that Lincoln had told me that he regarded Hooker very much as a father might regard a son who was lame, or who had some other incurable physical infirmity. His love for the son would be even intensified by the reflection that the lad could never be a strong and successful man. The tears stood in Hooker's eyes as he heard this curious characterization of himself; but immediately rallying, he said, "Well, the President may regard me as a cripple; but if he will give me a chance, I will yet show him that I know how to fight." The next day Hooker was arrested on an order from the War Department for having visited Washington without leave, contrary to existing rules and regulations. This certainly was a most ungracious and needless bit of oppression; for it would have been very easy to have warned Hooker that he was liable to arrest, and to have given him an opportunity to get away from Washington without discredit.

I never saw Hooker again until long after the war, when he was living at the Brevoort House, New York, where I was then in the habit of dining. His mind had become somewhat shaken by much sickness and the long and painful strain of years of strenuous service. Apparently he never saw me without a quickening of his memory of Chancellorsville, the President, and what came after. In loud tones, which astonished the quiet diners at the Brevoort, he would at once discourse of his misfortunes and wrongs, and speak of certain public men, civil and military, in the most violent and abusive terms. After a while, so habitual was this lecture, which poor Hooker seemed to address to the company in general, that I was obliged to take a table in a corner of the dining-room as far as possible from him. He has long since passed off the stage of action, but no one who knew him in his prime can fail to recall him to mind as one of the most picturesque personalities of the war; one of the brightest figures in that long and fast-fading panorama that reached from the firing on Fort Sumter to the burial of Lincoln at Springfield.

#### EXCLUSIVE INFORMATION.

IN spite of a rigorous censorship of the wires, military matters did sometimes get out of Washington in the most inexplicable manner, eluding the stern authority in the telegraph office. When it was decided to reinforce Rosecrans, in 1863, with the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps of the Army of the Potomac, an officer of the War Department went to every newspaper correspondent in the city, and requested them all, at the special desire of the President and the Secretary of War, not to make any mention of the

proposed movement. The correspondents all agreed to this, and telegraphed or wrote to their newspapers not to refer to the matter, should it come to their knowledge in any way. But one night (September 26) everybody was astonished by news from New York that the "Evening Post," an unconditional supporter of the Administration, had published full particulars of the reinforcement of Rosecrans by the Eleventh and Twelfth Army Corps under Hooker. The Washington Sunday morning papers copied the intelligence, and a Philadelphia paper, saying that the news was "contraband," suggested that the editors of the New York "Evening Post" should breakfast in Fort Lafayette. It is a curious illustration of the muddled condition of things at that time, that the Monday morning papers in Washington discreetly held their peace, and printed not a word of news or comment concerning the whole affair. The "Evening Post" explained its position by saying that its Washington correspondent was not responsible for the "rumors" which had appeared in its Saturday edition, and that the paper had been imposed upon by others. When this comical imbroglia began, the Washington correspondents were in despair. Stanton raged like a lion, and Lincoln, I am bound to say, was exceedingly angry.

The "Evening Post," in its zeal to secure the earliest information, more than once got itself or its correspondents into trouble. When it was known that the President had written a letter to the Republican mass meeting to be held in Springfield, Illinois, September 3, 1863, there was a great stir among the newspaper men in Washington, every correspondent being anxious to get an advance copy of so important a document. The Peace Democrats of Illinois, and indeed throughout the West, were then in a state of furious and threatening wrath. Senator Richardson of Illinois had addressed a meeting at Springfield that summer in a most hysterical and blood-curdling manner, and the meeting adopted resolutions denouncing "misrule and anarchy," and declaring in favor of "peace upon the basis of restoration of the Union." That the President of the United States should consent to write a letter to a convocation gotten up in his own State by way of a counterblast to this traitorous demonstration, was enough to stimulate to the highest pitch the desire of every journalist to secure an early copy of the document. But to all importunities the President and his secretaries were deaf; and the paper, which was dated August 26, 1863, was sent out of the White House, it was said, by a private messenger. Nevertheless, several days before the meeting of the Springfield assemblage, the letter appeared in full in the New York "Evening Post," and to our

great amusement was telegraphed back to Washington, and printed in that city before it could be publicly read in Springfield. This was the famous letter which has since become a political classic, in which occurred the unique phrase, "Uncle Sam's web-feet," and in which the good President said, "The signs look better," "the Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea," etc. So far as I know, the method by which the "Evening Post" got possession of a copy of that letter has never been made public. It was not an offense against military law, of course, to print it, as it was a political and not a military piece of information, but I remember that Lincoln said he was "mad enough to cry." He had refused a copy of his letter to the Washington agent of the Associated Press, explaining that although solemn promises not to publish had repeatedly been given, he found that the practice of furnishing advance copies of anything to the newspapers was a source of endless mischief. He was sorry to say that he could not always depend upon even the most impressive promises of those who besieged him for "early and exclusive" information.

#### AN INTERRUPTED SÉANCE.

THE most terrifying threat that could be held over a zealous war correspondent was that of arrest and confinement in the old Capitol prison. Every person who spent much time in Washington during the war will recall with mingled amusement and dread the freedom with which this threat was bandied about among people who were not always by any means authorized to promote the rapid transit of anybody to that malodorous Bastille. Let me give an instance in which, though one of the unauthorized, I made use of this fear-compelling threat. A seamstress employed in the White House had induced Mrs. Lincoln to listen to the artful tales of a so-called spiritual medium who masqueraded under the name of Colchester, and who pretended to be the illegitimate son of an English duke. The poor lady at that time was well-nigh distraught with grief at the death of her son Willie. By playing on her motherly sorrows, Colchester actually succeeded in inducing Mrs. Lincoln to receive him in the family residence at the Soldiers' Home, where, in a darkened room, he pretended to produce messages from the lost boy by means of scratches on the wainscoting and taps on the walls and furniture. Mrs. Lincoln told me of these so-called manifestations, and asked me to be present in the White House when Colchester would give an exhibition of his powers. I declined; but meanwhile I received an invitation to invest one dollar and attend "a Colchester sitting" at the house of

a Washington gentleman who was a profound believer in this pretentious seer. To gratify my curiosity, I paid the entrance fee, and, accompanied by a trusty friend, went to the séance. After the company had been seated around the table in the usual approved manner, and the lights were turned out, the silence was disturbed by the thumping of a drum, the twanging of a banjo, and the ringing of bells, all of which instruments had been laid on the table, ready for use. By some hocus-pocus, it was evident, the operator had freed his hands from the hands of those who sat on each side of him, and was himself making "music in the air." Loosening my hands from my neighbors', who were unbelievers, I rose, and, grasping in the direction of the drum-beat, grabbed a very solid and fleshy hand in which was held a bell that was being thumped on a drum-head. I shouted, "Strike a light!" My friend, after what appeared to be an unconscionable length of time, lighted a match; but meanwhile somebody had dealt me a severe blow with the drum, the edge of which cut a slight wound on my forehead. When the gas was finally lighted, the singular spectacle was presented of "the son of the duke" firmly grasped by a man whose forehead was covered with blood, while the arrested scion of nobility was glowering at the drum and bells which he still held in his hands. The meeting broke up in the most admired disorder, "Lord Colchester" slipping out of the room in the confusion. His host subsequently brought down word from the discomfited seer to the effect that Colchester was "so outraged by this insult" that he refused to reappear!

A day or two after this, I was astonished by a note from Mrs. Lincoln requesting me to come to the White House without a moment's delay, on a matter of the most distressing importance. On my arrival, the lady, somewhat discomposed, showed me a note from "Colchester," in which he requested that she should procure for him from the War Department a pass to New York, and intimated that in case she refused he might have some unpleasant things to say to her. We made an arrangement by which Colchester came to the White House at a specified hour the next day, and after I had been formally introduced to the charlatan, Mrs. Lincoln withdrew from the room. Going up to Colchester, I lifted the hair from the scar on my forehead, yet unhealed, and said, "Do you recognize this?" The man muttered something about his having been insulted, and then I said: "You know that I know you are a swindler and a humbug. Get out of this house and out of this city at once. If you are in Washington to-morrow afternoon at this time, you will be in the old Capitol prison." The little scamp pulled him-

self together, and sneaked out of the house, and, so far as I know, out of Washington. I never saw or heard of him afterward.

#### SOCIAL INCIDENTS.

THE White House did not witness many brilliant festivities during the war, after that famous party which was given by the President and Mrs. Lincoln early in the first year of the Lincoln administration. But Mrs. Lincoln's afternoon receptions and the President's public levees were held regularly during the winters. Nothing could be more democratic than these gatherings of the people at the White House. They were usually held twice a week during the winter, those on Tuesday evenings being so-called dress receptions, and the Saturday levees being less formal in character. A majority of the visitors went in full dress: the ladies in laces, feathers, silks, and satins, without bonnets; and the gentlemen in evening dress. But sprinkled through the gaily attired crowds were hundreds of officers and private soldiers, the light-blue army overcoat of the period being a conspicuous feature of the moving panorama. Here and there a day-laborer, looking as though he had just left his work-bench, or a hard-working clerk with ink-stained linen, added to the popular character of the assembly. Usually the President stood in the famous Blue Room, or at the head of the East Room; and those who wished to shake hands made their entrance, one by one, and were introduced by the functionary detailed for that occasion. So vast were the crowds, and so affectionate their greetings, that Mr. Lincoln's right hand was often swollen so that he would be unable to use it readily for hours afterward; and the white kid glove of his right hand, when the operation of handshaking was over, always looked as if it had been dragged through a dust-bin. Much of the time, I think, the President never heard with his inner ear the names of persons presented to him by Secretary Nicolay, Commissioner French, or United States Marshal Lamon. His thoughts were apt to be far from the crowds of strangers that passed before him. On one occasion, bringing up a friend, I greeted the President as usual, and presented my friend. The President shook hands with me in a perfunctory way, his eyes fixed on space, and I passed on, knowing that he had never seen me or heard the name of my friend; but after I had reached a point seven or eight persons beyond, the President suddenly seemed to see me, and, continuing the handshaking of strangers while he spoke, shouted out: "Oh, Brooks! Charley Maltby is in town, and I want you to come and see me to-morrow." Maltby, it may be said, was an old friend of

Mr. Lincoln's then living in California, and about whose petition for a federal appointment the President wished to talk with me. Lincoln's sudden outburst, naturally enough, astonished the people who heard it.

While the President and his party were with the Army of the Potomac at the time previously referred to, pleasant collations were occasionally served at the headquarters of the various corps commanders whose troops were being reviewed. At a luncheon given by General Sickles at his headquarters, among the ladies present was the Princess Salm-Salm, whose husband was a staff-officer in the army. This lady attracted much admiration by her graceful and dashing riding in the cavalcade that attended the reviews. Before her marriage she was a Miss Leclerc of Philadelphia. It was this remarkable woman who astonished the President, on his entering General Sickles's headquarters, by flying at him, and imprinting a bouncing kiss on his surprised and not altogether attractive face. As soon as he could pull himself together and recover from his astonishment, the President thanked the lady, but with evident discomposure; whereupon some of the party made haste to explain that the Princess Salm-Salm had laid a wager with one of the officers that she would kiss the President. Her audacious sally won her a box of gloves.

During the war the proportion of civilians to those who wore the trappings of the army and navy was so small that men felt it almost a distinction to wear the ordinary evening dress. An order from the War Department forbidding military officers to come to Washington without leave did not by any means abate what was felt to be a great nuisance. Too many officers haunted the lobbies of the Capitol in search of political aid to secure them the promotions that they desired, or the passage of bills in which military or naval officers had special interest. I saw a curious example of military absenteeism one night at Ford's Theater, where I had accompanied the President to see Edwin Booth in "The Merchant of Venice." The President had sent word late in the afternoon that he would like to have a box for himself and a friend; but when we arrived at the theater, going in by the stage entrance, we were met by the manager, who said that the boxes had all been taken before the President's message had been received, but he would use his efforts with a party of officers, as soon as they arrived, to induce them to give up the box which they had engaged. While he was speaking, an usher came behind the scenes, and said that the officers had very willingly relinquished their box for the pleasure of the President. Between the acts the manager came to pay his respects to the President, and to inquire for his

comfort, and Lincoln asked for the names of the military gentlemen who had so kindly given up their evening's entertainment in his behalf. The manager replied that he did not know, but afterward quietly told me that he knew that one half of the number were officers absent from the army without leave, and that they considered it a good joke that they could escape the President's observation at the cost of relinquishing their box at the theater. The manager shrewdly guessed that the President had asked for their names in order to discover if they were in Washington on leave; but that was not Lincoln's way.

President Lincoln's theater-going was usually confined to occasions when Shakspeare's plays were enacted; for, although he enjoyed a hearty laugh, he was better pleased with the stately dignity, deep philosophy, and exalted poetry of Shakspeare than with anything that was to be found in more modern dramatic writings. But I remember a delightful evening that we once spent at the old Washington Theater, where we saw Mrs. John Wood in John Brougham's travesty of "Pocahontas." The delicious absurdity and crackling puns of the piece gave the President food for mirth for many days thereafter. At another time we saw Edwin Forrest in "King Lear," and the President appeared to be more impressed by the acting of John McCullough, in the role of *Edgar*, than with the great tragedian's appearance as the mad king. He asked that McCullough might come to the box between the acts; and when the young actor was brought to the door, clad in his fantastic garb of rags and straw, Mr. Lincoln warmly, and yet with diffidence, praised the performance of the scene in which he had just appeared.

It was Mr. Lincoln's delight to sally forth in the darkness, on foot, and accompanied only by a friend, to visit some theater to which notice of his coming had been sent only just before his setting out. When we consider that it was popularly believed that Washington at that time was infested with spies and midnight assassins, we may well wonder at his temerity. But perhaps it was the unexpectedness and lack of advertisement of his movements that may have induced him to undertake these little excursions. It was the wide publicity given to his intention to go to the play that wrought his own undoing in 1865. Those who are disposed to consider that Lincoln exhibited a frivolous side of his character by his play-going should reflect that the theater was almost the only place where he could escape from the clamor of office-seekers, and for a moment unfix his thoughts from the cares and anxieties that weighed upon his spirit with dreadful oppressiveness. Official etiquette for-



bids the President of the United States the social pleasures outside of his house which a less exalted functionary or a private citizen may enjoy. In Lincoln's case, more than in that of any other who has held the presidential office, there was abundant justification of his seeking for opportunities to escape from the stately prison-house of the official residence.

#### THE GETTYSBURG SPEECH AND OFFICE-SEEKING.

ONE November day — it chanced to be the Sunday before the dedication of the national cemetery at Gettysburg—I had an appointment to go with the President to Gardner, the photographer, on Seventh street, to fulfil a long-standing engagement. Mr. Lincoln carefully explained that he could not go on any other day without interfering with the public business and the photographer's business, to say nothing of his liability to be hindered by curiosity-seekers "and other seekers" on the way thither. Just as we were going down the stairs of the White House, the President suddenly remembered that he wanted a paper, and after hurrying back to his office, soon rejoined me with a long envelop in his hand. When we were fairly started, he said that the envelop held an advance copy of Edward Everett's address to be delivered at the Gettysburg dedication on the following Tuesday. Drawing it out, I saw that it was a one-page supplement to a Boston paper, and that Mr. Everett's address nearly covered both sides of the sheet. The President expressed his admiration for the thoughtfulness of the Boston orator, who had sent this copy of his address in order that Mr. Lincoln might not traverse the same lines that the chosen speaker of the great occasion might have laid out for himself. When I exclaimed at its length, the President laughed and quoted the line,

Solid men of Boston, make no long orations,

which he said he had met somewhere in a speech by Daniel Webster. He said that there was no danger that he should get upon the lines of Mr. Everett's oration, for what he had ready to say was very short, or, as he emphatically expressed it, "short, short, short." In reply to a question as to the speech having been already written, he said that it was written, "but not finished." He had brought the paper with him, he explained, hoping that a few minutes of leisure while waiting for the movements of the photographer and his processes would give him a chance to look over the speech. But we did not have to wait long between the sittings, and the President, having

taken out the envelop, and laid it on the little table at his elbow, became so engaged in talk that he failed to open it while we were at the studio. A disaster overtook the negative of that photograph, and after a very few prints had been made from it, no more were possible. In the copy which the President gave me, the envelop containing Mr. Everett's oration is seen on the table by the side of the sitter, recalling the incident and Lincoln's quotation of Boston's "long orations."

It was a curious illustration of the pertinacity with which the office-hunters pursued the President that even Sunday's sanctity was not respected by them. When we returned that day to the White House, one of these was waiting to intercept him at the entrance with a paper covered with indorsements. "Office-hunting was in the air," Lincoln said.

When a certain prominent comedian of the time was playing in Washington during Lincoln's administration, the President saw his representations with great delight, and was so pleased that he expressed himself in warm terms to the player through the medium of the manager. Thereupon the actor sent the President a book in which he inscribed some pleasant words by way of dedication to Lincoln, who acknowledged the gift in a kindly little note. Not long after this, going to the President's cabinet on a summons from him very late at night, I noticed this man waiting alone in the corridor outside the President's door. Lincoln asked me if any one was waiting without, and when I told him that I had seen the actor sitting there, he made a gesture of impatience and regret, and said that the little courtesies which had passed between them had resulted in the comedian applying to him for an office. I have forgotten what it was, but I think it was an English consulate which the old man wanted. Lincoln almost groaned as he said that it seemed impossible for him to have any new relations with people in Washington without finding that the acquaintance thus formed generally ended with an application for office.

#### LINCOLN'S MEMORY.

ONE of the most charming figures in semi-public life in Washington during the war was Miss Anna Dickinson, then in the first flush of her success as an eloquent speaker. Her first appearance in January, 1864, was a grand triumph for a young woman then beginning her long and picturesque career. She was invited by a host of distinguished men (at the head of the list being Vice-President Hamlin and Speaker Colfax) to address the people in the Hall of Representatives. The great room was crowded, and the house never looked gayer

than it did that evening, bright as it was with the velvets, flowers, and brilliant colors of a great company of society women. Miss Dickinson was accompanied to the platform by the Vice-President and the Speaker, and was introduced by Mr. Hamlin, who likened her to Joan of Arc. Dressed in black silk with a touch of color at her throat, her wavy black hair in short redundant curls, Anna Dickinson made a figure long to be remembered as she slowly paced to and fro on the platform, dropping her well-formed and compact sentences upon the group below. Lincoln was present, and incidentally the fair orator introduced a striking and encomiastic allusion to the chief magistrate, and the vast audience applauded with tremendous enthusiasm. In the following March, however, the lady changed her mind, as ladies may, and in a speech delivered at Grover's Theater "raked the Lincoln administration fore and aft." But later on she experienced a change of heart, and forsook Frémont, who was her idol for a time, and paid a very beautiful tribute to the new administration of Lincoln. Her last appearance in the House of Representatives was very soon after Lincoln's second inauguration. Those who were present on that 4th of March, 1865, may remember that just as the President took the oath of office, the sun, which had been obscured by clouds, burst forth, and its golden beams fell upon the distinguished group assembled on the Capitol steps. Lincoln next day asked me if I had noticed the sunburst, and then went on to say that he was just superstitious enough to consider it a happy omen. In the address above referred to, Miss Dickinson also referred to the breaking of the clouds, and in touching and inspiring words pictured the dispersion of the gloom that lowered over the country. The President sat directly in front of the platform from which Miss Dickinson spoke. Before she began, he had recognized me as I sat in the reporters' gallery over the platform; and when the speaker referred to the sunburst, he looked up at me and deliberately winked.

A notable meeting was held in the hall of the House of Representatives in January, 1865, when the United States Christian Commission held its anniversary exercises. Secretary Seward presided, and made a delightful address. As an example of Mr. Lincoln's wonderful power of memory, I noticed that a few days after that meeting in the Capitol he recalled an entire sentence of Mr. Seward's speech, and, so far as I could remember, without missing a word. This faculty was apparently exercised without the slightest effort on his part. He "could n't help remembering," he was accustomed to say. One would suppose that in the midst of the worries

and cares of office his mind would become less retentive of matters not immediately related to the duties of the hour. But this was not the fact. Although the memories of long past events, and words long since read or heard, appeared to be impossible of obliteration, more recently acquired impressions remained just as fixed as the older ones. One of my cousins, John Holmes Goodenow, of Alfred, Maine, was appointed minister to Turkey early in the Lincoln administration, and was taken to the White House, before his departure for his post, to be presented to the President. When Lincoln learned that his visitor was a grandson of John Holmes, one of the first senators from Maine, and a man of note in his day and generation, he immediately began the recitation of a poetical quotation which must have been more than a hundred lines in length. Mr. Holmes, never having met the President, was naturally astonished at this outburst; and as the President went on and on with this long recitation, the suspicion crossed his mind that Lincoln had suddenly taken leave of his wits. But when the lines had been finished the President said: "There! that poem was quoted by your grandfather Holmes in a speech which he made in the United States Senate in —" and he named the date and specified the occasion. As John Holmes's term in the Senate ended in 1833, and Lincoln probably was impressed by reading a copy of the speech rather than by hearing it, this feat of memory appears most remarkable. If he had been by any casualty deprived of his sight, his own memory could have supplied him with an ample library.

Mr. Lincoln's manner toward enlisted men, with whom he occasionally met and talked, was always delightful in its bonhomie and its absolute freedom from anything like condescension. Then, at least, the "common soldier," who was an American citizen, after all, was the equal of the chief magistrate of the nation. One day in the latter part of March, 1863, I was at the White House with the President, and he told me to tarry for a while, as a party of Ohio soldiers who had been lately exchanged after many harassing experiences were coming to see him. It appeared that these were the survivors of what was then known as the Marietta raid. Twenty-one men from Ohio regiments of the command of General O. M. Mitchel, then in northern Alabama, were sent on a dangerous mission to destroy the railroad communications of Chattanooga to the south and east. The expedition failed, and of the original number only six returned to Washington, after incredible hardships and suffering,—one third of the party having escaped, and another fraction having been hanged as spies, the rebel authorities deciding that the fact that these men

wore citizen's clothes within an enemy's lines put them in that category.

The men, who were introduced to the President by General E. A. Hitchcock, then on duty in Washington, were Mason, Parrott, Pittenger, Buffum, Reddick, and Bensinger. Their names were given to the President, and, without missing the identity of a single man, he shook hands all round with an unaffected cordiality and good-fellowship difficult to describe. He had heard their story in all its details, and as he talked with each, asking questions and making his shrewd comments on what they had to say, it was evident that for the moment this interesting interview was to him of supreme importance. At that time we had great difficulty in effecting exchanges of prisoners, and General Hitchcock had compiled a series of papers of startling importance bearing on the question. The stories of these long-suffering men, and the cheerful lightness with which they narrated their courageous and hazardous deeds, impressed Mr. Lincoln very deeply. Speaking of the men afterward, he said, with much feeling, that their bearing, and their apparent unconsciousness of having taken their lives in their hands, with the chances of death all against them, presented an example of the apparent disregard of the tremendous issues of life and death which was so strong a characteristic of the American soldier.

One of Lincoln's favorite poems was Holmes's "Last Leaf"; and one November day we were driving out to the Soldiers' Home, near Washington, when the aspect of the scene recalled the lines to his mind. He slowly and with excellent judgment recited the whole poem. Enlarging upon the pathos, wit, and humor of Holmes, I found that the President had never seen a copy of the genial doctor's works, so far as he could remember, although he was not certain that he had not. I offered to lend him my copy of the poems, a little blue-and-gold

book; and the next time I went to the White House I took it with me. About a week after leaving the book with the President, I called at the house one evening, and, finding him alone, we settled down for a quiet chat. He took from a drawer in his table the blue-and-gold Holmes, and went over the book with much gusto, reading or reciting several poems that had struck his fancy. He expressed his surprise at finding that some of the verses which he admired most had been drifting about in the newspapers without the name of the author attached to them; and it was in this way, he said, that he had found "The Last Leaf," although he did know that Dr. Holmes was the author. Finally he said that he liked "Lexington" as well as anything in the book, "The Last Leaf" alone excepted, and he began to read the poem; but when he came to the stanza beginning


Green be the graves where her martyrs are lying!  
Shroudless and tombless they sunk to their rest,—

his voice faltered, and he gave me the book with the whispered request, "You read it; I can't." Months afterward, when several ladies were in the Red Parlor one evening, calling upon Mrs. Lincoln, he recited that poem without missing a word, so far as I could remember it. And yet I do not believe that he ever saw the text of "Lexington" except during the few busy days when he had my book.

I have still in my possession the blue-and-gold Holmes, Ticknor & Fields edition, 1862, with the leaf folded lengthwise, as Lincoln folded it to mark the place where he found "Lexington." In a preface written in 1885 Dr. Holmes said that "good Abraham Lincoln had a liking for 'The Last Leaf,'" and that Governor Andrew had told the author that Lincoln repeated the poem to him.

*Noah Brooks.*

## THEIR COUSIN LETHY.

 T seemed to me, child as I was, rather pitiful that, as Mr. Pate grew harder of hearing, and older, people, although never meaning to be offensive or impolite, kept themselves as much apart from his society as was possible to respectful friendly relations. This was on account of his increased garrulousness, and his frequent complainings of the little attention paid to his words,

sometimes narrative, as often admonitory. A harmless egotist, honestly believing himself to be a very charitable and therefore a very useful gossip, his habit was, before his deafness came on, to find out, as a matter of simple neighborly duty, every possible thing about current neighborhood existence, and then, without ever dreaming of charging anything for it, to offer his counsel for its disposal or utilization. This counsel some might, others might not, accept.