

maxim, "magna civitas, magna solitudo; I should substitute *multitudo*." A man in a million, or in ten, or in two, is but a common, equal man; whereas a man, alone, is a very important person; is in his thoughts, lord of the past, and hope of the future; commands the spirits of earth, air and heaven with a calm majesty exclusively known to solitude. There is an unlucky consciousness of which I can never divest myself that there is a breathing being in the room, and this cramps the pen that it cannot scamper freely over my page, or carries away mine eye from the lines of my book, and I feel very strongly persuaded that the success wherewith I study Divinity depends essentially upon this circumstance.

Do the Naiads who protect my mineral spring in your woods, resign their charge to Jack Frost? I presume you hardly frequent their rustic temple at this season. If when you revisit the woods, you should, perchance, descry the sylvan spirit peeping over her urn, you must present my poetical devotions to the red water lady, and promise my re-

turn to the same. I have just seen my tall cousin from your halls who promises to take my letter. He carries likewise a new "Christian Disciple." I know two or three of the authors. After this number, it passes into other hands. Please to read the first article and I will tell you who the writer is. I learn that Dr. Bigelow reviews Nuttall in the *N. A. Review*, and Mr. Hale (Editor of the *D. Advertiser*) reviewed Morse's *Geography*. I am in haste and cannot wait to finish my page.

Respectfully your friend and classmate,
R. WALDO EMERSON.

He to whom these letters address their frank admiration, and their shy appeal for sympathy, lived most of his life in the obscurity of country parsonages. April 27, 1882, sixty years from the day the first letter was written, he who called himself "a desponding school-master," "weary of myself," lay dying—his pillow watched and wept and blest by reverent thousands.

Mary S. Withington.

WASHINGTON ON THE EVE OF THE WAR.

DURING the summer and autumn of 1860, I was in Washington, supervising the preparation of maps of the reconnaissances which had been made by the Scientific Commission under my orders during the years 1857-58-59; and at the same time preparing my report on the operations of the Commission. It was my desire to preface the report by a history of all previous surveys and explorations of the western coast of North America. I had access to the large and valuable library of the late General Peter Force, probably the most complete collection of rare works on American history that then existed. General Force was a sergeant of volunteers for the defense of the capital at the time of its invasion by the British in 1813. He had been from that time forward attached to the militia organization of the District of Columbia, and had passed through every grade from sergeant to major-general, thus arriving at the highest grade known in the corps in which he had been enrolled fifty years before. He showed me a copy of a bill which the Secretary of War had prepared, abolishing all existing laws regarding the District of Columbia militia and volunteers and providing for a new organization. He said that the bill would no doubt pass the two

houses of Congress, and that meantime all the old organizations had been abandoned excepting a few companies, and these were awaiting the advantages of the new law to reorganize on the new basis. He then requested me to aid him in organizing his new division. I willingly consented, and began to study the matter with reference to the distribution of the volunteer organizations between the two divisions, the arrangement of the rolls of the militiamen, etc. The country at this time (Dec. 1860) was in a curious and alarming condition: one State (South Carolina) had already passed an ordinance of secession from the Union and other States were preparing to follow her lead.

The only regular troops near the capital of the country were three hundred or four hundred marines at the marine barracks, and perhaps a hundred enlisted men of ordnance at the Washington arsenal. The old militia system had been abandoned (without being legally abolished), and Congress had passed no law establishing a new one. The only armed volunteer organizations in the District of Columbia were: One company of riflemen at Georgetown (the Potomac Light Infantry), one company of riflemen in Washington (the National Rifles), a skeleton battalion of in-

fantry (the Washington Light Infantry) of about one hundred and sixty men, and another small organization called the National Guard Battalion.

It was evident that, on its assembling in December, Congress would have far different work to consider than the organization of the District of Columbia militia; and also that it would not be the policy of the President, at the very outset of the session, in the delicate position of affairs, to propose the military organization of the federal district. It was also evident that, should he be so disposed, the Senators and Representatives of the Southern States would oppose and denounce the project.

What force, then, would the Government have at its disposal in the federal district for the simple maintenance of order in case of need? Evidently but a handful; and as to calling thither promptly any regular troops, that was out of the question, since they had already all been distributed by the Southern sympathizers to the distant frontiers of the Indian country,—Texas, Utah, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington Territory,—and winter was rapidly approaching. It must be remembered that in those days there were no railways reaching out into those distant regions, and months would have been necessary to concentrate at Washington, in that season, a force of three thousand regular troops. Even had President Buchanan been desirous of bringing troops to the capital, the feverish condition of the public mind would, as the executive believed, have been badly affected by any movement of the kind, and the approaching crisis might have been precipitated.

I saw at once that the only force which could be readily made of service was a volunteer force raised from among the well disposed men of the District, and that this must be organized, if at all, under the old law of 1799.

By careful consultation with gentlemen well acquainted with the various classes of Washington society, I canvassed the District to learn what proportion of the able-bodied population could be counted on to sustain the Government should it need support from armed and organized citizens.

All who knew Washington in the days of December, 1860, know what thoughts reigned in the minds of all thinking men. Whatever their daily occupations, they went about them with their thoughts always bent on the possible disasters of the near future: some wishing to see the Union destroyed, and laboring night and day to that end; others straining their minds to discover how it might be saved and the civil war, which seemed imminent, might be averted.

On the 31st of December, 1860, Lieutenant-General Scott, commander-in-chief of the army (who had his head-quarters in New York), was in Washington. The President, at last thoroughly alarmed at the results of continued concessions to secession, had called him for consultation on the situation.

On the evening of that day I went to pay my respects to my old commander, and was received by him at Wormley's hotel. I found the General alone at the dinner-table, just finishing his evening meal. He chatted pleasantly with me for a few minutes, recalling past service in the Mexican war, etc.; and when the occasion presented itself, I remarked that I was glad to see him in good spirits, for that proved to me that he took a more cheerful view of the state of public affairs than he had on his arrival—more cheerful than those who resided in Washington had dared to take during the past few days.

"Yes, my young friend," said the General, "I feel more cheerful about the affairs of the country than I did this morning; for I believe that a safer policy than has hitherto been followed will now be adopted. The policy of entire conciliation, which has so far been pursued, would soon have led to ruin. We are now in such a state that a policy of pure force would precipitate a crisis for which we are not prepared. A mixed policy of force and conciliation is now necessary, and I believe it will be adopted and carried out." He then looked at his watch, rose, and said: "I must be with the President in a quarter of an hour," and ordered his carriage. He walked up and down the dining-room, but suddenly stopped and faced me, saying: "How is the feeling in the District of Columbia? What proportion of the population would sustain the Government by force, if necessary?"

I replied:

"General, it is my belief that two-thirds of the fighting stock of this population would sustain the Government in defending itself, if called upon. But they are uncertain as to what can be done or what the Government desires to have done, and they have no rallying point."

The General walked the room again in silence. The carriage came to the door, and I accompanied him toward it. As he was leaving the room, he turned suddenly, looked me in the face, placed his hand on my shoulder, and said:

"These people have no rallying point. Make yourself that rallying point!"

The next day I was commissioned by the President colonel in the staff and Inspector-General of the District of Columbia. I was mustered into the service of the United States from the 2d day of January, 1861, on the

special requisition of the General-in-Chief, and thus became the first one of the million citizens called into the military service of the Government to defend it against secession.

I immediately entered upon my duties, commencing by inspections in detail of the existing organizations of volunteers. The Potomac Light Infantry company, of Georgetown, I found fairly drilled, well armed, and, from careful information, it seemed to me certain that the majority of its members could be depended upon in case of need, but not all of them.

On the 2d of January, I met, at the entrance of the Metropolitan Hotel, Captain Schaeffer, of the "National Rifles" of Washington, and I spoke to him about his company, which was remarkable for its accurate and rapid drill and full ranks. Schaeffer had been a lieutenant in the First Regiment of United States Artillery, and was an excellent drill-master.

He had evidently not yet heard of my appointment as Inspector-General, and he replied to my complimentary remarks on his company:

"Yes, it is a good company, and I suppose I shall soon have to lead it to the banks of the Susquehanna!"

"Why so?" I asked.

"Why! To guard the frontier of Maryland and help to keep the Yankees from coming down to coerce the South!"

I said to him quietly that I thought it very imprudent in him, an employé of the Department of the Interior and captain of a company of District of Columbia volunteers, to use such expressions. He replied that most of his men were Marylanders, and would have to defend Maryland. I told him that he would soon learn that he had been imprudent, and advised him to think more seriously of his position, but did not inform him of my appointment, which he would be certain to learn the following morning from the newspapers.

It must be admitted that this was not a very cheerful beginning.

On inspecting the "National Rifles," I found that Schaeffer had more than one hundred men on his rolls, and was almost daily adding to the number, and that he had a full supply of rifles with two hundred rounds of ball cartridges, two mountain howitzers with harness and carriages, a supply of sabers and of revolvers and ammunition, all drawn from the United States arsenal. I went to the Chief of Ordnance, to learn how it was that this company of riflemen happened to be so unusually armed; and I found at the Ordnance office that an order had been given by the late Secretary of War (Floyd) directing the Chief of

Ordnance to cause to be issued to Captain Schaeffer "all the ordnance and ordnance stores that he might require for his company!" I ascertained also that Floyd had nominated Captain Schaeffer to the President for the commission of Major in the District of Columbia militia, and that the commission had already been sent to the President for his signature.

I immediately presented the matter to the new Secretary of War (Holt), and procured from him two orders: One, an order to the Chief of Ordnance to issue no arms to any militia or volunteers in the District of Columbia unless the requisition should be countersigned by the Inspector-General; the other, an order that all commissions issued to officers of the District of Columbia should be sent to the Inspector-General for delivery.

An office was assigned me in the War Department, convenient to the army-registers and near the Secretary of War, who kindly gave orders that I should at all times be admitted to his cabinet without waiting, and room was made for me in the office of Major-General Weightman, the senior major-general of the District, where each day I passed several hours to confer with him, and to be able promptly to obtain his authority for any necessary order to the District forces.

The Washington Light Infantry organization and the National Guard were old volunteers composed of Washington people, and were almost to a man faithful to the Government. Of their officers, Major-General Weightman, though aged, and Major-General Force, aged and infirm, were active, and true as steel; Brigadier-Generals Bacon and Carrington were young, active, and true. Brigadier-General Ould, who took no part in the preparations of the winter, joined the Confederates as soon as Virginia passed her ordinance of secession, and his known sentiments precluded consultation with him.

Having thus studied the ground, and taken the first necessary steps toward security, I commenced the work of providing a force of volunteers. I addressed individual letters to some forty well-known and esteemed gentlemen of the District, informing each one that it would be agreeable to the Government should he in his neighborhood raise and organize a company of volunteers for the preservation of order in the District. To some of these letters I received no replies. To some I received replies courteously declining the service. To some I received letters sarcastically declining. But to many I received replies enthusiastically accepting the service and promising to raise companies of good men.

Each week thenceforth, until the middle of February, brought to my office the rolls of several new companies formed, so that in about six weeks thirty-three companies of infantry and riflemen and two troops of cavalry were on the lists of the District volunteer force; and all had been uniformed, equipped, and put under frequent drill.

The Northern Liberties fire companies brought their quota; the Lafayette Hose Company was prompt to enrol; the masons, the carpenters, the stone-cutters, and the painters, the German turners responded: each corporation formed its companies, and drilled industriously. Petty rivalries disappeared, and each company strove to excel the others in drill and discipline. While the newly organized companies thus strove to perfect themselves, the older organizations resumed their drills and filled their ranks with good recruits.

The National Rifles company (Captain Schaeffer's) was carefully observed, and it was found that its ranks received constant accessions, including the most openly declared secessionists and even members of Congress from the States proposing to secede. This company was very frequently drilled in its armory, and its recruits were drilled nearly every night.

Having, as Inspector-General, a secret service force at my disposition, I placed a detective in the company, and had regular reports of the proceedings of its captain. He was evidently pushing for an independent command of infantry, artillery and cavalry, having his rifles, cannon, sabers, and revolvers stored in his armory. He also began to prepare for action, ordering his men to take their rifles and equipments home with them, with a supply of ammunition, so that even should his armory be occupied, they could assemble on short notice, ready for action. Meantime, his commission as major was signed by the President and sent to me.

I reported these matters to General Scott, who ordered me to watch these proceedings carefully, and to be ready to suppress any attempt at violence; but to avoid, if possible, any shock, for, said he, "We are now in such a state that a dog-fight might cause the gutters of the capital to run with blood."

While the volunteer force for the support of the Government was organizing, another force with exactly the opposite purpose was in course of formation. I learned that the great hall over Beach's livery stable was nightly filled with men, who were actively drilled. Doctor B——, of well known secession tendencies, was the moving spirit of these men, and he was assisted by other citizens of

high standing, among whom was a connection of the Governor of Virginia. The numbers of these occupants of Beach's hall increased rapidly, and I found it well to have a skillful New York detective officer, who had been placed at my disposition, enrolled among them. These men called themselves "National Volunteers," and openly discussed, in their meetings, the seizure of the national capital at the proper moment. They drilled industriously, and had regular business meetings, full reports of which were regularly laid before me every following morning by "the New York member." In the meeting at which the uniform to be adopted was discussed, the vote was for gray Kentucky jeans, with the Maryland button. A cautious member suggested that they must remember that, in order to procure arms, it would be "necessary to get the requisition signed by 'Old Stone,' and if he saw that they had adopted the Maryland button, and not that of the United States, he might suspect them and refuse the issue of arms!" Doctor B—— supported the idea of the Maryland button, and said that, if Stone refused the arms, his connection, the Governor of Virginia, would see them furnished, etc. These gentlemen probably little thought that a full report of their remarks would be read the next morning by "Old Stone" to the General-in-Chief.

The procuring of arms was a difficult matter for them, for it required the election of officers, the regular enrolling of the men, the certificate of elections, and the muster-rolls, all to be reported to the Inspector-General. The matter was long discussed by them, and it was finally arranged that, out of the three hundred and sixty men in their midst, a pretended company should be organized, officers elected, and the demand for arms made. This project was carried out, and *my* member brought to me early the next morning the report of the proceedings, informing me that Doctor B—— had been elected captain, and would call on the Inspector-General for arms. Sure enough, Doctor B—— presented himself in my office and informed me that he had raised a company of volunteers, and desired an order for arms. He produced a certificate of election in due form. I received him courteously, and informed him that I could not give an order for arms without having a muster-roll of his men, proving that a full one hundred had signed the rolls. It was, of course, very desirable to have the names of men holding their known sentiments and nursing such projects as were known to be theirs.

He returned, I think, on the following day,

with a muster-roll in due form, containing the names of one hundred men. This was all that I wanted. I looked him full in the face, smiled, and locked the muster-roll in a drawer of my desk, saying:

"Doctor B——, I am very happy to have obtained this list, and I wish you good morning."

The gallant doctor evidently understood me. He smiled, bowed, and left the office, to which he never returned. He subsequently proved the sincerity of his principles by abandoning his pleasant home in Washington, his large and valuable property, and giving his earnest service to the Confederate cause. The "National Volunteer" organization broke up without further trouble.

Next came the turn of Captain Schaeffer. He entered my office one day with the air of an injured man, holding in his hand a requisition for arms and ammunition, and saying, that, on presenting it at the Ordnance office, he had been informed that no arms could be issued to him without my approval. I informed him that that was certainly so, and that the order of the Secretary of War was general. I told him that he had already in his possession more rifles than were required for a company and that he could have no more. He then said, sulkily, that he could easily, with his company, *take* the arms he wanted.

I asked him, Where? and he replied:

"You have only four soldiers guarding the Columbian armory, where there are plenty of arms, and those four men could not prevent my taking them."

"Ah!" I replied, "In what part of the armory are those arms kept?" He said they were on the upper floor, which was true.

"Well," said I, "you seem to be well informed. If you think it best, just try taking the arms by force. I assure you that if you do you shall be fired on by one hundred and fifty soldiers as you come out of the armory."

The fact was, that only two enlisted men of ordnance were on duty at the Columbian armory, so feeble was the military force at the time. But Barry's battery had just arrived at the Washington arsenal, and on my application General Scott had ordered the company of sappers and miners at West Point to come to Washington to guard the Columbian armory; but they had not yet arrived. The precautions taken in ordering them were thus clearly proved advisable.

The time had evidently come to disarm Captain Schaeffer; and when he reached his office after leaving mine, he found there an order directing him to deposit in the Columbian armory, before sunset on that day, the

two howitzers with their carriages which he had in his possession, as well as the sabers and revolvers, as these weapons formed no part of the proper armament of a company of riflemen. He was taken by surprise, and had not time to call together men enough to resist; so that nothing was left to him but to comply with the order. He obeyed it, well knowing that if he did not I was prepared to take the guns from his armory by means of other troops.

Having obeyed, he presented himself again in my office, and before he had time to speak I informed him that I had a commission of major for his name. He was much pleased, and said: "Yes, I heard that I had been appointed." I then handed him a slip of paper on which I had written out the form of oath which the old law required to be taken by officers, that law never having been repealed, and said to him:

"Here is the form of oath you are to take. You will find a justice of the peace on the next floor. Please qualify, sign the form in duplicate, and bring both to me. One will be filed with your letter of acceptance, the other will be filed in the clerk's office of the Circuit Court of the District."

He took the paper with a sober look, and stood near my table several minutes looking at the form of oath and turning the paper in his hand, while I, apparently very busy with my papers, was observing him closely. I then said:

"Ah, Schaeffer, have you already taken the oath?"

"No," said he.

"Well, please be quick about it, as I have no time to spare."

He hesitated, and said slowly:

"In ordinary times I would not mind taking it, but in these times ——"

"Ah!" said I, "you decline to accept your commission of major. Very well!" and I returned his commission to the drawer and locked it in.

"Oh, no," said Schaeffer, "I want the commission."

"But, sir, you cannot have it. Do you suppose that, in these times, which are not, as you say, 'ordinary times,' I would think of delivering a commission of field-officer to a man who hesitates about taking the oath of office? Do you think that the Government of the United States is stupid enough to allow a man to march armed men about the federal district under its authority, when that man hesitates to take the simple oath of office? No, sir, you cannot have this commission; and more than that, I now inform you that you hold no office in the District of Columbia volunteers."

"Yes, I do; I am captain, and have my commission as such, signed by the President and delivered to me by the Major-General."

"I am aware that such a paper was delivered to you, but you failed legally to accept it."

"I wrote a letter of acceptance to the Adjutant-General, and forwarded it through the Major-General."

"Yes, I am aware that you did; but I know also that you failed to inclose in that letter, according to law, the form of oath required to accompany all letters of acceptance, and on the register of the War Department, while the issuance of your commission is recorded, the acceptance is not recorded. You have never legally accepted your commission, and it is now too late. The oath of a man who hesitates to take it will not now be accepted."

So Captain Schaeffer left the "National Rifles," and with him left the secession members of the company. I induced quite a number of true men to join its ranks; a new election was ordered, and a strong, loyal man (Lieutenant Smead of the U. S. artillery) was elected its captain. Smead was then on duty in the office of the Coast Survey, and I easily procured from the War Department permission for him to accept the position.

If my information was correct, the plan had been formed for seizing the public departments at the proper moment and obtaining possession of the seals of the Government. Schaeffer's part, with the battalion he was to form, was to take possession of the Treasury Department for the benefit of the new provisional government. Whatever may have been the project, it was effectually foiled. With the breaking up of the "National Volunteers"; with the transformation of the secession company of "National Rifles" into a thoroughly faithful and admirably drilled company ready for the service of the Government; with the arrival from West Point of the company of sappers and miners, and, later, the arrival of the Military Academy battery under Griffin; and with the formation in the district of thirty new companies of infantry and riflemen from among the good citizens of Washington and Georgetown the face of things in the national capital had much changed before the fourth of March, 1861.

I must now go back a little in time, to mention one fact which will show in how weak and dangerous a condition our Government was in the latter part of January and the early part of February, 1861. The invitations which I had issued for the raising of companies of volunteers had, as already stated, been enthusiastically responded to, and companies were rapidly organized. The pre-

paratory drills were carried on every night, and I soon found that the men were sufficiently advanced to receive their arms. I began to approve the requisitions for arms; but to my great astonishment, the captains who first received the orders came back to me, stating that the Ordnance Department refused to issue any arms! On referring to the Ordnance office, I was informed by the Chief of Ordnance that he had received, the day before, an order not to issue any arms to the District of Columbia troops, and that this order had come from the President!

I went immediately to the Secretary of War (Mr. Holt) and informed him of the state of affairs, telling him at the same time that I did not feel disposed to be employed in child's play, organizing troops which could not be armed, and that unless the order in question should be immediately revoked there was no use for me in my place and that I must at once resign. Mr. Holt told me that I was perfectly right; that unless the order should be revoked there was no use in my holding my place, and he added, with a smile, "and I will also say, Colonel, there will be no use in my holding my place any longer. Go to the President, Colonel, and talk to him as you have talked to me."

I went to the White House, and was received by Mr. Buchanan. I found him sitting at his writing-table, in his dressing-gown, looking wearied and worried.

I opened at once the subject of arms, and stated the necessity of immediate issue, as the refusal of arms would not only stop the instruction of the volunteers, which they needed sadly, but would make them lose all confidence in the Government and break up the organizations. I closed by saying that, while I begged his pardon for saying it, in case he declined to revoke his order I must ask him to accept my resignation at once.

Mr. Buchanan was evidently in distress of mind, and said:

"Colonel, I gave that order acting on the advice of the District Attorney, Mr. Robert Ould."

I replied:

"Then, Mr. President, the District Attorney has advised your Excellency very badly."

"But, Colonel, the District Attorney is an old resident of Washington, and he knows all the little jealousies which exist here. He tells me that you have organized a company from the Northern Liberties fire company."

"Not only one, but two excellent companies in the Northern Liberties, your Excellency."

"And then, the District Attorney tells me

you have organized another company from among the members of the Lafayette Hose Company."

"Yes, your Excellency, another excellent company."

"And the District Attorney tells me, Colonel, that there is a strong feeling of enmity between those fire companies and, if arms are put in their hands, there will be danger of bloodshed in the city."

"Will your Excellency excuse me if I say that the District Attorney talks nonsense or worse to you? If the Northern Liberties and the Lafayette Hose men wish to fight, can they not procure hundreds of arms in the shops along the avenue? Be assured, Mr. President, that the people of this District are thinking now of other things than old ward feuds. They are thinking whether or not the Government of the United States is to allow itself to crumble out of existence by its own weakness. And I believe that the District Attorney knows that as well as I do. If the companies of volunteers are not armed, they will disband, and the Government will have nothing to protect it in case of even a little disturbance. Is it not better for the public peace, your Excellency, even if the bloody feud exists (which I believe is forgotten in a greater question),—is it not better to have these men organized and under the discipline of the Government?"

The President hesitated a moment, and then said:

"I don't know that you are not right, Colonel; but you must take the responsibility on you that no bloodshed results from arming these men."

I willingly accepted this responsibility. The prohibitory order was revoked. My companies received their arms. They made good use of them learning the manual of arms in a surprisingly short time. Later, they made good use of them in sustaining the Government which had furnished them against the faction which soon became the public enemy, including Mr. Robert Ould, who, following his convictions, no doubt as honestly as I was following mine, gave his earnest services to his State against the federal Government.

I think that the country has never properly appreciated the services of those District of Columbia volunteers. It certainly has not appreciated the difficulties surmounted in their organization. Those volunteers were citizens of the federal District, and therefore had not at the time, nor have they ever since had, the powerful stimulant of a State feeling, nor the powerful support of a State government, a State's pride, a State press to set forth

and make much of their services. They did their duty quietly, and they did it well and faithfully. Although not mustered into the service and placed on pay until after the fatal day when the flag was fired upon, for the first time, at Sumter, yet they rendered great service before that time in giving confidence to those citizens of the District who were faithful to the Government, in giving confidence to members of the national legislature, and in giving confidence also to the President in the knowledge that there was at least a small force at its disposition ready to respond at any moment to his call. It should also be remembered of them, that the first troops mustered into the service were sixteen companies of these volunteers; and that, during the dark days when Washington was cut off from communication with the North, when railway bridges were burned and tracks torn up, when the Potomac was blockaded, these troops were the only reliance of the Government for guarding the public departments, for preserving order and for holding the bridges and other outposts; that these were the troops which recovered possession of the railway from Washington to Annapolis Junction and made practicable the re-opening of communications. They also formed the advance guard of the force which first crossed the Potomac into Virginia, and captured the city of Alexandria.

These were the troops which insured the regular inauguration on the steps of the capitol of the constitutionally elected President. I firmly believe that without them Mr. Lincoln would never have been inaugurated. I believe that tumults would have been created, during which he would have been killed, and that we should have found ourselves engaged in a struggle, without preparation, and without a recognized head at the capital. In this I may be mistaken, of course, as any other man may be mistaken; but it was then my opinion, when I had many sources of information at my command, and it remains my opinion now, when, after the lapse of twenty years and a somewhat large experience, I look back in cool blood upon those days of political madness.

One day, after the official declaration of the election of Mr. Lincoln, my duties called me to the House of Representatives; and while standing in the lobby waiting for the member with whom I had business, I conversed with a distinguished officer from New York. We were leaning against the sill of a window which overlooked the steps of the capitol, where the President-elect usually stands to take the oath of office. The gentleman grew excited as we discussed the elec-

tion of Mr. Lincoln, and pointing to the portico he exclaimed :

"He shall never be inaugurated on those steps!"

"Mr. Lincoln," I replied, "has been constitutionally elected President of the United States. You may be sure that, if he lives until the 4th day of March, he will be inaugurated on those steps."

As I spoke, I noticed for the first time how perfectly the wings of the capitol flanked the steps in question; and on the morning of the 4th of March I saw to it that each window of the two wings was occupied by two riflemen.

I received daily numerous communications from various parts of the country, informing me of plots to prevent the arrival of the President-elect at the capital. These warnings came from St. Louis, from Chicago, from Cincinnati, from Pittsburg, from New York, from Philadelphia, and, especially, from Baltimore. Every morning I reported to General Scott on the occurrences of the night and the information received by the morning's mail; and every evening I rendered an account of the day's work and received instructions for the night. General Scott also received numerous warnings of danger to the President-elect, which he would give me to study and compare. Many of the communications were anonymous and vague. But on the other hand many were from calm and wise men, one of whom became, shortly afterward, a cabinet minister; one was a railway president, another a distinguished ex-Governor of a State, etc., etc. In every case where the indications were distinct, they were followed up to learn if real danger existed.

So many clear indications pointed to Baltimore, that three good detectives of the New York police force were constantly employed there. These men reported frequently to me, and their statements were constantly compared with the information received from independent sources.

Doubtless, Mr. Lincoln, at his home in Springfield, received many and contradictory reports from the capital, for he took his own way of obtaining information. One night, between eleven o'clock and midnight, while I was busy in my study over the papers of the day and evening, a card was brought me, bearing the name "Mr. Leonard Swett," and upon it was written, in the well-known hand of General Scott, "Colonel Stone, Inspector-General, may converse freely with Mr. Swett." I gave orders for his admission, and a tall gentleman of marked features entered my room. At first I thought that Mr. Lincoln himself was present, so much, at first glance, did Mr. Swett's face resemble the

portraits I had seen of Mr. Lincoln, and so nearly did his height correspond with that attributed to the President-elect. But I quickly found that the gentleman's card bore his true name, and that Mr. Swett had come directly from Mr. Lincoln, having his full confidence, to see for him the state of affairs in Washington, and report back to him in person.

Mr. Swett remained several days in the capital, had frequent and long conversations with General Scott and myself (and I suppose also with many others), and with me visited the armories of some of the volunteer companies. As he drove with me to the railway station on the evening of his departure, Mr. Swett said :

"Mr. Lincoln, and in fact everybody almost, is ignorant of the vast amount of careful work which has been done here this winter, by General Scott and yourself, to insure the existence of the Government and to render certain and safe the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln. He will be very grateful to both."

I replied, with more sincerity than tact :

"Mr. Lincoln has no cause to be grateful to me. I was opposed to his election, and believed in advance that it would bring on what is evidently coming, a fearful war. The work which I have done has not been done for him, and he need feel under no obligations to me. I have done my best toward saving the Government of the country and to insure the regular inauguration of the constitutionally elected President, on the 4th of next month."

As President Lincoln approached the capital, it became certain that desperate attempts would be made to prevent his arriving there. To be thoroughly informed as to what might be expected in Baltimore, I directed a detective to be constantly near the chief of police and to keep up relations with him; while two others were instructed to watch independent and without the knowledge of the chief of police. The officer who was near the chief of police reported regularly, until near the last, that there was no danger in Baltimore; but the others discovered a band of desperate men plotting for the destruction of Mr. Lincoln during his passage through the city, and by affiliating with them, these detectives got at the details of the plot.

Mr. Lincoln passed through Baltimore in advance of the time announced for the journey (in accordance with advice given by me to Mr. Seward and which was carried by Mr. Frederick Seward to Mr. Lincoln), and arrived safely at Washington on the morning of the day he was to have passed through Baltimore. But the plotting to prevent his inauguration continued; and there was only

too good reason to fear that an attempt would be made against his life during the passage of the inaugural procession from Willard's hotel, where Mr. Lincoln lodged, to the capitol.

On the afternoon of the 3rd of March, General Scott held a conference at his headquarters, there being present his staff, General Sumner, and myself, and then was arranged the programme of the procession. President Buchanan was to drive to Willard's hotel, and call upon the President-elect. The two were to ride in the same carriage, between double files of a squadron of the District of Columbia cavalry. The company of sappers and miners were to march in front of the Presidential carriage, and the infantry and riflemen of the District of Columbia were to follow it. Riflemen in squads were to be placed on the roofs of certain commanding houses which I had selected, along Pennsylvania avenue, with orders to watch the windows on the opposite side and to fire upon them in case any attempt should be made to fire from those windows on the Presidential carriage. The small force of regular cavalry which had arrived was to guard the side-street crossings of Pennsylvania avenue, and to move from one to another during the passage of the procession. A battalion of District of Columbia troops were to be placed near the steps of the Capitol, and riflemen in the windows of the wings of the Capitol. On the arrival of the Presidential party at the Capitol, the troops were to be stationed so as to return in the same order after the ceremony.

To illustrate the state of uncertainty in which we were at that time concerning men, I may here state that the Lieutenant-Colonel, military secretary of the General-in-chief, who that afternoon recorded the conclusions of the General in conference, and who afterward wrote out for me the instructions regarding the disposition of troops, resigned his commission that very night, and departed for the South, where he joined the Confederate army.

During the night of the 3d of March, notice was brought me that an attempt would

be made to blow up the platform on which the President would stand to take the oath of office. I immediately placed men under the steps, and at daybreak a trusted battalion of District troops (if I remember rightly, it was the National Guard, under Colonel Tait) formed in a semicircle at the foot of the great stairway, and prevented all entrance from without. When the crowd began to assemble in front of the portico, a large number of policemen in plain clothes were scattered through the mass to observe closely, to place themselves near any individual who might act suspiciously, and to strike down any hand which might raise a weapon.

At the appointed hour, Mr. Buchanan was escorted to Willard's hotel, which he entered. There I found a number of mounted "marshals of the day," and posted them around the carriage, within the cavalry guard. The two Presidents were saluted by the troops as they came out of the hotel and took their places in the carriage. The procession started. During the march to the Capitol I rode near the carriage, and by an apparently clumsy use of my spurs managed to keep the horses of the cavalry in an uneasy state, so that it would have been very difficult for even a very good rifle shot to get an aim at one of the inmates of the carriage between the dancing horses.

After the inaugural ceremony, the President and the ex-President were escorted in the same order to the White House. Arrived there, Mr. Buchanan walked to the door with Mr. Lincoln, and there bade him welcome to the House and good morning. The infantry escort formed in line from the gate of the White House to the house of Mr. Ould, whither Mr. Buchanan drove, and the cavalry escorted his carriage. The infantry line presented arms to the ex-President as he passed, and the cavalry escort saluted as he left the carriage and entered the house. Mr. Buchanan turned on the steps, gracefully acknowledged the salute, and disappeared. The District of Columbia volunteers had given to President Lincoln his first military salute and to Mr. Buchanan his last.

Charles P. Stone.

