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The MASQUERADE

by

OSCAR MICHEAUX

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THE MASQUERADE

An Historical Novel

By

OSCAR MICHEAUX

Author of

The CASE OF MRS. WINGATE

Second Edition

BOOK SUPPLY COMPANY
Publishers
40 MORNINGSIDE AVENUE
NEW YORK

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yond the Shenandoah kept echoing. Sweet Louise Alcott referred to him as "Saint John the Just," and Longfellow whispered to his diary that the hanging of Brown marked the "Day of a new revolution, quite as much needed as the old one."

Brown had been so calmly and so religiously glad to be hanged publicly before all men and nations, that he could not be dismissed lightly from the thoughts of men. Even those who agreed with Stephen A. Douglas, speaking in the Senate, that Brown was a horse-thief and murderer, were puzzled at the old man writing to his family: "A calm peace too, fills my mind by day and by night," and to a Clergyman, "Let them have me; I forgive them, and may God forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The hanging of John Brown renewed the nationwide agitation against slavery. The number of Anti-Slave Societies increased in numbers, then somebody conceived the idea to draw huge paintings, to be displayed along the highways, all over the North. These paintings showed John Brown on the gallows, the rope around his neck, his long gray beard flowing all over his breast. His eyes were large and raised to heaven, his hands outstretched, reminding one of some strange and saintly patriarch, making appeal to God. On the same long billboard, was the scene of a beautiful octoroon slave girl, on her knees, hair down over her shoulders, eyes down, bent and crying while a brutal auctioneer stood over her, his mouth wide with the words, "How much am I bid?" Below, hands up, pointing at the girl, were a group of slave-traders, some with a string of blood hounds, held in the other hand, all seeming to bid for the helpless girl. Beneath these huge paintings that could

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Again and again came letters—just precisely what would he do with slavery if elected? Would it not be wise to say plainly that he wouldn't interfere? One he answered, "Those who will not heed or read what I have already publicly said would not read or heed a repetition of it." He quoted: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Replying to a pro-Douglas Louisville editor, he wrote, "For the good men of the South—and I regard the majority of them as such—I have no objection to repeat seventy and seven times. But I have bad men to deal with, both North and South; men who are eager for something new upon which to base new misrepresentations; men who would like to frighten me; or at least fix upon me the character of timidity and cowardice" (he was hinting at James Buchanan). What he would write would be seized upon as an "awful coming down." The letter closed, "I intend keeping my eye on these gentlemen and not to unnecessarily put any weapon in their hands."

Dick Yates, who was soon to become Governor of Illinois, and whose son was elected and served a term or two as such, more than forty years later, was telling of a pretty young bride who handed a bridegroom a thousand dollars after their wedding night. And the bridegroom told her, "Lizzie I like you very much, but this thousand dollars doesn't set you back any." From this Yates went on, "If Lincoln has all the other qualifications of a statesman, it doesn't set him back any with us who know and love him, to know that he was once a poor hard working boy.

"We know old Abe doesn't look very handsome, and

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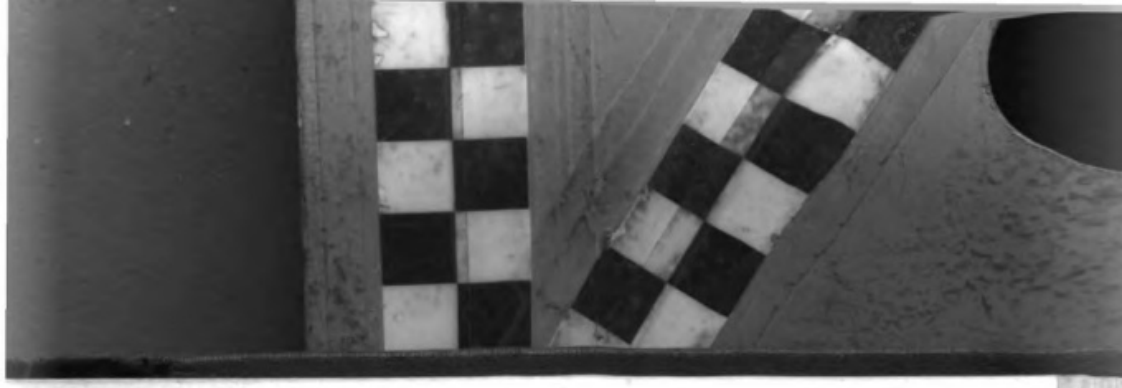

some of the papers say he is positively ugly." Yates was also saying on the stump, "Well, if all the ugly men in the United States vote for him, he will surely be elected."

Enemy newspapers rolled up his past, claiming that he had said that Thomas Jefferson was a slave-holder who "brought his own children under the hammer, and made money out of his debaucheries," particularizing that "A daughter of this vaunted champion of Democracy was sold years ago at public auction in Louisiana, and purchased by a society of gentlemen who wished to testify by her liberation their admiration of the Statesman who "dreamt of freedom in a slave-embrace."

This Lincoln designated as a base forgery, "which my friends will be entirely safe in denouncing."

The campaign was in its last week. Millions of people had by this time read his words of two years ago in The House Divided speech. They struck the soft, weird keynote of the hour. "If we could first know where we were, and whither we are drifting, we could better judge what to do and how to do it."

Twice, since he had first spoken, the corn had grown from seed to the full stalk and had been harvested.

In a book he had carried, it was said, "All rising to power is by a winding stair." As he went higher it grew colder and lonelier.

The last leaves were blowing off the trees, and the final geese honking South. Winter would come and go before seed corn went into the ground again.

At last came the day of election, Nov. 6, 1860. From nine o'clock on, Lincoln sat in the Springfield telegraph office. Lyman Trumbull arrived from Alton and sum-

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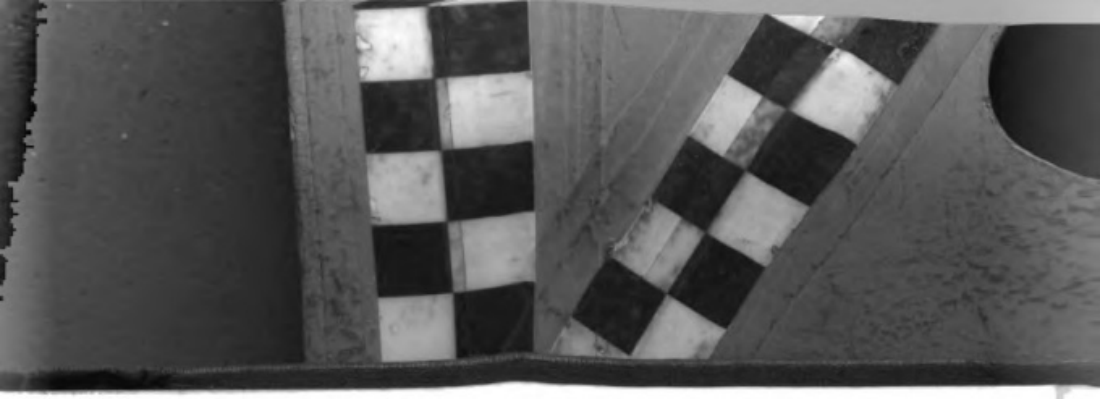

Chapter Eleven

EVENTS THEN CAME as by clock at a signal—and Lincoln's election was the signal!

South Carolina legislators voted to raise and equip 10,000 volunteer soldiers; Georgia and Louisiana legislators voted $1,000,000 and $500,000 for arms and troops.

South Carolina through its legislature declared itself a sovereign and independent state and seceded from the Union of states on December 20, 1860. With a flag of its own, with oaths of allegiance, forts, post offices, custom houses of the Federal government were taken. Before New Years' Day it was known that the whole row of cotton states would follow South Carolina, with a view to forming a Southern Confederacy. And in the same weeks, for whatever it portended there was also the accomplished fact that a great chain of railroads, making a complete rail transportation line from Bangor, Maine to New Orleans, had been completed.

A crisscross of facts was operating. Robert Toombs was saying: "It is admitted that you seek to outlaw $4,000,000,000 of property of our people in the Territories. Is not that a cause for war?" But was secession the softest way of managing this property? Jefferson Davis had his doubts. And Alexander Stephens had written five months before, shortly after Lincoln's nomination on the Republican ticket, "I consider slavery much more secure in the

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Union than out of it if our people are but wise. Property suffers in revolutions," he pointed out. "The institution is based on conservatism." Stephens had noted the diminishing supply of slave labor and wrote his belief that without fresh supplies from Africa, slavery would be replaced by free competitive wage labor.

Among the fire-eaters clamoring for secession were those who made a business of buying, breeding and selling slaves. A planter from Georgia had told the National Democratic Convention, "I have had to pay from $1,000 to $2,000 a head for good niggers, when I could go to Africa and buy better darkies—all I can bring back for $50 a head. I tell you and plead with you, gentlemen of the Democratic party, of which I am a life long member, to put in your platform at this convention, a promise to restore the slave trade—and I will subscribe $100,000 to your campaign fund!" This was too much for Democrats, who upheld slavery even, and he was hooted down.

A reporter on the New York Tribune dug up a strange fact in South Carolina. On the tax lists in Charleston, for the year 1861, he found the names of 132 "colored people" who paid taxes on 390 slaves which they owned; the class included eleven Indian families who had consorted with Negroes.

Secession was the creed of state sovereignty, which Douglas had said so much about in the years before. It was now kicking back and proving a boomerang for not even the learned Douglas had thought or foreseen that it would give the State the right also to secede from the Union as they were now doing, and stand by themselves in a separate existence when it chose to do so.

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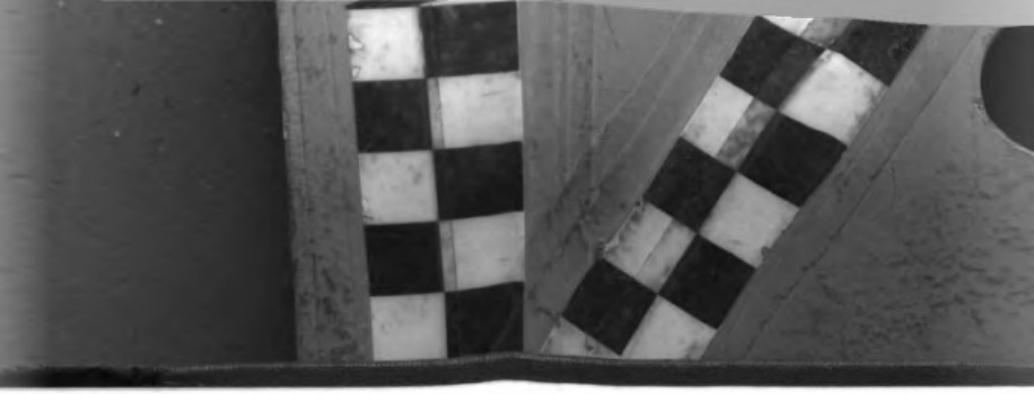

John C. Calhoun and other figures of austere life and heroic proportions had taught this with a logic that to Southerners seemed inexorable and unconquerable. Yet the fact must be recorded with this, that Davis, Stephens and other high counselors of the South, in their letters and speeches at this time, did not advise secession. The leaders were Yancey, Rhett and others. They cried, "The irrepressible conflict is about to be visited upon us by the Black Republican Lincoln and his fanatical, diabolical Republican party."

Once secession was accomplished by its radical manipulators, Southerners, till then conservative and advising against disunion, fell in line as patriots whose first oath of allegiance was to their sovereign State, their country. They quoted Decatur:

"Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right, but our country right or wrong." And the *Charleston Mercury* published dispatches from Northern cities under the heading "FOREIGN NEWS."

Those who demurred, reasoned and lifted warnings against disunion and secession were many, but their efforts were useless against the onrush of those who took Lincoln's election as a signal for a time of change. There were those who looked on Lincoln as Alexander Stephens did in a letter to J. Henley Smith, a fellow Georgian, five months before the election, saying:

"What is to become of the country in case of Lincoln's election, I do not know. As at present advised, I shall not be for disunion on the grounds of his election. It may be that his election will be attended with events that will

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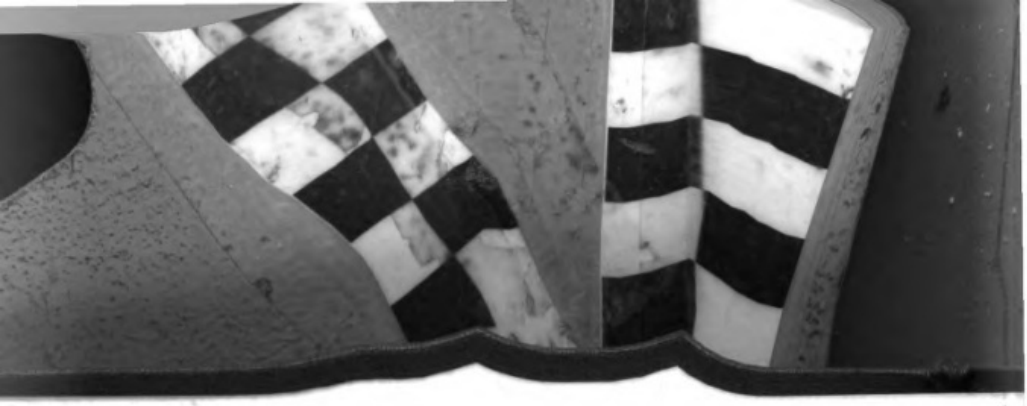

ous, distracted and intoxicated most of the time, proclaimed Fast Day publicly, and moaned privately that he was the "last President of the United States."

"The Union is falling to pieces all around me and I don't know what to do about it" he was quoted as saying.

Well meaning men of splendid intentions and generous hearts sprang forward with compromises, arrangements, and suggestions; special committees and conferences of duly appointed delegates met, spoke, protested, argued and adjourned. Southern congressmen resigned and left Washington; there were enough votes one January day to admit "Bleeding Kansas as a State in the Union." The *Charleston* Mercury, in an editorial, derided, *"What a Union!"*

While Southern radicals were calling Lincoln a fanatical, diabolical Abolitionist, Wendell Phillips sneered at him and called him the "Slave hound" of Illinois. Robert Toombs read to the new Georgia legislature a defense of Secession written and published by Horace Greeley. The advice of Greeley was: "Let the crying sisters depart in peace."

Boston heard Phillips declare: "Let the South march off, with flags and trumpets, and we will speed the parting guests. Let us not stand upon the order of her going, but go at once. Give her forts, arsenals and sub-treasuries. Give her jewels of silver and gold, and rejoice that she has departed. All hail disunion!"

Frederick Douglas, the great Negro Abolitionist, after a visit to see Lincoln, in Springfield, was asked what he thought of secession. He replied quietly: "It is not what *I* think about it," and turned his eyes in the direction of

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Chapter Twelve

WHILE ALL THIS was going on, secession and disunion, let us turn back for a moment, to little Fayetteville, resting quietly on the banks of the Cape Fear River and see how our old friends Judge Straight, Dr. Green, and, in the country, the Fowlers were taking it.

"Well," sighed Dr. Green, "secession seems about complete now with Texas overriding its Governor and coming in. I think that just about completes the Confederacy, and we are no longer a part and parcel of the United States of America." Judge Straight smiled, and grunted.

"Says who?" he said, looking hard at Green, who turned to him in some surprise.

"Says who? What do you mean?"

"Says I, and I mean that all this seceding, grabbing post offices, arsenals, custom houses and etc., is all very premature."

"It has already been done. The Confederate States of America is now a fact, a Republic within itself. What do you mean by calling it premature?"

"Just what I said, and which is just what it is, no more."

"You talk in riddles or parables or—will you explain *why* it is not now a government in itself?"

"Wait until Abraham Lincoln speaks."

"Abraham Lincoln! He's the cause of the whole thing. If

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it. They haven't permitted a slave State to be admitted in years. Slavery has long since been confined to where it is."

"But the South felt sure that if he were elected, he planned to interfere with it. They have seceded in order to beat him to the punch."

"Like a group of children, small children. Why couldn't they wait until he was inaugurated; wait until they heard and read his inaugural address; it is most certain that he will set forth such plans, if any, with regards to the institution at that time. At least, in all courts it is the rule to hear a least one side of the case, and both sides most times before rendering a decision. If the South *had* to secede, they could have at least waited until Lincoln was inaugurated, heard and read his address to the Nation, after which they could have seceded and broke up the Union just as well afterwards as before."

"Well," Dr. Green sighed, "there is plenty of logic in what you say, but they have seceded and set up their own government where the North can no longer bother them about keeping Negroes in Slavery, so that is that."

"I have the feeling that the trouble hasn't really started yet." Dr. Green looked quickly and intently at him.

"If Lincoln in his inaugural address, does not recognize the Confederacy, and these States right to secede, and says they are still a part and parcel of the Union, the same as all the States that haven't seceded, then what?"

"Then it is war."

"War sure enough, and a real war."

"The North will then have to conquer the South, and restore the status quo."

"Which is exactly what I expect them to do."

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"You mean," her father said, "about the war and—all that?"

"I mean about, just about everything," Selena replied, hardly knowing just where to start.

"Well, I read that there is great activity down there, preparing for the—expected war."

"And how!" Selena exclaimed, and shook her head as if to emphasize how active it was.

"All you see and hear are recruits, drilling, drilling and drilling everywhere, morning, noon and night."

"You don't mean to say so," her mother exclaimed, seeming amazed. "Who are they preparing to fight?"

"The North, mother, the North and the Yankees—and how they seem to want to fight."

"Well, I declare. Getting all ready to fight with the War not started?"

"It is in full blast in Charleston—and how badly they want to fight. Why, they're just War crazy."

"It's an outrage," her father commented, his face serious. "The people of the whole State should be ashamed of themselves. Talking about Lincoln starting the war, when the man has done nothing but get elected to the Presidency —and he didn't do that, even. The people did it."

"Not the Southern people, and especially not Charlestonians. I doubt if he got a hundred votes in that town."

"How did they manage to reach such a—radical conclusion, anyhow, dear?" her father queried curiously. All eyes now went to Selena, who, taking her time, started to tell them how.

"In the first place, Charleston, seemingly, more than anywhere else in the South, resents, more than any other

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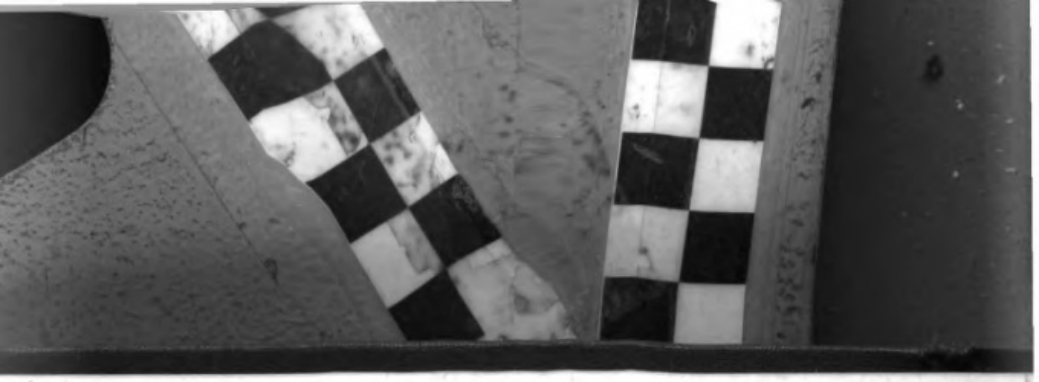

to be assassinated on the way to Washington, so he will never get to be president at all.

"There are other rumors which say he will; and that he will be inaugurated in Chicago, under the watchful eye of the Army, and will go to Washington afterwards, but that he will be killed before he gets to sign a single bill."

"What do they have to say about his silence; just why he hasn't said what he plans to do, if and when he ever becomes President?"

"They have an answer for that, too—in fact, they seem to have an answer for everything in Charleston. One of the big boasts is, that if they try to force Lincoln on the country—disregarding the fact that he has been duly elected, and is due to take his seat, that a Confederate Army will be waiting just outside Alexandria, Virginia, and will promptly cross the Potomac, march into Washington and take over the Capitol and everything else and install Jeff Davis as President and Alexander Stephens as Vice-President instead of Lincoln and Hamlin.

"Another thing they are whispering is that Hamlin has some Negro blood and that he will have to be killed at the same time with Lincoln, as having a Vice-President with Negro blood would be a greater disgrace than letting Lincoln take his seat." All of which brought more laughter from the family, it was so obviously untrue and absurd.

"Charleston is filled with Slave-Traders, and it is talked around there that after the South has licked the North and taken the whole country over, the first thing Congress will do is to repeal the law that prohibits importing any more Negroes as slaves. They say they will repeal all laws that confine slavery to slave States, and pass a new one that

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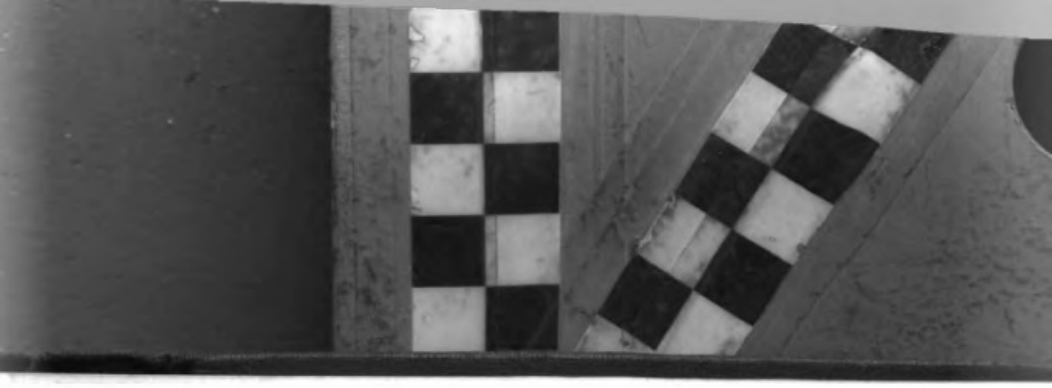

permits owners to have slaves anywhere and everywhere in the United States; and that slave-traders will be allowed to import all the Negroes from Africa for new slaves that they can bring. They declare that a movement is on foot to import 50,000 from West Africa to be shipped to Texas, mostly, and, that after the War is over and the South has licked and killed off most of the Yankees, the brave young Confederates who have been responsible for winning the war, will be given free land in Texas and be permitted to purchase up to five or six slaves at a top cost of $500 each as a reward for winning the war."

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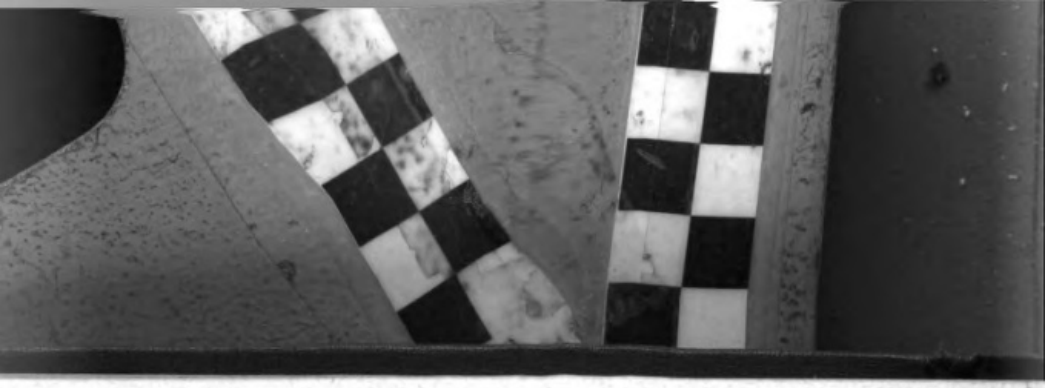

Chapter Thirteen

IN JUSTIFICATION OF SECESSION, the South Carolina convention issued two papers. One, An Address to the People of the Slave-holding States, reported by R. B. Rhett; the other, a Declaration of the Causes of Secession, reported by C. B. Memminger. Respecting the members or the delegates to the convention's point of view, this declaration to us, seems so interesting that we have decided to reproduce in full same herewith, with the exception of two long and early paragraphs, going back to 1787.

"The people of the State of South Carolina in convention, assembled, on the 2nd day of April, A.D. 1852, declared that the frequent violations of the Constitution of the United States by the Federal government, and its encroachments on the reserved rights of the States, fully justifies this State in its withdrawal from the Federal Union; but in deference to the opinions and wishes of the other slave-holding states, she forbore at that time to exercise this right. Since that time, however, these encroachments have continued to increase, and further forbearance ceases to be a virtue.

"And now the State of South Carolina, having resumed her separate and equal place among nations, deems it due to herself, to the remaining United States of America and the nations of the world that she should declare the immediate causes which have led to this act.

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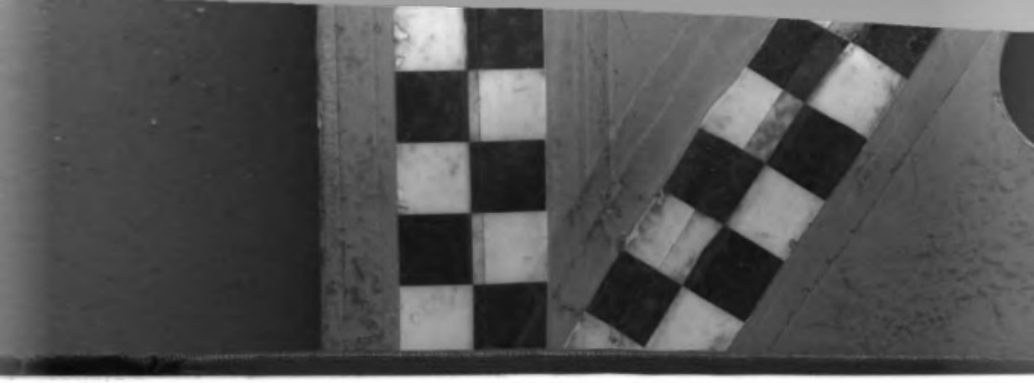

leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures, to servile insurrection.

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing until now it has secured to its aid the power of the common government. Observing the forms of the Constitution, a sectional party has found within that article establishing the executive department, the means of subverting the Constitution itself.

A geographical line has been drawn across the Union (they were referring to the Mason Dixon line) and all of the states North of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the common government because he has declared that *"This government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free,"* and that the public mind must rest in the belief that slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

This sectional combination for the subversion of the Constitution has been aided in some of the States, by elevating to citizenship, Negroes, persons who, by the supreme law of the land, are incapable of becoming citizens. (Please recall the Dred Scott Decision). And their votes have been used to inaugurate a new policy, hostile to the South and destructive of its peace and safety.

On the fourth day of March, next, this party will take possession of the Government. It has announced that the South shall be excluded from the common territory; that the Judicial Tribunal shall be made sectional, and that a war must be waged against slavery until it shall cease throughout the United States.

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The guarantees of the Constitution will then no longer exist; the equal rights of the States will be lost. The slave-holding States will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection and the Federal government will have become their enemy.

Sectional interest and animosity will deepen the irritation; and all hope of remedy is rendered vain, by the fact that the public opinion at the North has invested a great political error with the sanctions of a more religious belief.

We, therefore, the people of South Carolina, by our delegates in convention assembled, appealing to the supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, has solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State, with full powers to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right to do.

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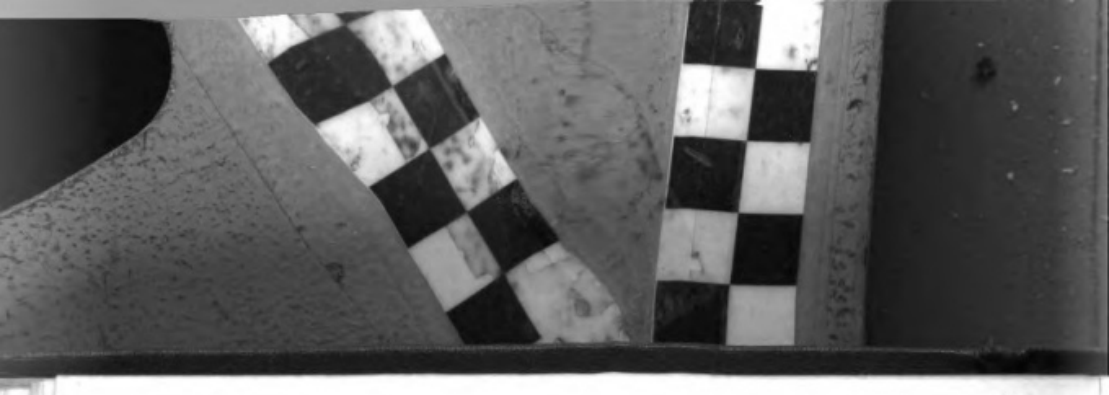

force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal, that I deem it better to forego, for the time, the uses of such offices.

"The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. So far as possible, the people everywhere shall have the sense of perfect security, which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change according to circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the National troubles and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affection.

"That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To these, however, who really love the Union, may I speak?

"Before entering upon so grave a matter, as the destruction of our National fabric, with all its achievements, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from—will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

"All profess to be content in the Union if the Constitu-

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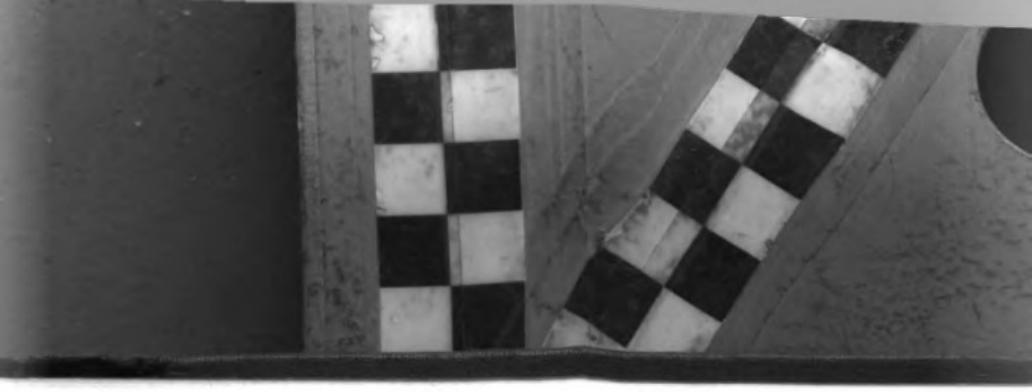

tional rights can be maintained. Is it true then, that any right, plainly written in the Constitution has been denied? I think not. Happily the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in a plainly written provision of the Constitution that has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers, a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written Constitutional right, it might, from a moral point of view, justify revolution—certainly would, if such right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assumed to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions, in the Constitution, that controversies never rise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision especial to every question which may arise or occur in its practical administration. No foresight can anticipate nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by National or State authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. May Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

"From questions of this class spring all our Constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease. There is no other alternative, (The South in seceding, was guilty of this and they knew it as well as did Lincoln) for continuing the government is acquiescence on one side or the other.

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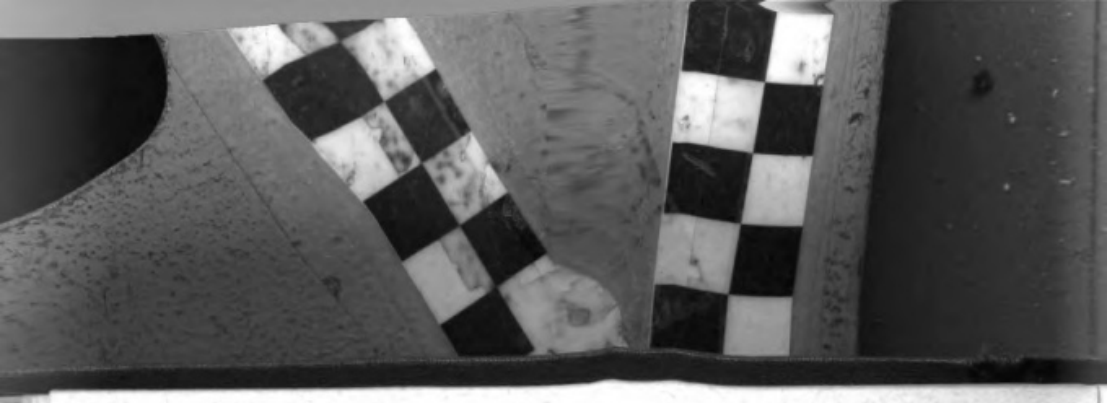

"If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which will in turn divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new Confederacy, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this.

"Is there such perfect identity of interests among the States to compose a new Union, as to produce harmony only, and prevent renewed secession? Supposing that, in a State, one county or two or three, decide to secede from the rest of the counties in that State, where would the State soon be—any State; every State?

"Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by Constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing locality with deliberate charges of popular opposition and sentiments, is the only true sovereignty of a free people. Whoever rejects it does of necessity fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement is wholly inadmissible; so that rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

"I do not forget the position assumed by some, that Constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court; nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding, in any case, upon the parties to a suit, as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other depart-

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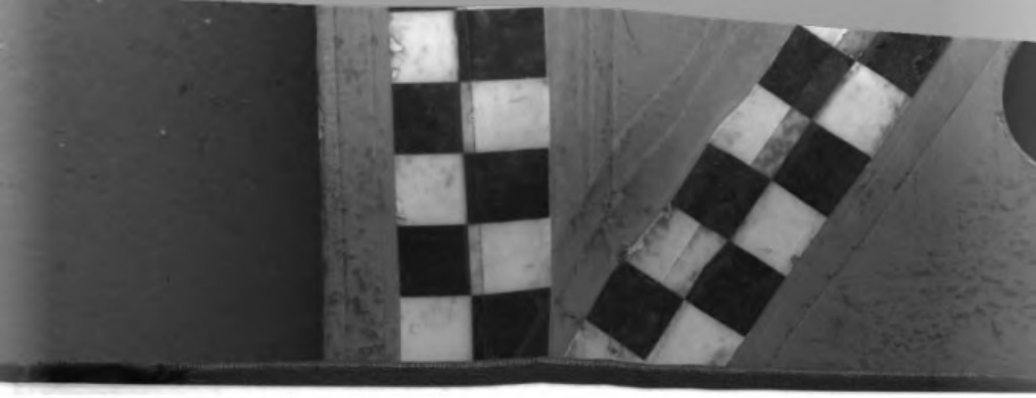

afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me, the convention mode seems preferable in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others which might not be precisely what they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand that a proposed amendment to the Constitution—which amendment, however, I have not seen, has passed Congress to the effect that the Federal government shall never interfere with the domestic institution of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of that what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments as far as to say, that holding such a provision to now be implied as constitutional law, I have no objection to it being made express and irrevocable.

"The chief magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have conferred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves can do this also if they chose; but the executive as such has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present government, as it comes to his hands, and to transmit it, unimpaired by him, to his successor.

"Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present difference is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty ruler of nations, with this eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

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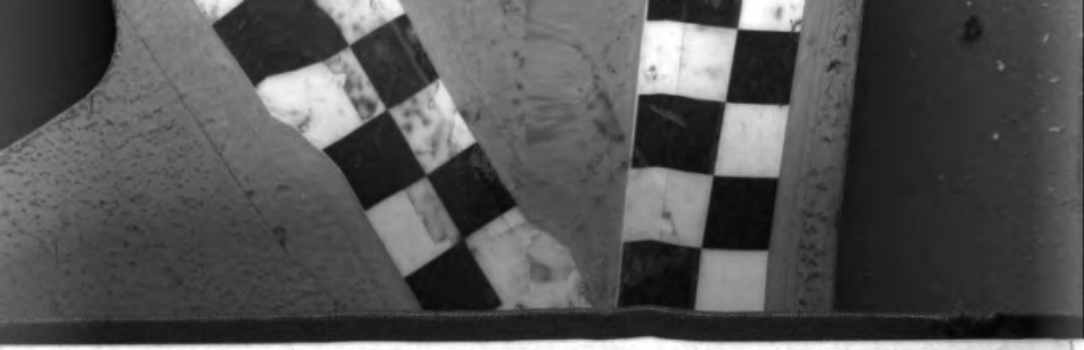

"By the frame of the government under which we live, this same people have wisely given their public servant but little power for mischief. And have, with equal wisdom, provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration by any extreme of wickedness, or folly, can very seriously injure the government in the short space of four years.

"My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing it; while the new administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied, hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust in the best way, all our present difficulties.

"In your hands, my dissatisfied countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of Civil War. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressor. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect and defend it.' "

Thus flowed the reasonings, explanations, watchwords, that ended his long silence.

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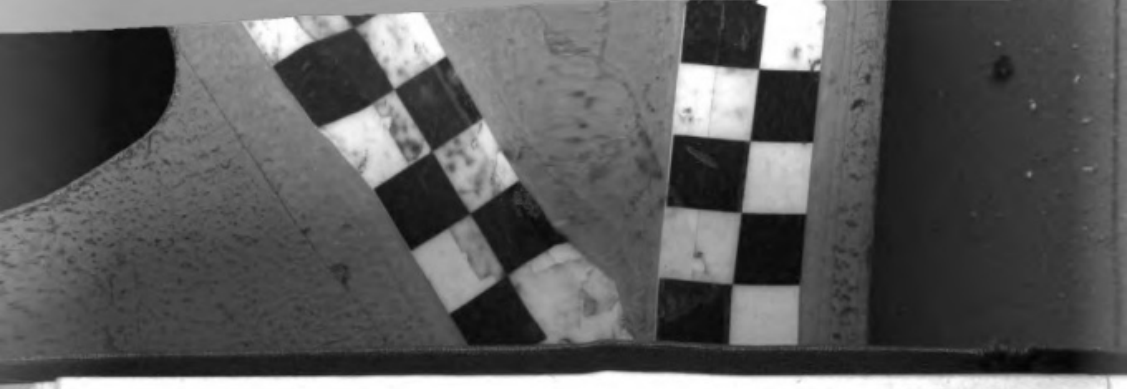

In all that has been said or shown with regards to the relation between the North and the South, there was not shown any serious difference of opinion on important issues. The dissension was confined exclusively and positively to the Slave-question and it was the slave-issue that had now torn the two sections asunder.

Not all the people of the South favored slavery. It was a problem which they found themselves born into. They consoled themselves with the feeling, when it annoyed their consciences too much, to say to themselves that they never created it, they found it. It was an institution that the present generation had inherited, and no leader seemed to come forward with a program or a pattern bold enough and brave enough to change it.

Meanwhile the slave-traders, breeders and exploiters of slave-labor, found it profitable, seared their consciences, if many ever had any, and planned how to make it more profitable. Naturally it was they who found Northern sentiment so confounding to their trade. From Southern Tenn. north, there was growing a larger number of runaway slaves. They talked, the whole North, of an "Underground Railroad," stretching all the way from Cairo almost to Pittsburgh, where slaves found their way—and then were helped across the Ohio River by Abolitionists.

In the limited number of cases when they were able to trace and locate the fugitives, somewhere North of the Ohio, they were compelled to go to a Federal Judge and get a court order to carry the slave back. Unless they could succeed in doing this secretly, and if by any chance those who were succoring or concealing the runaway, discovered it, the officer or officers were threatened, and often at-

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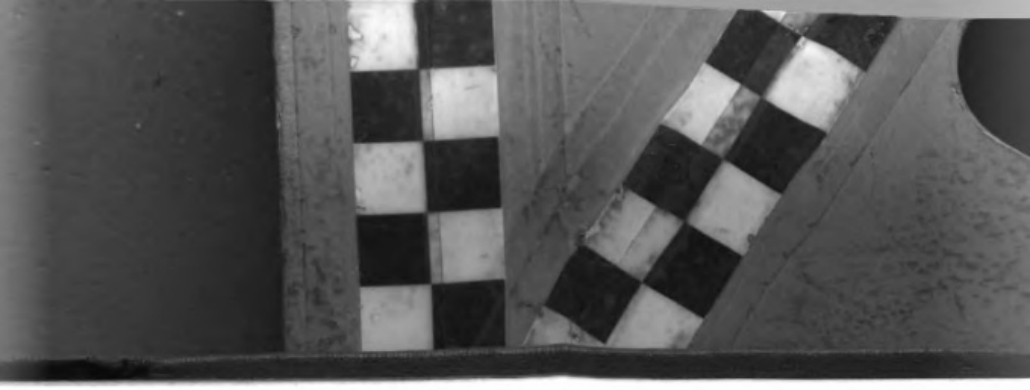

tacked and forced to run away themselves to avoid being beaten, not to count being ostracized. Often if those hiding the runaway had the chance and the time, they frequently took the runaway to another section—even into Canada which granted no extradition. On the whole, the North gave the South no co-operation whatever, in helping to return runaway slaves.

Behind secession, Lincoln knew, there was much of this, and, with secession being urged and clamored for by the slave-traders and heavy slave-owners, was all that, that has been detailed above. Once free of Northern interference, the slave-trader and slave-breeder felt that he could operate without molestation or interference. These men had planned in the meanwhile, that if and when this finally happened, they would get a bill through in the Confederate Congress to restore the slave-trade, after which they could put headhunters in Africa to work, rounding up thousands of native Africans to be brought across the seas and placed in service.

After Lincoln finally completed the two and a half hours of hand-shaking, he was driven to the White House, seated beside Buchanan. He sat there quiet and solemn, his mind occupied with the problems soon to be, and they exchanged few, if any, words. Buchanan knew that Lincoln neither liked nor admired him, and had criticized him often and roundly because of what Lincoln knew to be true, that Buchanan was a political pawn and a coward. So seated side by side as they rode from the Capital to the White House, the incoming and the retiring President had little if any interests in common.

Arriving at their destination, Buchanan admitted Mr.

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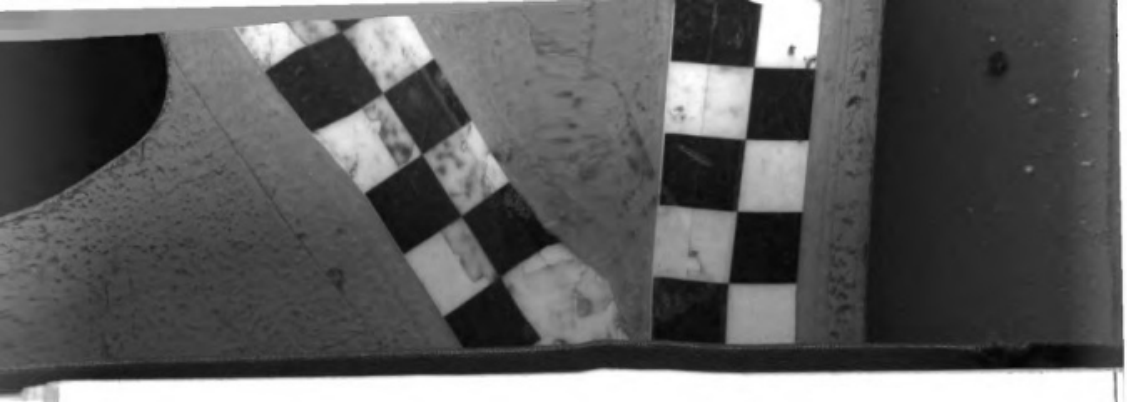

can residing in those States, but to such eminent loyalists as H. Winter Davis, Parson Brownlow, the Union Central Committee, of Baltimore—and to the *Nashville Union*—we ask you to consider that slavery, the inciting cause and sustaining base of treason. The most slave-holding sections of Maryland and Delaware being this day, though under the Union flag, in full sympathy with the rebellion, while the free labor portions of Tennessee and Texas, though writhing under the bloody heel of treason, are unconquerably loyal to the Union . . . It seems to us the most obvious truth, that whatever strengthens or fortifies slavery in the border States, strengthens also treason, and drives home the wedge intended to divide the Union. Had you from the beginning, refused to recognize in those States, as here, any other than unconditional loyalty—that which stands for the Union—whatever may become of slavery—those States would have been, and would be far more helpful and less troublesome to the defenders of the Union, than they have been, or now are.

IV. We think that timid counsels in such a crisis calculated to prove perilous, and probably disastrous. It is the duty of a government so wantonly, wickedly assailed by rebellion, as ours has been to oppose with force, in a defiant, dauntless spirit. It cannot afford to temporize with traitors. It must not bribe them to behave themselves, nor make them fair promises in the hope of disarming their causeless hostility. Representing a brave and high spirited people, it can't afford to forfeit anything better than its own self-respect, or their admiring confidence, for any government, even to dispel the affected apprehensious armed traitors that their cherished privileges, may be assailed by it, is to

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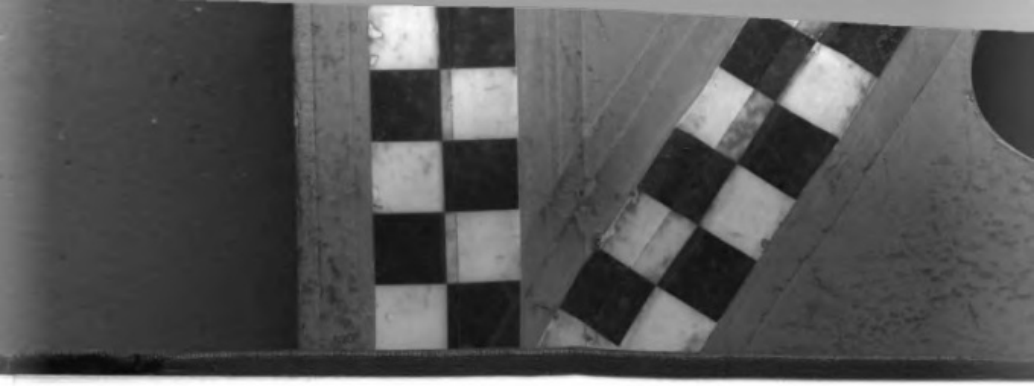

men require is a frank, declared, unqualified, ungrudging execution of the laws of the land, more especially, of the Confiscation Act. That act gives Freedom to the slaves, coming within our lines, or those who may live at anytime near—We ask you to render it due obedience by publicly requiring all your subordinates to recognize and obey it. The rebels are everywhere using the late Anti-Negro riots in the North, as they have long used your officers treatment of Negroes in the South, to convince the slaves that they have nothing to hope for from a Union success—that we mean in that case to sell them into a bitter bondage to defray the costs of the war. Let them impress this as a truth on the great mass of their ignorant and credulous bondmen —and the Union will never be restored—never! We cannot conquer ten millions of people united in solid phalanx against us, powerfully aided by Northern sympathizers and European allies. We must have scouts, guides, spies, cooks, teamsters, diggers and choppers from the blacks of the South, whether we allow them to fight for us or not, or we shall be baffled and repelled. As one of the millions who would gladly have avoided this struggle at any sacrifice but that of principle and honor, but who feels now that the triumph of the Union is indispensable, not only to the existence of our country, but to the well-being of mankind, I entreat you to render a hearty and unequivocal obedience to the law of the land.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY"

President Lincoln saw fit to make reply to the letter from an old friend, and so, in a few days, Mr. Greeley

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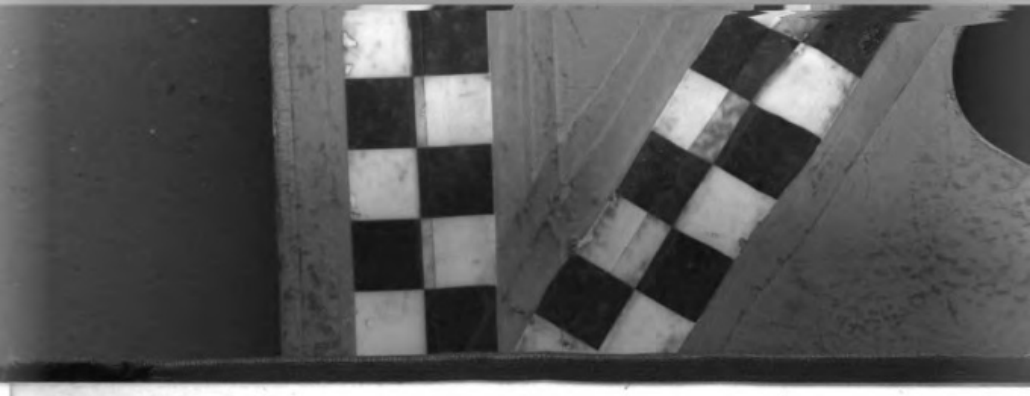

and given several of the boys acres of their own. Of Frank, he had followed in his father's trade, a carpenter and mason.

For more than a year now, Frank had been contracting and building, and, since there had been little or no construction during the war, now that it was over and the country had become more settled, it seemed that just about everybody who owned land wanted buildings erected, and Frank had more than he could do.

From the beginning, Rena Northcross had assisted him, by helping him to draw estimates and keep his books. She had found it delightful work and Frank found her most efficient and helpful. Both were glad to be thrown together, and enjoyed each other's company.

Frank was now 22, Rena 18. He was tall, dark, with a flush of coarse brindle-like hair, a powerfully built and athletic type, over six feet tall. Rena was a cross between her father, Richard Northcross, and her mother, Molly, had fine silken, dark chestnut hair, could easily pass for white, which, however, as far as expression went, she seemed totally unconscious of.

She was rather tall for a girl, slender, shapely, but what Frank liked about her best of all was that she was so keen, so considerate of everybody's feelings, so thoughtful and intelligent.

Such was the state of affairs in Fayetteville and The House Behind The Cedars as we return to our real story, where we will continue until the end of this book.

It is night, or should we call it early evening? Anyway, it was growing dark in the Northcross household; Rena and her mother had dined, cleared the table, washed and

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yer and stuck to it. I got up, walked over by the window and tried to think of some way to get rid of him. As I stood there, I turned once to look at him and our eyes met. And there was where he got me. There was an expression in that boy's eyes as he looked straight at me that I shall never forget until the longest day I live.

"I asked him if he had considered how difficult it would be for him to become a lawyer. His answer was a suggestion which I could see he had thought out carefully. He said, 'I have considered that I might pass for white.'" Judge Straight was silent for a moment as if to let Richard Northcross think, too. Northcross *was* thinking, too; he had been thinking all the while Judge Straight talked.

"Well, there it was," Judge Straight said and shrugged his shoulders. "What he suggested was so full of logic that I was taken aback. He *could* easily pass for a white boy anywhere he isn't known, which put me to thinking. As you know, Northcross, there is no chance for him to become much of anything as a Negro—even a Free Negro; but as a white man the boy might manage to become something, especially when he seems possessed with so much natural intelligence—so much resolute determination.

"Well, I was cornered; he had touched my human sympathies. All his life is before him. As stated, as a Negro, he could never become much of anything; but as a white man —well, who knows what heights he might reach in fifteen or twenty years?

"I didn't want to argue any more but I had to tell him something. So I told him to come back tomorrow. Meanwhile, I had decided when I told him to come back to come out here and see you and talk it over with you tonight."

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