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The Civil War

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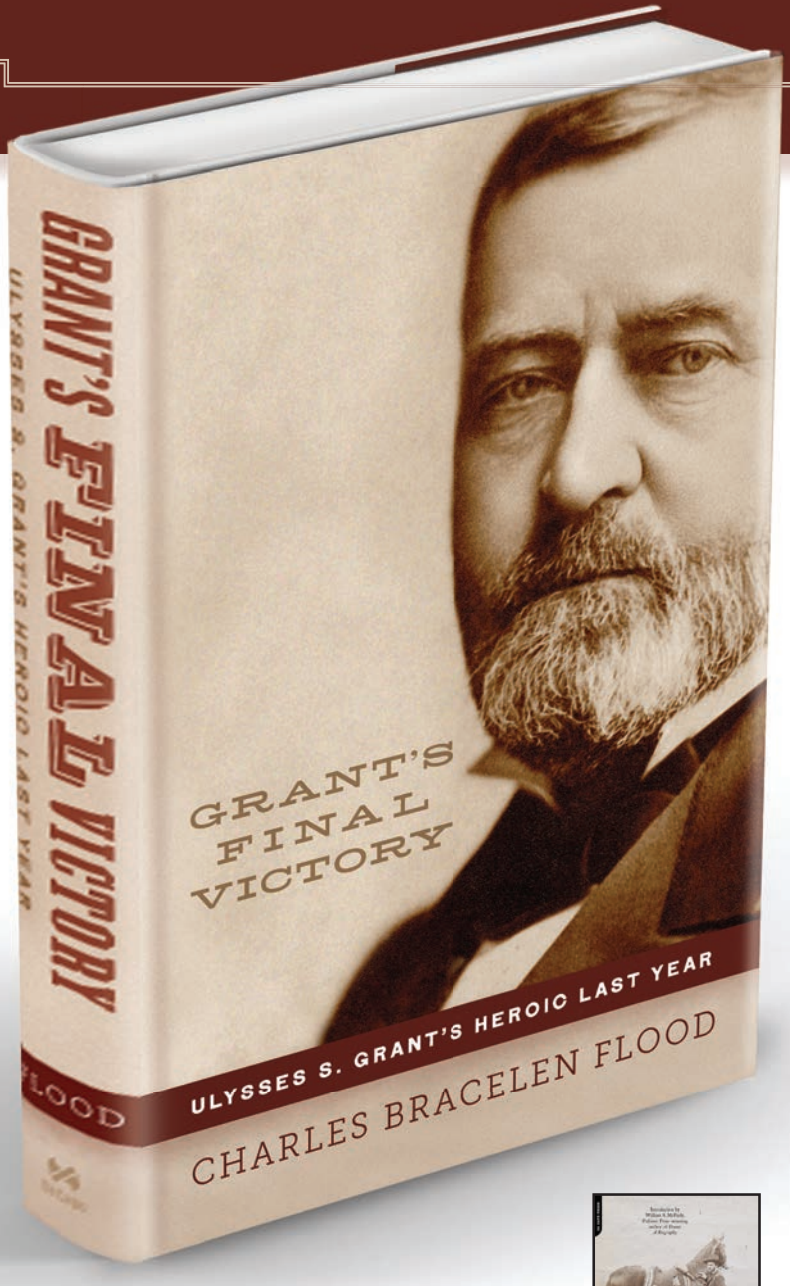

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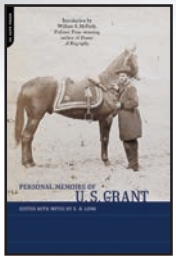

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BOOK PUBLISHING: *Gloria Bruere, 718-275-0482, gbruere@theatlantic.com*

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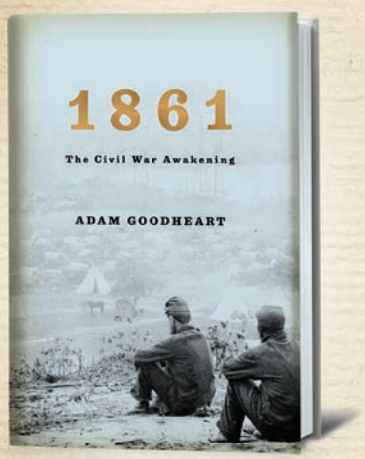

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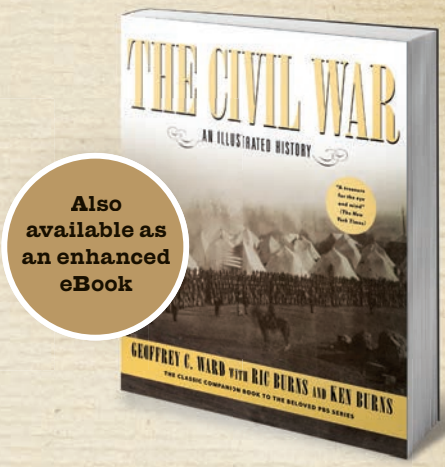

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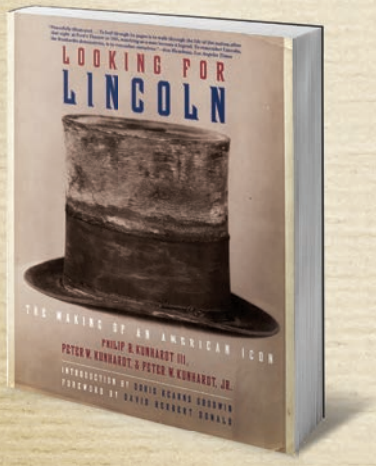

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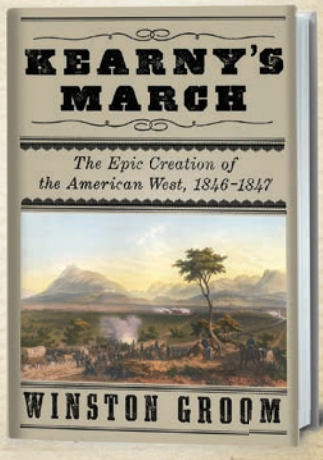

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The Duty to Think

SHELTERING FROM A thunderstorm in an empty freight car, the one-term congressman—the one with the habit of telling dirty jokes, and dodging tough questions, and lying to deflect annoying visitors—squatted on the floor, wrapped his arms around his knees, and roared with laughter at his wife's ridiculous ambition for him. "Just think of such a sucker as me as President!," Abraham Lincoln told our correspondent, Henry Villard. Villard would later marvel that this man, who caused him "disgust and humiliation," would prove "one of the great leaders of mankind in adversity."

As the writers in this issue witnessed the country's most terrible and transformative passage, they felt, and reported, the "magnetic personality" of John Brown; walked the anxious streets of Charleston on the eve of the attack on Fort Sumter; joined with Union soldiers quartering (and making mock speeches) in the House of Representatives; listened late one starlit night as Ulysses Grant, puffing on a Havana cigar by his tent, defended himself against the charge that he was a butcher of men. They saw the tide of war turn, and were in Richmond when it was liberated—when Lincoln, holding his young son's hand, passed through the jubilant crowd, pausing to remove his hat and, in silence, return the bow of an elderly black man.

It is possible, in these pages, to enter into both the humanity of figures consecrated or condemned by history and the uncertainty the writers must have felt during the rush of events. Yes, we know that Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. survived being shot in the neck at Antietam to become one of our greatest Supreme Court justices; but the reader may still share some of the tension of his father, a physician and a founder of this magazine, when, via "telegraphic messenger," he received the harrowing news in the dead of night and set out for the wavering front line to search hospitals, improvised on battlefields and in churches, for his Captain H. (As the elder Holmes neared the front, he referred with asperity—could it have been despair?—to "our so-called civilization.")

When *The Atlantic* originally published many of these pieces, the most-consequential questions the country has faced were wide open: Would the Union survive? Would slavery? What did it mean to be an American? And so the writers not only bore witness but also argued toward the answers. The founders of this magazine and its first contributors disagreed about many things, but, with the exception of the ambivalent Nathaniel Hawthorne, they were radicals in the cause of abolition. Along with the desire to cultivate an American literary voice, the moral and militant struggle against slavery—the struggle to free the idea of America from corrupting delusions—is what gave birth to *The Atlantic* and shaped its character.

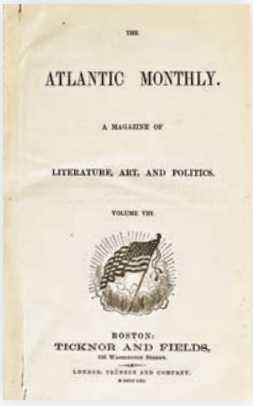
"The discussion of Slavery is said to be dangerous," wrote James Russell Lowell,

The building that today houses the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery—and many of the images in this special issue of The Atlantic*—was originally the U.S. Patent Office, and later also housed the U.S. Department of the Interior. During the early years of the Civil War, the building served as a barracks for Union soldiers, and as a hospital and morgue after battles at Manassas, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. Walt Whitman, who tended to the wounded as a nurse there, called it "the noblest of Washington buildings." On March 6, 1865, Abraham Lincoln held his second inaugural ball on the third floor.*

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

the first editor, in 1860. "But dangerous to what?" And: "In a democracy it is the duty of every citizen to think."

The war was quickening other changes in the country, as suggested by that telegraphic messenger. Trains were rushing troops toward the front, while a steam-powered, ironclad ship—"silent and sullen, the floating fort," Longfellow wrote—could make short work of the mightiest sloop of war. Holmes perceived a new "perpetual intercommunication" of news, an "equalizing and steadying of public opinion."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Amid the turmoil, we recognize enduring types we might otherwise have mistaken as modern: As he noted how repetitious the Lincoln-Douglas debates had become or complained of Lincoln's evasions about secession, Henry Villard sounded every bit the veteran political reporter; while in his glib cynicism about national politics, Hawthorne wrote like he was a little too cool for it all. Emerson, the very model of the successful op-ed columnist, first demanded an emancipation proclamation, then praised the president for delivering it. (Lincoln, like other presidents we have known, was alert to the emerging possibilities of the new media, from the power of photography to the founding ambition of *The Atlantic* to be "of no party or clique." He once objected when a writer said he intended to publish an anti-slavery piece in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*. "Can't you get it into *The Atlantic Monthly*?" Lincoln asked. "It would have less of a partisan look there.")

The pieces in this special issue, deftly excerpted by our contributing editor and unofficial archivist, Sage Stossel, are arranged in three sections: the run-up to the war, the war itself, and Reconstruction. Though stories in *The Atlantic* were published anonymously from the magazine's founding in 1857 until 1870, we have added bylines throughout. We have kept the original titles except in six instances, noted in each case. Alongside reported articles and essays we have included fiction, including Sarah Orne Jewett's tale of a shattered plantation owner and Mark Twain's account of a freed slave's reunion with her stolen son. Throughout, we have drawn on the collection of our partner in creating this issue, the National Portrait Gallery.

Within each section, you will find that the dates of original publication may skip around. After Booker T. Washington's 1896 argument for practical education, we have placed W. E. B. Du Bois's 1902 rejoinder, "Of the Training of Black Men." Only after that do we publish Du Bois's 1897 lament about emancipation, that "the freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised land." It immediately precedes Ta-Nehisi Coates's essay on how blacks have been written out of the Civil War.

It seemed to us that these *Atlantic* pieces have a way of conversing across the decades. And so in this issue, one finds Garry Wills's account from 1992 of how Lincoln used the Gettysburg Address to reinterpret the Constitution and thereby "revolutionized the Revolution, giving people a new past to live with that would change their future indefinitely." And then, equipped with that explication of how Lincoln purified the nation's meaning, and with President Obama's summation of what that meaning is, the reader can then encounter, with fresh appreciation, Lowell's epitaph for Lincoln: "New birth of our new soil, the first American."

—James Bennet

CURATORS' NOTE

Photography and War

JUST AS THE Civil War modernized the economy, it modernized culture, even if its effects took time to manifest themselves. (One of the great novels resulting from the war, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, was not published until 1884.) It eroded Victorian habits of feeling and sentimentality. As Edmund Wilson argued, the war chastened American language, making it sharper, more concise, more pungent. The war stripped away illusions. This scourging was accelerated by a flourishing new medium: photography.

Photography complemented—and competed with—old discursive methods of verbal description by bringing a visceral immediacy to an audience avid for images. Photographic images became the connective tissue binding the home front to the combat zone. And in a society anxious about its very survival, portraits of statesmen and generals provided reassuring testimony of steadfast character; Lincoln used photography to assert his leadership over a fractious polity. When Mathew Brady exhibited "The Dead of Antietam" in the fall of 1862, the horror and pity of war disoriented Americans. Sensation was replacing rationality in the public's mind.

In the writings from *The Atlantic* and photographs from the National Portrait Gallery in the pages that follow, one can see a people grappling to make sense of life in the cauldron of war. And one can see, in hesitant and undeveloped ways, the emergence of the modern United States of America.

—David C. Ward, historian, and Frank H. Goodyear, associate curator of photographs, National Portrait Gallery

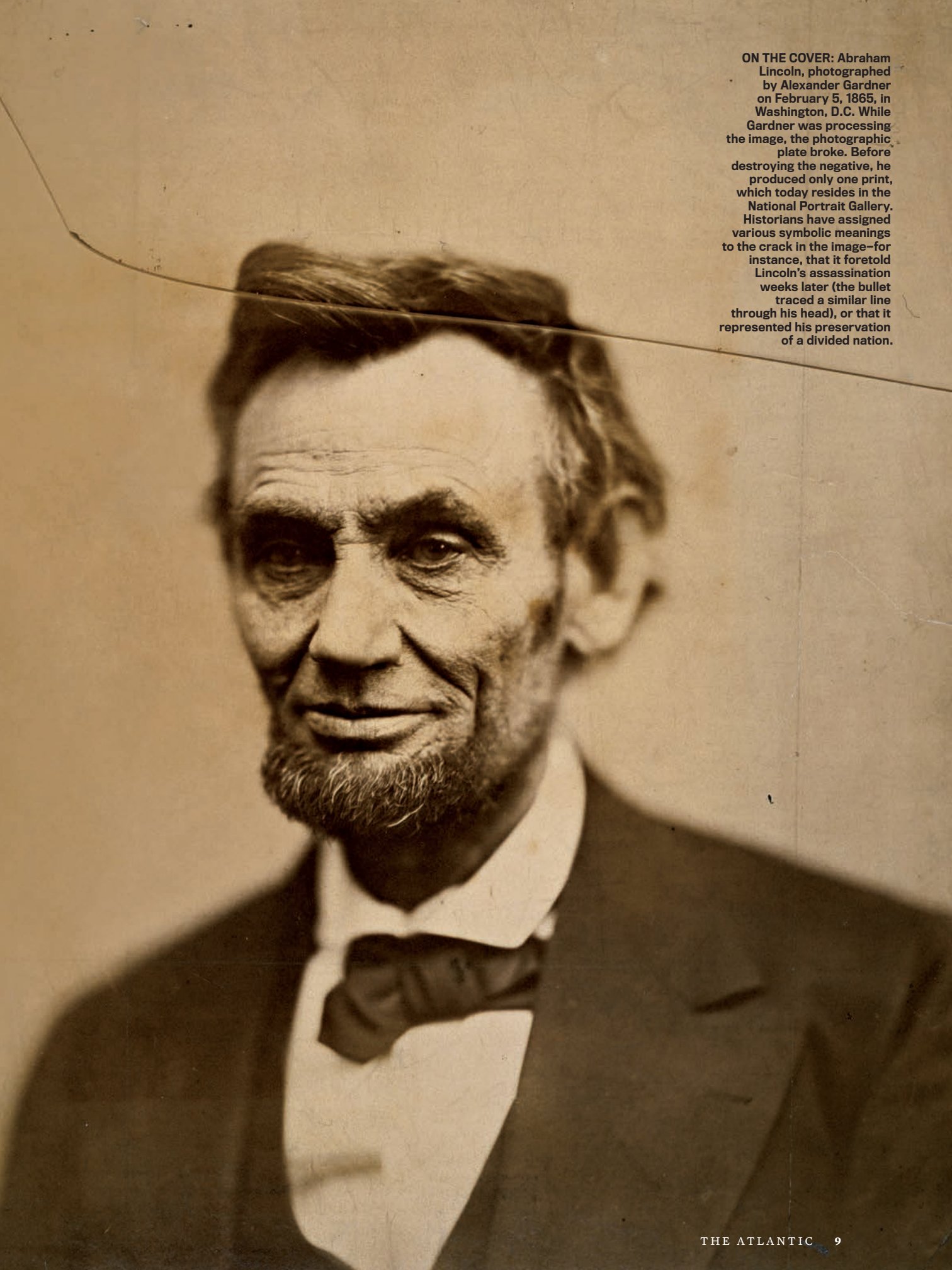
STEPHEN VOSS

Perfecting Our Union

The president of the United States reflects on what Abraham Lincoln means to him, and to America.

BY
BARACK OBAMA

LINCOLN IS A PRESIDENT I TURN TO OFTEN. From time to time, I'll walk over to the Lincoln Bedroom and reread the handwritten Gettysburg Address encased in glass, or reflect on the Emancipation Proclamation, which hangs in the Oval Office, or pull a volume of his writings from the library in search of lessons to draw. ¶ Always thoughtful, always eloquent, Lincoln's writings speak to me as they speak to so many Americans, reminding us what is best about ourselves and the Union he saved: that though we may have our differences, we are one people, and we are one nation, united by a common creed. ¶ That, I believe, is why, a century and a half after he took office, Lincoln is revered by the American people. Such reverence is richly deserved, but it comes at a cost. The Lincoln who holds a place in our national memory is less a man than an icon—a face carved in black hills, a marble giant towering over us on a mall. ¶ What makes Alexander Gardner's print so resonant, then, is its humanity. Here is Lincoln as he was, his eyes weary, his forehead wrinkled, wearing an expression, wrote a poet, of "deep latent sadness." But Gardner also captures something else. An eyebrow, arched. An upturned lip. The faintest hint of a smile. There is, in the photographer's print, something of his subject's spirit. ¶ Three years before he entered Gardner's studio, Lincoln termed the United States, in one of his early messages to Congress, "the last best hope of earth." Considering that our fragile Union was not 100 years old and stood a good chance of dissolving, it was an improbable thing to say. But Lincoln saw beyond the bloodshed and division. He saw us not only as we were, but as we might be. And he calls on us through the ages to commit ourselves to the unfinished work he so nobly advanced—the work of perfecting our Union.



ON THE COVER: Abraham Lincoln, photographed by Alexander Gardner on February 5, 1865, in Washington, D.C. While Gardner was processing the image, the photographic plate broke. Before destroying the negative, he produced only one print, which today resides in the National Portrait Gallery. Historians have assigned various symbolic meanings to the crack in the image—for instance, that it foretold Lincoln's assassination weeks later (the bullet traced a similar line through his head), or that it represented his preservation of a divided nation.

1857–1861

PART I
PRE-WAR

IN 1857, AS TENSIONS OVER SLAVERY WERE COMING TO A HEAD, a group of writers, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., founded *The Atlantic* in Boston. The magazine's first issue appeared in November 1857, and in the ensuing months and years, its contributors—writing almost uniformly from a Northern-abolitionist perspective—chronicled the crisis tearing the country apart. Its coverage of the years leading up to the war—some contemporaneous, some written decades later—included calls to action, dramatic accounts by former slaves, and firsthand reportage, as well as poetry, fiction, and memoir.

In one of the first instances of photography being used as propaganda, this portrait of an escaped slave was circulated widely among abolitionists. One newspaper wrote that the image "should be multiplied by the 100,000 and scattered over the states. It tells the story in a way that even Mrs. Stowe cannot approach, because it tells the story to the eye."

MATHEW BRADY STUDIO/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Where Will It End?

BACKGROUND

WHEN *THE ATLANTIC* debuted in November 1857, the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision—declaring that slaves were not and could never become citizens, and also that Congress lacked the authority to outlaw slavery in federal territories—had been handed down just eight months earlier, and violence raged in Kansas over the question of popular sovereignty.

The magazine's first broadside against the South's "peculiar institution" appeared the following month, written by the author and anti-slavery activist Edmund Quincy, of a prominent Boston political family. Articulating a perspective common among Northern abolitionists, Quincy characterized the South as morally bankrupt and culturally and economically backward, and urged Northerners to take a decisive stand against slavery's territorial and political encroachments.

By EDMUND QUINCY

WITH ALL THE means and materials of wealth, the South is poor. With every advantage for gathering strength and self-reliance, it is weak and dependent.—Why this difference between the [North and the South]?

The *why* is not far to seek. It is to be found in the reward which Labor bestows on those that pay it due reverence in the one case, and the punishment it inflicts on those offering it outrage and insult in the other ... A man in fetters cannot do the task-work that one whose limbs are unshackled looks upon as a pastime ... Hence the difference so often noticed between tracts lying side by side, separated only by a river or an imaginary line; on one side of which, thrift and comfort and gathering wealth, growing villages, smiling farms, convenient habitations, school-houses, and churches make the landscape beautiful; while on the other, slovenly husbandry, dilapidated mansions, sordid huts, perilous wastes, horrible roads, the rare spire, and rarer village school betray all the nakedness of the land ...

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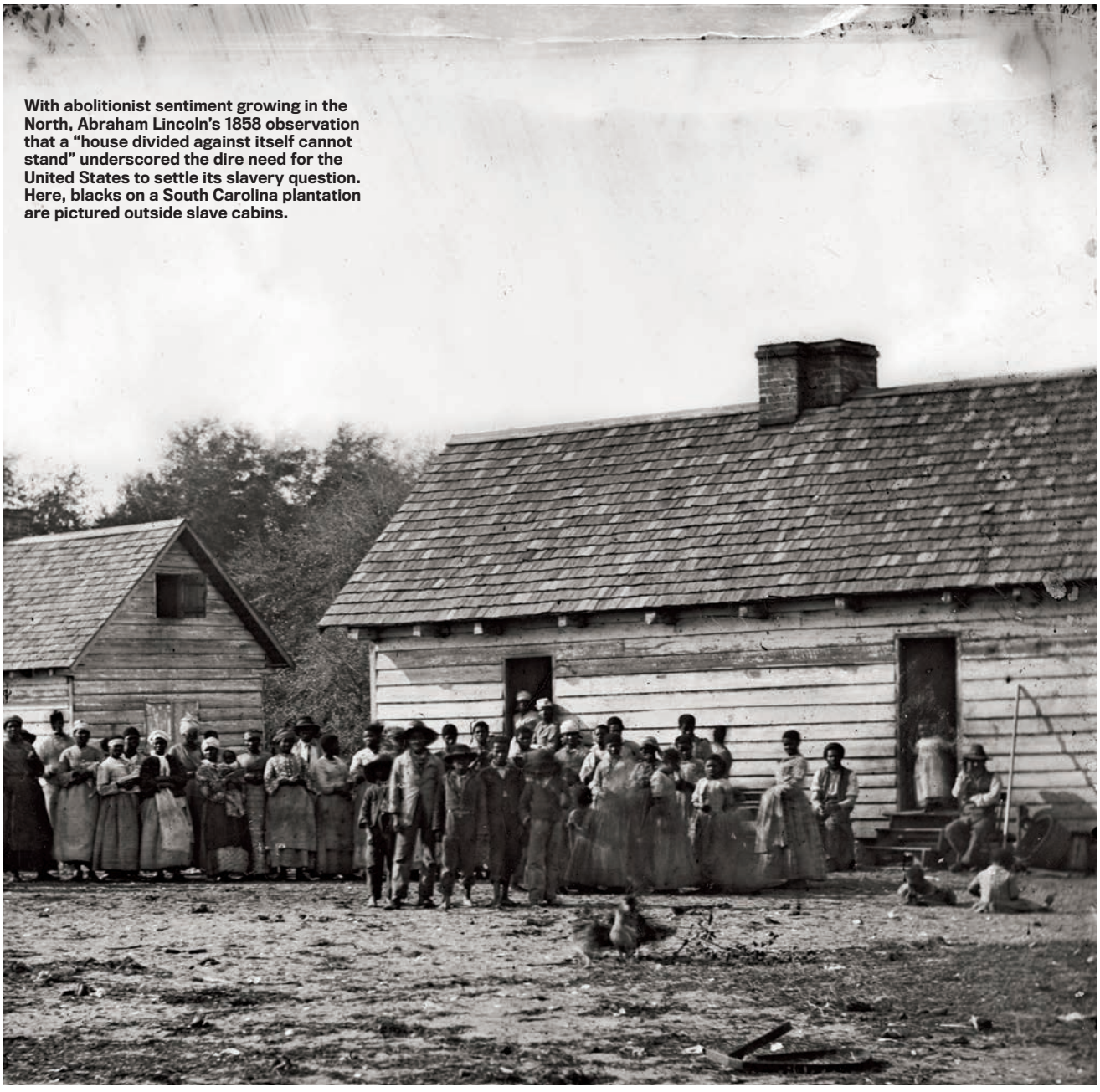
True prosperity can never grow up from wrong and wickedness ... But that the stronger half of the nation should suffer the weaker to rule over it ... that the richer region should submit to the political tyranny of its impoverished moiety ... is indeed a marvel and a mystery. That the intelligent, educated, and civilized portion of a race should consent to the sway of their ignorant, illiterate, and barbarian companions in the commonwealth ... is an astonishment ...

In the blighting shadow of Slavery letters die and art cannot live. What book has the South ever given to the libraries of the world? What work of art has she ever added to its galleries? What artist has she produced that did not instinctively fly, like Allston, to regions in which genius could breathe and art was possible? What statesman has she reared, since Jefferson died and Madison ceased to write? ...

The baleful influence ... ever shed by Slavery on our national history and our public men has not yet spent its malignant forces ... The line drawn in 1820, which the slaveholders plighted their faith



With abolitionist sentiment growing in the North, Abraham Lincoln's 1858 observation that a "house divided against itself cannot stand" underscored the dire need for the United States to settle its slavery question. Here, blacks on a South Carolina plantation are pictured outside slave cabins.

TIMOTHY H. O'SULLIVAN/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Slavery should never overstep, insolently as well as infamously obliterated,—Slavery presiding in the Cabinet, seated on the Supreme Bench, absolute in the halls of Congress,—no man can say what shape its next aggression may not take to itself ... Parasites everywhere instinctively feel that a zeal for the establishment of Slavery where it has been abolished, or its introduction where it had been prohibited, is the highest recommendation to the Executive favor ... Mighty events are at hand, even at the door; and the mission of them all will be to fix Slavery firmly and forever on the throne of this nation ...

Is our spirit effectually broken? Is the brand of meanness and compromise burnt in uneffaceably upon our souls? and are we never to be roused, by any indignities, to fervent resentment and effectual resistance? The answer to these grave questions lies with ourselves alone ...

We believe that the days of this ignominious subjection are already numbered ...

The people of the North submit to the domination of the South because they are used to it, and are doubtful as to what may replace it. Whenever the millions, North and South, whom Slavery grinds under her heel, shall be resolutely minded that her usurpation shall cease, it will disappear, and forever. As soon as the stone is thrown the giant will die, and men will marvel that they endured him so long. But this can only come to pass by virtue of a change yet to be wrought in the hearts and minds of men ... The ideal of a true republic, of a government of laws made and executed by the people, of which bards have sung and prophets dreamed, and for which martyrs have suffered and heroes died, may yet be possible to us, and the great experiment of this Western World be indeed a Model, instead of a Warning to the nations. *A*

Nat Turner's Insurrection

BACKGROUND

IN THE EARLY YEARS of the 19th century, some Southern planters took pains to treat their slaves well, as healthy slaves were more likely to work efficiently and reproduce. Slaveholders contended that the master-slave relationship was a mutually beneficial one.

But periodic slave uprisings gave the lie to such a notion. The most notorious uprising took place in the summer of 1831, when a Virginia slave named Nat Turner led a rampage that left more than 50 whites dead. Whites retaliated by murdering more than 100 blacks, slave and free alike; imposing new restrictions throughout the South; and seizing and destroying Northern abolitionist literature.

In 1861, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an abolitionist, minister, and frequent *Atlantic* contributor (and sometime assistant editor), drew on newspaper reports, Turner's published confession, and accounts by witnesses to chronicle Turner's insurrection. The following year, Higginson would become colonel of the Union's first black regiment, the First South Carolina Volunteers (an experience he also wrote about; see page 76).

By THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

NEAR THE SOUTHEASTERN border of Virginia, in Southampton County, there is a neighborhood known as "The Cross Keys." It lies fifteen miles from Jerusalem, the county-town or "court-house," seventy miles from Norfolk, and about as far from Richmond ... Up to Sunday, the twenty-first of August, 1831, there was nothing to distinguish it from any other rural, lethargic, slipshod Virginia neighborhood, with the due allotment of mansion-houses and log-huts, tobacco-fields and "old-fields," horses, dogs, negroes, "poor white folks," so called, and other white folks, poor without being called so. One of these last was Joseph Travis, who had recently married the widow of one Putnam Moore, and had unfortunately wedded to himself her negroes also.

In the woods on the plantation of Joseph Travis, upon the Sunday just named, six slaves met at noon for what is called in the Northern States a picnic and in the Southern a barbecue. The bill of fare was to be simple: one brought a pig, and another some brandy, giving to the meeting an aspect so cheaply convivial that no one would have imagined it to be the final consummation of a conspiracy which had been for six months in preparation ... The party had remained together from twelve to three o'clock, when a seventh man joined them,—a short, stout, powerfully built person, of dark mulatto complexion and strongly-marked African features, but with a face full of expression and resolution. This was Nat Turner.

He was at this time nearly thirty-one years old, having been born on the second of October, 1800. He had belonged originally to Benjamin Turner,—whence his last name, slaves having usually no patronymic,—had then been transferred to Putnam Moore, and then to his present owner. He had, by his own account, felt himself singled out from childhood for some great work ... His moral faculties were very strong, so that white witnesses admitted that he had never been known to swear an oath, to drink a drop of spirits, or to commit a theft ...

Eleven hours [this group] remained [at the barbecue], in anxious consultation: one can imagine those terrible dusky faces, beneath the funereal woods, and amid the flickering of pine-knot torches, preparing that stern revenge whose shuddering echoes should ring through the land so long. Two things were at last decided: to

OPPOSITE: A pair of former slaves, photographed after their escape. Across the South, in the years leading up to the war, the thought of slave uprisings struck fear in the hearts of slave-owners.

CORBIS

begin their work that night, and to begin it with a massacre so swift and irresistible as to create in a few days more terror than many battles, and so spare the need of future bloodshed ...

Swift and stealthy as Indians, the black men passed from house to house,—not pausing, not hesitating, as their terrible work went on. In one thing they were humaner than Indians or than white men fighting against Indians,—there was no gratuitous outrage beyond the death-blow itself, no insult, no mutilation; but in every house they entered, that blow fell on man, woman, and child,—nothing that had a white skin was spared. From every house they took arms and ammunition, and from a few, money; on every plantation they found recruits: those dusky slaves, so obsequious to their master the day before, so prompt to sing and dance before his Northern visitors, were all swift to transform themselves into fiends of retribution now; show them sword or musket and they grasped it, though it were an heirloom from Washington himself. The troop increased from house to house,—first to fifteen, then to forty, then to sixty. Some were armed with muskets, some with axes, some with scythes; some came on their masters' horses. As the numbers increased, they could be divided, and the awful work was carried on more rapidly still. The plan then was for an advanced guard of horsemen to approach each house at a gallop, and surround it till the others came up. Meanwhile what agonies of terror must have taken place within, shared alike by innocent and by guilty! what memories of wrongs inflicted on those dusky creatures, by some,—what innocent participation, by others, in the penance! The outbreak lasted for but forty-eight hours; but during that period fifty-five whites were slain, without the loss of a single slave.

The black men passed from house to house,—not pausing, not hesitating, as their terrible work went on. In every house, nothing that had a white skin was spared.

One fear was needless, which to many a husband and father must have intensified the last struggle. These negroes had been systematically brutalized from childhood; they had been allowed no legalized or permanent marriage; they had beheld around them an habitual licentiousness, such as can scarcely exist except in a Slave State; some of them had seen their wives and sisters habitually polluted by the husbands and the brothers of these fair white women who were now absolutely in their power. Yet I have looked through the Virginia newspapers of that time in vain for one charge of an indecent outrage on a woman against these triumphant and terrible slaves. Wherever they went, there went death, and that was all ...

When the number of adherents had increased to fifty or sixty, Nat Turner judged it time to strike at the county-seat, Jerusalem. Thither a few white fugitives had already fled, and couriers might thence be dispatched for aid to Richmond and Petersburg, unless promptly intercepted. Besides, he could there find arms, ammunition, and money; though they had already obtained, it is dubiously reported, from eight hundred to one thousand dollars. On the way it was necessary to pass the plantation of Mr. Parker, three miles from Jerusalem. Some of the men wished to stop here and enlist some of their friends. Nat Turner objected, as the delay might prove dangerous; he yielded at last, and it proved fatal.

He remained at the gate with six or eight men; thirty or forty went to the house, half a mile distant. They remained too long, and he went alone to hasten them. During his absence a party of eighteen white men came up suddenly, dispersing the small guard left at the gate; and when the main body of slaves emerged from the house, they encountered, for the first time, their armed masters. The blacks halted, the whites advanced cautiously within a hundred yards and fired a volley; on its being returned, they broke into disorder, and hurriedly retreated, leaving some wounded on the ground. The retreating whites were pursued, and were saved only by falling in with another band of fresh men from Jerusalem, with whose aid they turned upon the slaves, who in their turn fell into confusion ...

Sadly came Nat Turner at nightfall into those gloomy woods where forty-eight hours before he had revealed the details of his terrible plot to his companions. At the outset all his plans had succeeded; everything was as he predicted: the slaves had come readily at his call, the masters had proved perfectly defenceless. Had he not been persuaded to pause at Parker's plantation, he would have been master before now of the arms and ammunition at Jerusalem; and with these to aid, and the Dismal Swamp for a refuge, he might have sustained himself indefinitely against his pursuers ...

He found a spot which he judged safe, dug a hole under a

CORBIS

pile of fence-rails in a field, and lay there for six weeks, only leaving it for a few moments at midnight to obtain water from a neighboring spring. Food he had previously provided, without discovery, from a house near by.

Meanwhile an unbounded variety of rumors went flying through the State ...

Indeed, the most formidable weapon in the hands of slave-insurgents is always this blind panic they create, and the wild exaggerations which follow. The worst being possible, every one takes the worst for granted ...

Now the work of vengeance was to begin. In the frank phrase of a North Carolina correspondent,—"The massacre of the whites was over, and the white people had commenced the destruction of the negroes, which was continued after our men got there, from time to time, as they could fall in with them, all day yesterday." A postscript adds, that "passengers by the Fayetteville stage say, that, by the latest accounts, one hundred and twenty negroes had been killed,"—this being little more than one day's work.

These murders were defended as Nat Turner defended his: a fearful blow must be struck. In shuddering at the horrors of the insurrection, we have forgotten the far greater horrors of its suppression ...

The truth is, it was a Reign of Terror. Volunteer patrols rode in all directions, visiting plantations. "It was with the greatest difficulty," said General Brodnax before the House of Delegates, "and at the hazard of personal popularity and esteem, that the coolest and most judicious among us could exert an influence sufficient to restrain an indiscriminate slaughter of the blacks who were suspected." A letter from the Rev. G. W. Powell declares, "There are thousands of troops searching in every direction, and many negroes are killed every day: the exact number will never be ascertained." Petition after petition was subsequently presented to the legislature, asking compensation for slaves thus assassinated without trial.

Men were tortured to death, burned, maimed, and subjected to nameless atrocities. The overseers were called on to point out any slaves whom they distrusted, and if any tried to escape, they were shot down. Nay, worse than this. "A party of horsemen started from Richmond with the intention of killing every colored person they saw in Southampton County. They stopped opposite the cabin of a free colored man, who was hoeing in his little field. They called out, 'Is this Southampton County?' He replied, 'Yes, Sir, you have just crossed the line, by yonder tree.' They shot him dead and rode on." This is from the narrative of the editor of the "Richmond Whig," who was then on duty in the militia, and protested manfully against these outrages. "Some of these scenes," he adds, "are hardly inferior in barbarity to the atrocities of the insurgents."

A group of slaves, photographed around the outbreak of war. **OPPOSITE:** An escaped slave who later joined the Union army.

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These were the masters' stories. If even these conceded so much, it would be interesting to hear what the slaves had to report ...

Meanwhile the panic of the whites continued; for, though all others might be disposed of, Nat Turner was still at large ...

On Sunday, October 30th, a man named Benjamin Phipps, going out for the first time on patrol duty, was passing at noon a clearing in the woods where a number of pine-trees had long since been felled. There was a motion among their boughs; he stopped to watch it; and through a gap in the branches he saw, emerging from a hole in the earth beneath, the face of Nat Turner. Aiming his gun instantly, Phipps called on him to surrender. The fugitive, exhausted with watching and privation, entangled in the branches, armed only with a sword, had nothing to do but to yield; sagaciously reflecting, also, as he afterwards explained, that the woods were full of armed men, and that he had better trust fortune for some later chance of escape, instead of desperately attempting it then ...

Torn, emaciated, ragged, "a mere scarecrow," still wearing the hat perforated with buckshot, with his arms bound to his sides, he was driven before the levelled gun to the nearest house ...

When Nat Turner was asked by Mr. T. R. Gray, the counsel assigned him, whether, although defeated, he still believed in his own Providential mission, he answered, as simply as one who came thirty years after him, "Was not Christ crucified?" In the same spirit, when arraigned before the court, "he answered, 'Not guilty,' saying to his counsel that he did not feel so." But apparently no argument was made in his favor by his counsel, nor were any witnesses called ... He was therefore placed in the paradoxical position of conviction by his own confession, under a plea of "Not guilty." The arrest took place on the thirtieth of October, 1831, the confession on the first of November, the trial and conviction on the fifth, and the execution on the following Friday, the eleventh of November, precisely at noon. A

A True Story, Word for Word As I Heard It

BACKGROUND

A FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP between Samuel Clemens and *The Atlantic* began in 1869, when William Dean Howells, then an assistant editor, wrote a favorable review of Clemens's first book, *Innocents Abroad*. Clemens, who wrote under the name Mark Twain, was so pleased with the review that he stopped by *The Atlantic*'s offices to meet Howells. The two became friends, and after this first story was published in 1874, Twain's work began to appear regularly in the magazine.

Twain submitted the manuscript for this piece with the following note: "I enclose ... a 'True Story,' which has no humor in it ... I have not altered the old colored woman's story except to begin at the beginning, instead of the middle, as she did—and traveled both ways." The woman in question was Mary Ann Cord (rechristened "Aunt Rachel" here), the cook at his sister-in-law's farm in Elmira, New York.

Twain's straightforward writing style marked a dramatic departure from the stilted language and rarefied tastes of the New England literary establishment, and through its embrace of Twain, *The Atlantic* helped chart a new direction in American literature.

By MARK TWAIN

IT WAS SUMMER TIME, and twilight. We were sitting on the porch of the farm-house, on the summit of the hill, and "Aunt Rachel" was sitting respectfully below our level, on the steps,—for she was our servant, and colored. She was of mighty frame and stature; she was sixty years old, but her eye was undimmed and her strength unabated. She was a cheerful, hearty soul, and it was no more trouble for her to laugh than it is for a bird to sing. She was under fire, now, as usual when the day was done. That is to say, she was being chaffed without mercy, and was enjoying it. She would let off peal after peal of laughter, and then sit with her face in her hands and shake with throes of enjoyment which she could no longer get breath enough to express. At such a moment as this a thought occurred to me, and I said:—

"Aunt Rachel, how is it that you 've lived sixty years and never had any trouble?"

She stopped quaking. She paused, and there was a moment of silence. She turned her face over her shoulder toward me, and said, without even a smile in her voice:—

"Misto C——, is you in 'arnest?"

It surprised me a good deal; and it sobered my manner and my speech, too. I said:—

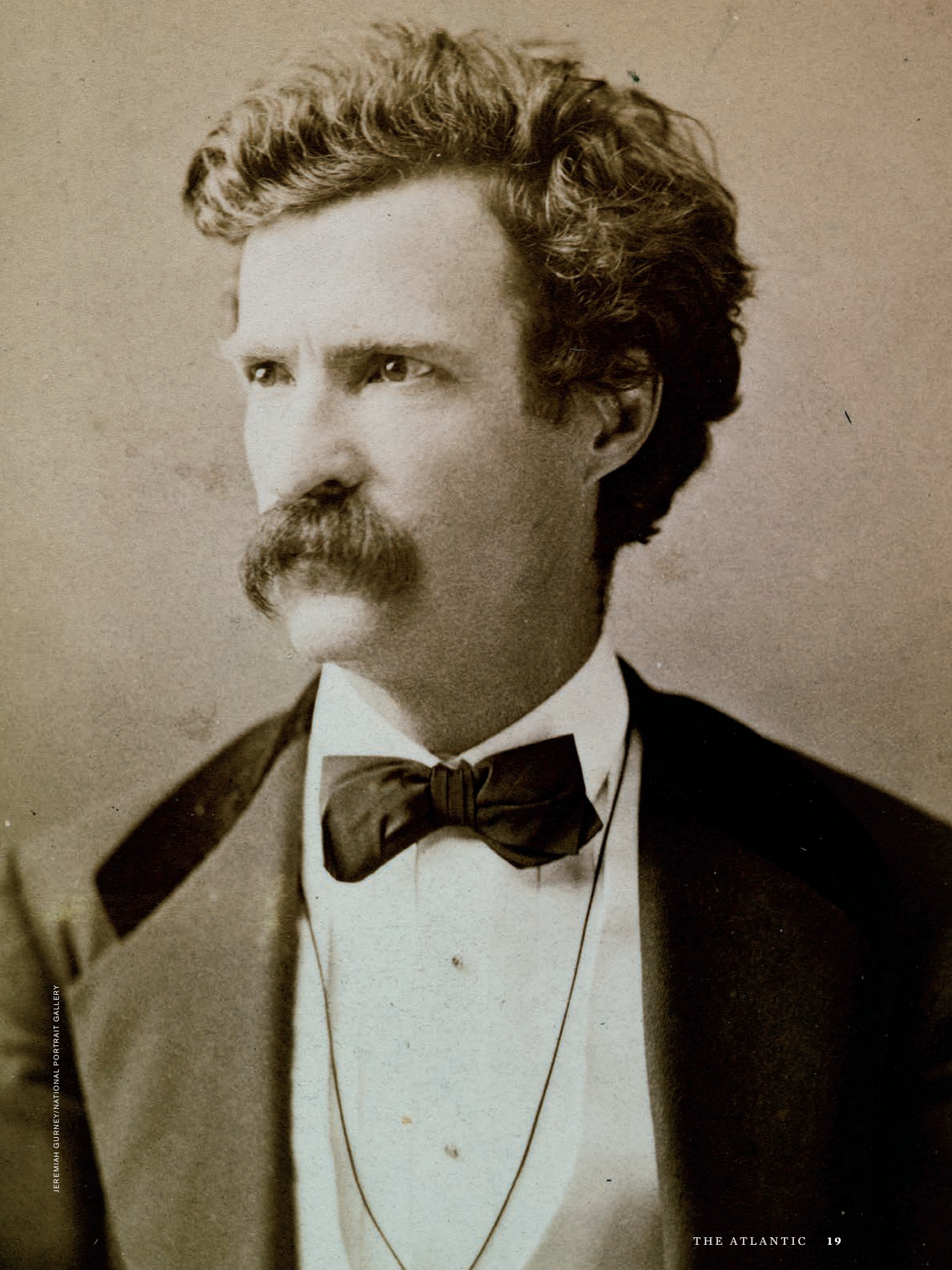
"Why, I thought—that is, I meant—why, you *can't* have had any trouble. I've never heard you sigh, and never seen your eye when there wasn't a laugh in it."

She faced fairly around, now, and was full of earnestness.

"Has I had any trouble? Misto C——, I's gwyne to tell you, den I leave it to you. I was bawn down 'mongst de slaves; I knows all 'bout slavery, 'case I ben one of 'em my own se'f. Well, sah, my ole man—dat's my husban'—he was lovin' an' kind to me, jist as kind as you is to yo' own wife. An' we had chil'en—seven chil'en—an' we loved dem chil'en jist de same as you loves yo' chil'en. Dey was black, but de Lord can't make no chil'en so black but what dey mother loves 'em an' wouldn't give 'em up, no, not for anything dat's in dis whole world.

"Well, sah, I was raised in Ole Fo'-ginny, but my mother she was raised in Maryland; an' my *souls*! she was turrible when she'd git started! My *lan*'! but she'd make de fur fly! When she'd git into dem tantrums, she always had one word dat she said.

OPPOSITE: For Twain, a humorist from the West, breaking into *The Atlantic* was an accomplishment he had aspired to for some time. As the author Ron Powers wrote in his biography of Twain, without the friendship and help of the magazine's editor, William Dean Howells, "Twain might have flared for a while, a regional curiosity among many, and then faded, forgotten." Ten years after this tale of slavery, Twain would create a literary icon in the escaped slave Jim in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.



JEREMIAH GURNEY/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

She'd straighten herse'f up an' put her fists in her hips an' say, 'I want you to understan' dat I wa' n't bawn in de mash to be fool' by trash! I's one o' de ole Blue Hen's Chickens, *I* is!' 'Ca'se, you see, dat's what folks dat's bawn in Maryland calls deyselves, an' dey's proud of it. Well, dat was her word. I don't ever forgit it, beca'se she said it so much, an' beca'se she said it one day when my little Henry tore his wris' awful, an' most busted his head, right up at de top of his forehead, an' de niggers did n't fly aroun' fas' enough to 'tend to him. An' when dey talk' back at her, she up an' she says, 'Look-a-heah!' she says, 'I want you niggers to understan' dat I wa' n't bawn in de mash to be fool' by trash! I's one o' de ole Blue Hen's Chickens, *I* is!' an' den she clar' dat kitchen an' bandage' up de chile herse'f. So I says dat word, too, when I's riled.

"Well, bymeby my ole mistis say she's broke, an' she got to sell all de niggers on de place. An' when I heah dat dey gwyne to sell us all off at oction in Richmon', oh de good gracious! I know what dat mean!"

"My marster he was a Confedrit colonel, an' I was his cook. So when de Unions took dat town, dey all run away an' lef' me in dat mons'us big house."

Aunt Rachel had gradually risen, while she warmed to her subject, and now she towered above us, black against the stars.

"Dey put chains on us an' put us on a stan' as high as dis po'ch,—twenty foot high,—an' all de people stood aroun', crowds an' crowds. An' dey'd come up dah an' look at us all roun', an' squeeze our arm, an' make us git up an' walk, an' den say, 'Dis one too ole,' or 'Dis one lame,' or 'Dis one don't 'mount to much.' An' dey sole my ole man, an' took him away, an' dey begin to sell my chil'en an' take *dem* away, an' I begin to cry; an' de man say, 'Shet up yo' dam blubberin',' an' hit me on de mouf wid his han'. An' when de las' one was gone but my little Henry, I grab' *him* clost up to my breas' so, an' I ris up an' says, 'You shan't take him away,' I says; 'I'll kill de man dat tetches him!' I says. But my little Henry whisper an' say, 'I gwyne to run away, an' den I work an' buy yo' freedom.' Oh, bless de chile, he always so good! But dey got him—dey got him, de men did; but I took and tear de clo'es mos' off of 'em, an' beat 'em over de head wid my chain; an' *dey* give it to *me*, too, but I did n't mine dat.

"Well, dah was my ole man gone, an' all my chil'en, all my seven chil'en—an' six of 'em I hain't set eyes on ag'in to dis day, an' dat's twenty-two year ago las' Easter. De man dat bought me b'long' in Newbern, an' he took me dah. Well, bymeby de years roll on an' de waw come. My marster he was a Confedrit colonel, an' I was his family's cook. So when de Unions took dat town, dey all run away an' lef' me all by myse'f wid de other niggers in dat mons'us big house. So de big Union officers move in dah, an' dey ask would I cook for *dem*. 'Lord bless you,' says I, 'dat's what I's *for*.'

"Dey wa' n't no small-fry officers, mine you, dey was de biggest dey *is*; an' de way dey made dem sojers mosey roun'! De Gen'l he tole me to boss dat kitchen; an' he say, 'If anybody come meddlin' wid you, you jist make 'em walk chalk; don't you be afeard,' he say; 'you's 'mong frens, now.'

"Well, I thinks to myse'f, if my little Henry ever got a chance to run away, he 'd make to de Norf, o' course. So one day I comes in

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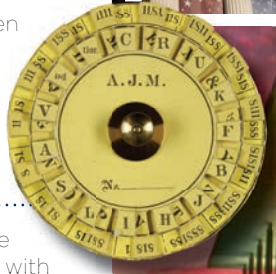
CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS
3-DAY ITINERARY

DAY 1

Begin your day with breakfast at the **Willard InterContinental**, where Lincoln stayed prior to his inauguration, and where Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his "I Have a Dream" speech. A short walk from Smithsonian Metro is the new **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial** 1. A 30-foot statue of the civil rights leader is the centerpiece of this moving memorial. Stop by the **National Archives** 2, where you can scan records of Civil War soldiers and learn about the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau. It's here that Alex Haley conducted the research that led to his landmark work, "Roots."

From there, it's a short walk to **Ford's Theatre** 3. Tour the museum that tells the story behind Lincoln's fateful visit in 1865 and listen in on a ranger-led interpretive program. Follow John Wilkes Booth's escape route near 9th and F Streets NW.

Have dinner at a DC classic like the **Occidental** or **Old Ebbitt Grill** then hop a cab to the **Kennedy Center** 4, which memorializes the former president by celebrating his passion for the arts. End your day with a moonlight visit to the **Lincoln Memorial**.



Civil War Cipher Disk, National Archives

DAY 2

Start with a morning visit to **Arlington National Cemetery** 5. View the graves of civil rights leader Medgar Evers and John F. Kennedy, along with thousands of notable soldiers and statesmen. A memorial to Robert E. Lee is located inside his hilltop family home, **Arlington House**. The cemetery's southern section was once known as Freedmen's Village and served as a home for freed and fugitive slaves during and following the war.

Make your next stop the **National Museum of American History** 7. Among its fascinating treasures: Lincoln's top hat, the Greensboro lunch counter made famous by sit-ins and the chairs that Lee and Grant sat in during the surrender at Appomattox. Head to the **National Portrait Gallery & Smithsonian American Art Museum** for a light lunch in the courtyard café. It's here that Lincoln hosted his second inaugural ball and where the last photograph taken of him is on display.

Take Metro to U Street NW. Near the station you'll discover the **African American Civil War Memorial & Museum** 6, honoring members of the U.S. Colored Troops that fought for freedom. Duck in to **Ben's Chili Bowl** for a chili half-smoke and join the diverse crowds to take in the nightlife on DC's historic "Black Broadway."

Lincoln's Top Hat, National Museum of American History

DAY 3

Pay a visit to **Cedar Hill** 10, the historic home of abolitionist, statesman and Lincoln confidante Frederick Douglass, and enjoy the stunning views of the DC skyline. The nearby **Anacostia Community Museum** tells the story of this fascinating neighborhood.

Spend the afternoon at **President Lincoln's Cottage** 9, the peaceful retreat where Lincoln spent the summers of 1862, 1863 and 1864, and where he penned pieces of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Take an evening stroll through Georgetown 8. DC's oldest neighborhood, Georgetown was home to both Union and Confederate sympathizers during the war. Stop for a bite to eat at a sidewalk café or on the scenic waterfront.

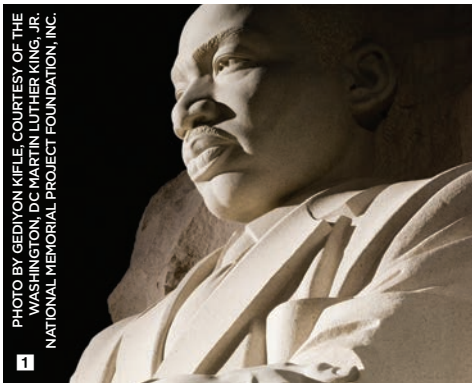


PHOTO BY GEDIYON KIFLE, COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON, DC MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL MEMORIAL PROJECT FOUNDATION, INC.
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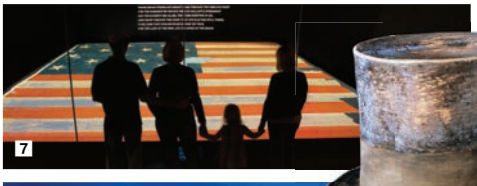
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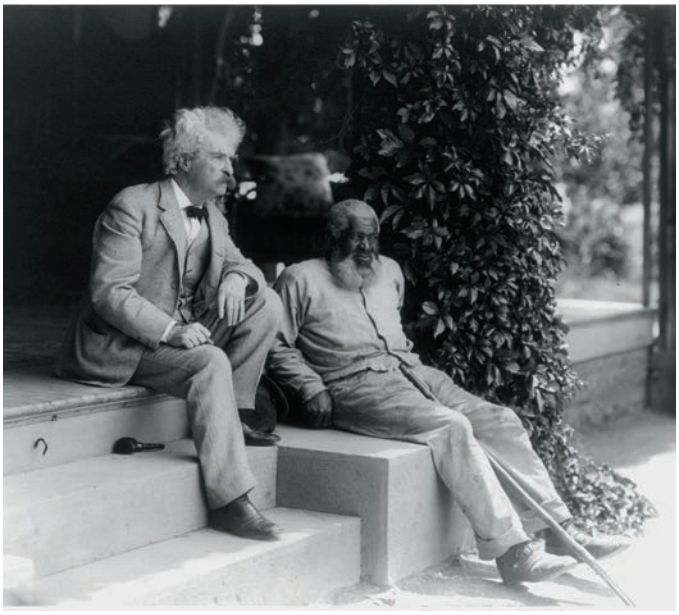
WASHINGTON DC 150 CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS

washington.org/cwcr

dah whah de big officers was, in de parlor, an' I drops a kurtchy, so, an' I up an' tole 'em 'bout my Henry, dey a-listenin' to my troubles jist de same as if I was white folks; an' I says, 'What I come for is beca'se if he got away and got up Norf whah you gemmen comes from, you might 'a' seen him, maybe, an' could tell me so as I could fine him ag'in; he was very little, an' he had a sk-yar on his lef' wris', an' at de top of his forehead.' Den dey mournful, an' de Gen'l say, 'How long sence you los' him?' an' I say, 'Thirteen year.' Den de Gen'l say, 'He would n't be little no mo', now—he's a man!'

"I never thought o' dat befo'! He was only dat little feller to *me*, yit. I never thought 'bout him growin' up an' bein' big. But I see it den. None o' de gemmen had run acrost him, so dey could n't do nothin' for me. But all dat time, do' *I* did n't know it, my Henry *was* run off to de Norf, years an' years, an' he was a barber, too, an' worked for hisse'f. An' bymeby, when de waw come, he ups an' he says, 'I's done barberin',' he says; 'I's gwyne to fine my ole mammy, less'n she's dead.' So he sole out an' went to whah dey was recruitin', an' hired hisse'f out to de colonel for his servant; an' den he went all froo de battles everywhah, huntin' for his ole mammy; yes indeedy, he'd hire to fust one officer an' den another, tell he 'd ransacked de whole Souf; but you see *I* did n't know nuffin 'bout *dis*. How was *I* gwyne to know it?



Twain, pictured with John T. Lewis, who lived near Twain in Elmira, New York. "I have not known a honester man or a more respect-worthy one," the author once said of his friend.

"Well, one night we had a big sojer ball; de sojers dah at Newbern was always havin' balls an' carryin' on. Dey had 'em in my kitchen, heaps o' times, 'ca'se it was so big. Mine you, I was *down* on sich doin's; beca'se my place was wid de officers, an' it rasp' me to have dem common sojers cavortin' roun' my kitchen like dat. But I alway' stood aroun' an' kep' things straight, I did; an' sometimes dey'd git my dander up, an' den I'd make 'em clar dat kitchen, mine I *tell* you!

"Well, one night—it was a Friday night—dey comes a whole plattoon f'm a *nigger* ridgment dat was on guard at de house,—de house was head-quarters, you know,—an' den I was jist a-*bilin*'! Mad? I was jist a-*boomin*'! I swelled aroun', an' swelled aroun'; I jist was a-itchin' for 'em to do somefin for to start me. An' dey was a-waltzin' an a-dancin'! *my*! but dey was havin' a time! an' I jist a-swellin' an' a-swellin' up! Pooty soon, 'long comes *sich* a spruce young nigger a-sailin' down de room wid a yaller wench roun' de wais'; an' roun' an' roun' an' roun' dey went, enough to make a body drunk to look at 'em; an' when dey got abreas' o' me, dey went to kin' o' balancin' aroun', fust on one leg, an' den on t'other, an' smilin' at my big red turban, an' makin' fun, an' I ups an' says, '*Git* along wid you!—rubbage!' De young man's face kin' o' changed, all of a sudden, for 'bout a second, but den he went to smilin' ag'in, same as he was befo'. Well, 'bout dis time, in comes some niggers dat played music an' b'long' to de ban', an' dey *never* could git along widout puttin' on airs. An' de very fust air dey put on dat night, I lit into 'em! Dey laughed, an' dat made me wuss. De res' o' de niggers got to laughin', an' den my soul *alive* but I was hot! My eye was jist a-blazin'! I jist straightened myself up, so,—jist as I is now, plum to de ceilin', mos',—an' I digs my fists into my hips, an' I says, 'Look-a-heah!' I says, 'I want you niggers to understan' dat I wa' n't bawn in de mash to be fool' by trash! I's one o' de ole Blue Hen's Chickens, *I* is!' an' den I see dat young man stan' a-starin' an' stiff, lookin' kin' o' up at de ceilin' like he fo'got somefin, an' could n't 'member it no mo'. Well, I jist march' on dem niggers,—so, lookin' like a gen'l,—an' dey jist cave' away befo' me an' out at de do'. An' as dis young man was a-goin' out, I heah him say to another nigger, 'Jim,' he says, 'you go 'long an' tell de cap'n I be on han' 'bout eight o'clock in de mawnin'; dey's somefin on my mine,' he says; 'I don't sleep no mo' dis night. You go 'long,' he says, 'an' leave me by my own se'f.'

"Dis was 'bout one o'clock in de mawnin'. Well, 'bout seven, I was up an' on han', gittin' de officers' breakfast. I was a-stoopin' down by de stove,—jist so, same as if yo' foot was de stove,—an' I'd opened de stove do wid my right han',—so, pushin' it back, jist as I pushes yo' foot,—an' I'd jist got de pan o' hot biscuits in my han' an' was 'bout to raise up, when I see a black face come aroun' under mine, an' de eyes a-lookin' up into mine, jist as I's a-lookin' up clost under yo' face now; an' I jist stopped *right dah*, an' never budged! jist gazed, an' gazed, so; an' de pan begin to tremble, an' all of a sudden I *knowed*! De pan drop' on de flo' an' I grab his lef' han' an' shove back his sleeve,—jist so, as I's doin' to you,—an' den I goes for his forehead an' push de hair back, so, an' 'Boy!' I says, 'if you an't my Henry, what is you doin' wid dis welt on yo' wris' an' dat sk-yar on yo' forehead? De Lord God ob heaven be praise', I got my own ag'in!'

"Oh, no, Misto C——, *I* hain't had no trouble. An' no *joy*!" A

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Freedman's Story

BACKGROUND

EVEN FERVENT abolitionists often spoke patronizingly of slaves—portraying them as the hapless beneficiaries of white assistance. But black Americans like William Parker had long been taking bold and effective action on their own. Born into slavery in Maryland, Parker escaped to the free state of Pennsylvania in 1842. He joined forces with fellow freedmen to fend off the slave-catchers who regularly ventured into Pennsylvania.

In September of 1851, a year after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act (which made harboring runaway slaves a serious crime), a Maryland slaveholder named Edward Gorsuch came north in search of his four escaped slaves. A showdown ensued when Gorsuch's posse knocked at Parker's door in the town of Christiana. The "Christiana Riot" garnered nationwide attention—as both a challenge to the legitimacy of the Fugitive Slave Act, and a harbinger of conflict to come.

In 1866, Parker wrote about his life for an *Atlantic* article; in this excerpt, he recalled the infamous events in Christiana.

By WILLIAM PARKER

A NUMBER OF US had formed an organization for mutual protection against slaveholders and kidnappers, and had resolved to prevent any of our brethren being taken back into slavery, at the risk of our own lives ... Kidnapping was so common ... that we were kept in constant fear. We would hear of slaveholders or kidnappers every two or three weeks; sometimes a party of white men would break into a house and take a man away, no one knew where; and, again, a whole family would be carried off. There was no power to protect them, nor prevent it. So completely roused were my feelings, that I vowed to let no slaveholder take back a fugitive, if I could but get my eye on him ...

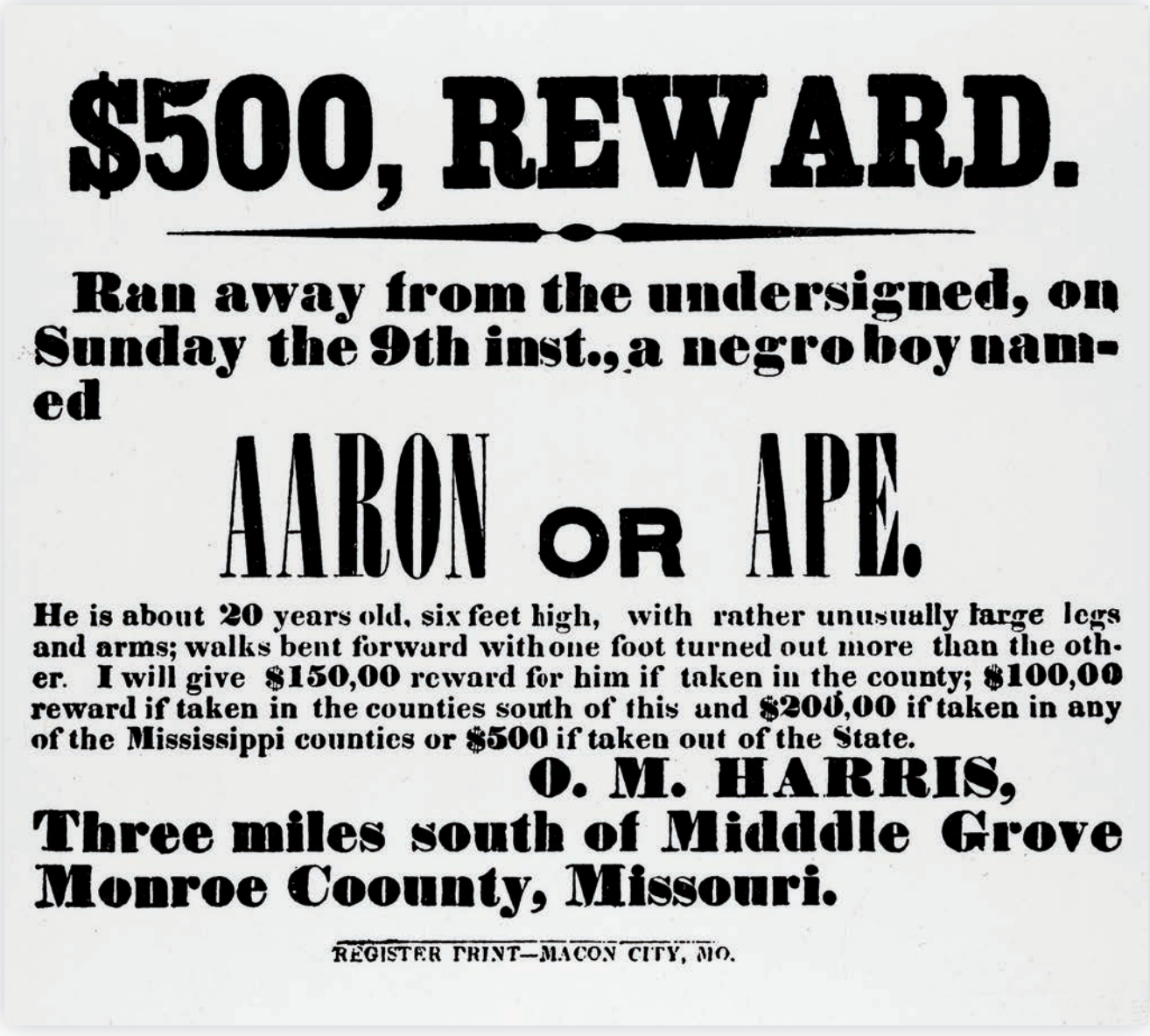
I was not at this time aware that in the city of Philadelphia there was a band of devoted, determined men,—few in number, but strong in purpose,—who were fully resolved to leave no means untried to thwart [slave-catchers] ... This little band of true patriots in Philadelphia united for the purpose of standing between the pursuer and the pursued, the kidnapper and his victim, and, regardless of all personal considerations, were ever on the alert, ready to sound the alarm to save their fellows from a fate far more to be dreaded than death. In this they had frequently succeeded, and many times had turned the hunter home bootless of his prey ...

Thus matters stood in Philadelphia on the 9th of September, 1851, when Mr. Gorsuch and his gang of Maryland kidnappers arrived there. Their presence was soon known to the little band of true men who were called "The Special Secret Committee." They had agents faithful and true as steel; and through these agents the whereabouts and business of Gorsuch and his minions were soon discovered ...

The trusty agent of this Special Committee, Mr. Samuel Williams, of Philadelphia,—a man true and faithful to his race, and courageous in the highest degree,—came to Christiana travelling most of the way in company with the very men whom Gorsuch had employed to drag into slavery four as good men as ever trod the earth. These Philadelphia roughs, with their Maryland associates, little dreamed that the man who sat by their side carried with him their inglorious defeat ...

The information brought by Mr. Williams spread through the vicinity like a fire in the prairies; and when I went home from my work in the evening, I found [a group of local men] at my house, all of them excited about the rumor ... This was the 10th

OPPOSITE: A reward poster from Monroe County, Missouri, dating from the 1850s. With the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, even residents of free states and territories were obligated to return escaped slaves to Southern slaveholders.



$500, REWARD.

Ran away from the undersigned, on Sunday the 9th inst., a negro boy named

AARON OR APE.

He is about 20 years old, six feet high, with rather unusually large legs and arms; walks bent forward with one foot turned out more than the other. I will give $150,00 reward for him if taken in the county; $100,00 reward if taken in the counties south of this and $200,00 if taken in any of the Mississippi counties or $500 if taken out of the State.

O. M. HARRIS,
Three miles south of Midddle Grove
Monroe Coounty, Missouri.

REGISTER PRINT—MACON CITY, MO.

of September, 1851. They stopped for the night with us, and we went to bed as usual. Before daylight, [one of the men,] Joshua Kite rose, and started for his home. Directly, he ran back to the house, burst open the door, crying, "O William! kidnappers! kidnappers!"

He said that, when he was just beyond the yard, two men crossed before him, as if to stop him, and others came up on either side. As he said this, they had reached the door. Joshua ran up stairs, (we slept up stairs,) and they followed him; but I met them at the landing, and asked, "Who are you?"

The leader, Kline, replied, "I am the United States Marshal."

I then told him to take another step, and I would break his neck.

He again said, "I am the United States Marshal."

I told him I did not care for him nor the United States. At that he turned and went down stairs ...

My wife came to me and asked if she should blow the horn, to bring friends to our assistance. I assented, and she went to the garret for the purpose ...

It was a custom with us, when a horn was blown at an unusual hour, to proceed to the spot promptly to see what was the matter ...

When the white men ran, they scattered. I ran after Nathan Nelson, but could not catch him. I never saw a man run faster. Returning, I saw Joshua Gorsuch coming, and Pinckney behind him. I reminded him that he would like "to take hold of a nigger," told him that now was his "chance," and struck him a blow on the side of the head, which stopped him ...

Having driven the slavocrats off in every direction, our party now turned towards their several homes. Some of us, however, went back to my house, where we found several of the neighbors.

The scene at the house beggars description. Old Mr. Gorsuch was lying in the yard in a pool of blood, and confusion reigned both inside and outside of the house ...

The riot, so called, was now entirely ended. The elder Gorsuch was dead; his son and nephew were both wounded, and I have reason to believe others were,—how many, it would be difficult to say. Of our party, only two were wounded. A

KEAN COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES

Paul Revere's Ride

■ *By* HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW | JANUARY 1861

BACKGROUND **HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW'S most popular work has been passed down through the generations as the quintessential Revolutionary War poem. But in fact it was the rift over slavery that Longfellow had in mind as he wrote the classic story of Paul Revere.**

Longfellow was a committed abolitionist who had been quietly donating money toward buying the freedom of slaves. The day John Brown was hanged in 1859, the poet observed in his diary, "This will be a great day in our history, the date of a new Revolution quite as much needed as the old one."

With "Paul Revere's Ride," he sought to create a patriotic national myth that would remind readers of their shared heroic past while galvanizing them to once more stand up for the nation's founding principles. His poem didn't exactly match the historic record—for example, Paul Revere was intercepted by the British before he got to Concord—but Longfellow was less concerned with being accurate than with fashioning a stirring common history.

On December 20, 1860, the day South Carolina seceded from the Union, the January 1861 issue of *The Atlantic* came out, featuring Longfellow's poem.

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five:
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend,—"If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry-arch
Of the North-Church-tower, as a signal-light,—
One if by land, and two if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said good-night, and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somersett, British man-of-war:
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon, like a prison-bar,
And a huge, black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack-door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church,
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
Up the light ladder, slender and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still,
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black, that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride,
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed on the landscape far and near,

Then impetuous stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely, and spectral, and sombre, and still.

And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height,
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village-street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed that flies fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

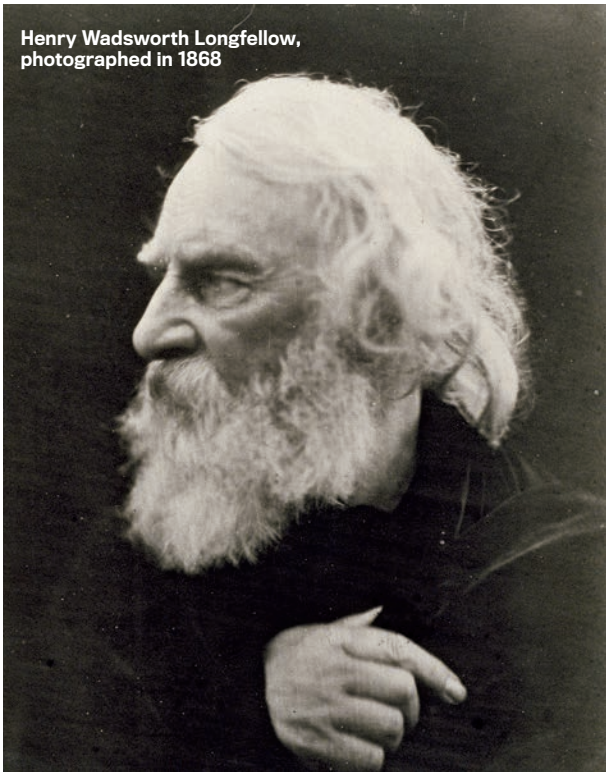
It was twelve by the village-clock,
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river-fog,
That rises when the sun goes down.

It was one by the village-clock,
When he rode into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village-clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning-breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read
How the British regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard-wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,—
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beat of that steed,
And the midnight-message of Paul Revere.



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, photographed in 1868

JULIA MARGARET CAMERON/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

John Brown and His Friends

BACKGROUND

IN 1856, JOHN BROWN, a militant abolitionist who'd had 20 children and a string of failed businesses, earned notoriety by murdering five pro-slavery men in Kansas. The following year, he hatched the idea of establishing a militarized outpost of abolitionists in the Blue Ridge Mountains. His plan was to seize the federal armory at Harpers Ferry and arm the legions of slaves he imagined would rise up. Though the band of men he led into Harpers Ferry in October 1859 did seize the armory, the raid was quickly suppressed and Brown was hanged for conspiracy, treason, and murder.

Across the North, Brown gained fame as a martyr, but the South was horrified, both by Brown's actions and by the celebration of them.

Shortly after the raid, it came to light that Brown had obtained secret funding from New England abolitionists. After the war, one of those supporters, Franklin Sanborn (writing anonymously and referring to himself in the third person), recounted how he and his fellow abolitionists—through clandestine meetings and a "secret committee"—had funneled money and weapons to Brown's cause.

By FRANKLIN SANBORN

AT THE BEGINNING of the year 1858, nobody in Massachusetts, except here and there a fugitive slave perhaps, had heard of John Brown's plan for the invasion of Virginia, though he had made much progress toward its execution ...

Brown suddenly left Kansas without the knowledge of his friends there, and appeared, in the beginning of February, 1858, at the house of Frederick Douglass in Rochester, New York. From there he wrote, February 2, to Theodore Parker, George L. Stearns, F. B. Sanborn, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, asking them to aid him in raising a small sum of money to carry out "an important measure in which the world has a deep interest" ...

Mr. Sanborn ... made the journey [to see Brown in Rochester] alone, and reached the place of meeting on the evening of Washington's birthday, February 22d. A few friends of Brown were there gathered ... In the long winter evening which followed, the whole outline of Brown's campaign in Virginia was laid before the little council, to the astonishment and almost the dismay of all present. The constitution which he had drawn up for the government of his men, and such territory as they might occupy, and which was found among his papers at the Kennedy Farm, was exhibited by Brown, its provisions recited and explained, the proposed movements of his men indicated, and the middle of May was named as the time of the attack. To begin this hazardous adventure he asked for but eight hundred dollars, and would think himself rich with a thousand ...

After what has passed in the last ten years, no one can picture to himself the startling effect of such a plan, heard for the first time in the dismal days of Buchanan's administration, when Floyd was Secretary of War, and Jefferson Davis and Senator Mason omnipotent in Congress. Those who listened to Captain Brown had been familiar with the bold plots and counter-plots of the Kansas border, and had aided the escape of slaves in various parts of the South. But to strike at once at the existence of slavery, by an organized force, acting for years, if need be, on the dubious principles of guerilla warfare, and exposed, perhaps, to the whole power of the country, was

OPPOSITE: Thought to be the earliest portrait of John Brown, this daguerreotype was made by the African American photographer Augustus Washington. Produced in 1846 or 1847–about a decade before Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry–the image shows Brown with a hand raised, calling to mind the pledge he made to fight for the eradication of slavery. Brown was living at this time in Springfield, Massachusetts, and, finding himself increasingly stirred by the anti-slavery fervor emanating from Boston, he had begun planning for armed action against slave-holding Southerners.

something they had never contemplated. That was the long-meditated plan of a poor, obscure, old man, uncertain at best of another ten years' lease of life, and yet calmly proposing an enterprise which, if successful, might require a whole generation to accomplish. His friends listened until late at night, proposing objections and raising difficulties, but nothing shook the purpose of the old Puritan. To every objection he had an answer; every difficulty had been foreseen and provided for; the great difficulty of all, the apparent hopelessness of undertaking anything so vast with such slender means, he met with the words of Scripture, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

To all suggestions of delay until a more favorable time, he would reply, "I am nearly sixty years old; I have desired to do this work for many years; if I do not begin soon, it will be too late for me." He had made nearly all his arrangements; he had so many hundred weapons, so many men enlisted, all that he wanted was the small sum of money. With that he would open his campaign with the spring, and he did not doubt that his enterprise would pay. But those who heard him, while they looked upon the success of Brown's undertaking as a great blessing and relief to the country, felt also that to fail, contending against such odds, might hazard for many years the cause of freedom and union. They had not yet fully attained the sublime faith of Brown when he said, "A few men in the right, and knowing they are right, can overturn a king. Twenty men in the Alleghanies could break slavery to pieces in two years" ...

Sanborn returned to Boston on the 25th of February, and on the same day communicated the enterprise to Theodore Parker and Colonel Higginson. At the suggestion of Parker, Brown, who had gone to Brooklyn, New York, was invited to visit Boston secretly, and did so early in March, taking a room at the American House, in Hanover Street. He registered himself as "J. Brown," instead of writing out the customary "John" in full, and remained for the most part in his room (No. 126) during the four days of his stay ...

On the departure of Brown from Boston in March, 1858, the five persons mentioned—Parker, [Dr. S. G.] Howe, Higginson, Sanborn, and Stearns—formed themselves into a secret committee to raise for him the money (now set at $1,000) which it was agreed should be raised in New England ...

On the 24th of May a meeting of the Boston secret committee, with one of the principal friends of Brown's plan outside of New England, took place at the Revere House in Boston,—Parker, Howe, Sanborn, and Stearns being present, as before; and it was agreed that the execution of the plan should be postponed till the spring of 1859. In the mean time a larger sum of money—from two to three thousand dollars—was to be raised ... The secret committee were, in future, to know nothing in detail of Brown's plans. Brown was not himself present at this Revere House meeting, but came to Boston the next week, and was at the American House May 31st. Here he met all the committee, Higginson included; and, in the two or three days that he stayed, the Revere House arrangement was completed. He received the sole custody of the arms which had belonged to the Kansas Committee, and five hundred dollars beside; was to go to Kansas at once, but after that to use his own discretion; and, though still believing the postponement unwise, he left New England in good spirits the first week in June ...

It is unnecessary to speak here of the events at Harper's Ferry, or the subsequent history of the affair. Our purpose has been simply to put on record a few facts which have come to our knowledge concerning the origin and progress of the plan of attack there made, and the relation which a few persons, living or dead, bore to John Brown and his great enterprise. We have shown it to be exclusively his own, carried out by him with the help of a few men and women whom his strong purpose and magnetic personality attracted to his assistance. It is not known that any of these friends regret or blush for the aid they were able to render to a hero as undaunted, as patient, and as completely under Divine guidance as any whom history or romance describes. Those who are dead did not; those who are still living need not. A

AUGUSTUS WASHINGTON/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Bardic Symbols

■ *By* WALT WHITMAN | APRIL 1860

BACKGROUND **WALT WHITMAN, ULTIMATELY REVERED as "America's Bard," began his career as an obscure newspaperman. In 1855, seeking to expand his audience, he mailed his self-published collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass*, to Ralph Waldo Emerson, who replied with a laudatory note. Emerson was dismayed to discover that Whitman went on to publish the note in several newspapers, as well as having it printed up in a new edition of *Leaves of Grass*. But Emerson's tribute notwithstanding, the book was met with widespread indifference.**

In "Bardic Symbols," his first poem in *The Atlantic* (later republished as "As I Ebb'd With the Ocean of Life"), Whitman lamented his failure to make a mark and described his work as "insolent poems." Even *The Atlantic* was squeamish about his uninhibited effusions: James Russell Lowell, the editor, talked Whitman into striking two lines that he deemed too disturbing ("See from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last! / See the prismatic colors glistening and rolling!").

Whitman would go on to find renewed purpose through his experiences in the war. After his brother was injured at Fredericksburg in 1862, he traveled to Washington, where he was so overwhelmed by the horrors at the hospital that he decided to stay on as a volunteer nurse. Three years later, he would publish *Drum Taps*, considered the most important collection of poems to come out of the war.

I.

Elemental drifts!
Oh, I wish I could impress others as you and the waves have just been impressing me!

II.

As I ebbed with an ebb of the ocean of life,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walked where the sea-ripples wash you, Paumanok,
Where they rustle up, hoarse and sibilant,
Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her cast-aways,
I, musing, late in the autumn day, gazing off southward,
Alone, held by the eternal self of me that threatens to get the better of me and stifle me,
Was seized by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot,
In the ruin, the sediment, that stands for all the water and all the land of the globe.

III.

Fascinated, my eyes, reverting from the south, dropped, to follow those slender windrows,
Chaff, straw, splinters of wood, weeds, and the sea-gluten,
Scum, scales from shining rocks, leaves of salt-lettuce, left by the tide.

IV.

Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves the other side of me,
Paumanok, there and then as I thought the old thought of likenesses,
These you presented to me, you fish-shaped island,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walked with that eternal self of me, seeking types.

V.

As I wend the shores I know not,
As I listen to the dirge, the voices of men and women wrecked,
As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set in upon me,
As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me closer and closer,
At once I find, the least thing that belongs to me, or that I see or touch, I know not;
I, too, but signify a little washed-up drift,—a few sands and dead leaves to gather,
Gather, and merge myself as part of the leaves and drift.

VI.

Oh, baffled, lost,
Bent to the very earth, here preceding what follows,
Terrified with myself that I have dared to open my mouth,
Aware now, that, amid all the blab whose echoes recoil upon me, I have not once had the least idea who or what I am,
But that before all my insolent poems the real me still stands untouched, untold, altogether unreached,
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory signs and bows,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have written or shall write,
Striking me with insults, till I fall helpless upon the sand!

VII.

Oh, I think I have not understood anything,—not a single object,—and that no man ever can!

VIII.

I think Nature here, in sight of the sea, is taking advantage of me to oppress me,
Because I was assuming so much,
And because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all.

IX.

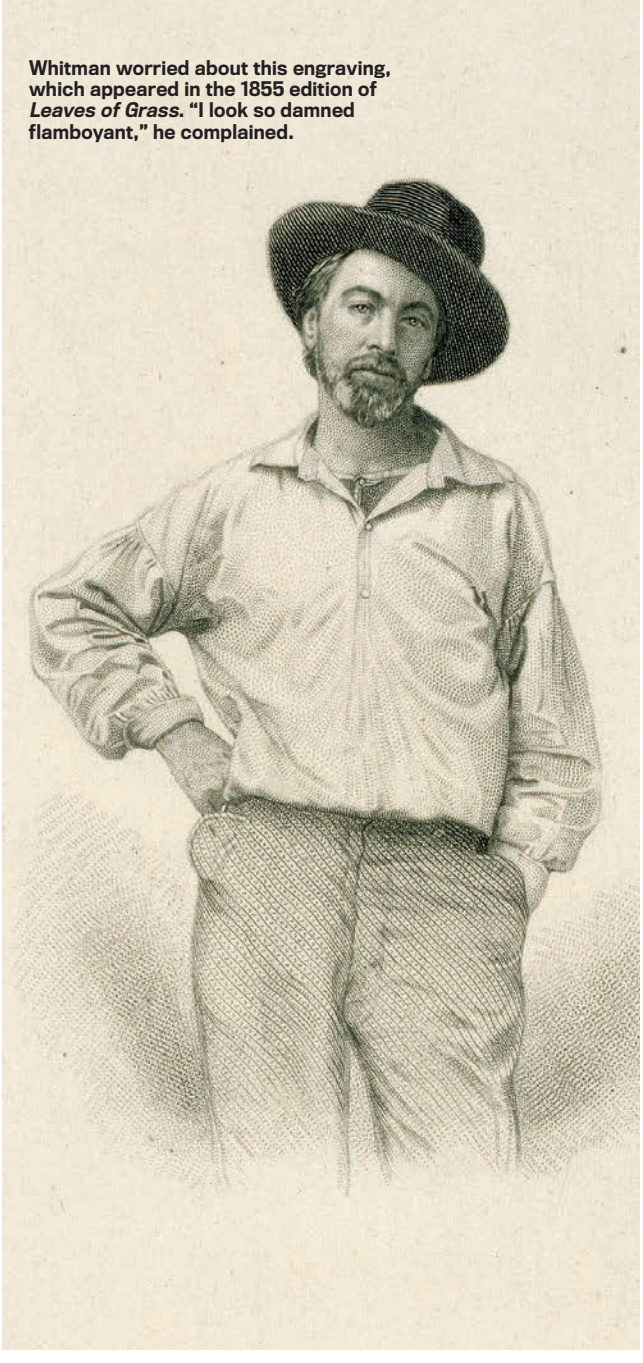
You oceans both! You tangible land! Nature!
Be not too stern with me,—I submit,—I close with you,—
These little shreds shall, indeed, stand for all.

X.

You friable shore, with trails of debris!
You fish-shaped island! I take what is underfoot:
What is yours is mine, my father!

XI.

I, too, Paumanok,
I, too, have bubbled up, floated the measureless float,
and been washed on your shores.



Whitman worried about this engraving, which appeared in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. "I look so damned flamboyant," he complained.

SAMUEL HOLLYER COPY AFTER GABRIEL HARRISON/ NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

XII.

I, too, am but a trail of drift and debris,—
I, too, leave little wrecks upon you, you fish-shaped island!

XIII.

I throw myself upon your breast, my father!
I cling to you so that you cannot unloose me,—
I hold you so firm, till you answer me something.

XIV.

Kiss me, my father!
Touch me with your lips, as I touch those I love!
Breathe to me, while I hold you close, the secret of the wondrous murmuring I envy!
For I fear I shall become crazed, if I cannot emulate it, and utter myself as well as it.

XV.

Sea-raff! Torn leaves!
Oh, I sing, some day, what you have certainly said to me!

XVI.

Ebb, ocean of life! (the flow will return,)—
Cease not your moaning, you fierce old mother!
Endlessly cry for your castaways! Yet fear not, deny not me,—
Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet, as I touch you, or gather from you.

XVII.

I mean tenderly by you,—
I gather for myself, and for this phantom, looking down where we lead, and following me and mine.

XVIII.

Me and mine!
We, loose windrows, little corpses,
Froth, snowy white, and bubbles,
Tufts of straw, sands, fragments,
Buoyed hither from many moods, one contradicting another,
From the storm, the long calm, the darkness, the swell,
Musing, pondering, a breath, a briny tear, a dab of liquid or soil,
Up just as much out of fathomless workings fermented and thrown,
A limp blossom or two, torn, just as much over waves floating, drifted at random,
Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature,
Just as much, whence we come, that blare of the cloud-trumpets,—
We, capricious, brought hither, we know not whence, spread out before you,—you, up there, walking or sitting,
Whoever you are,—we, too, lie in drifts at your feet.

The Reign of King Cotton

BACKGROUND

BY THE BEGINNING of April 1861, seven states had seceded from the Union, and Confederate and Union soldiers had been pointing their guns at each other across Charleston Harbor for several months. But not everyone was convinced that a violent showdown was the only way to resolve the slavery question.

The 25-year-old Harvard graduate Charles Francis Adams Jr. (grandson of President John Quincy Adams and great-grandson of President John Adams) suggested in *The Atlantic* that natural economic forces could prove more effective than military ones in eradicating slavery. If the "peaceful laws of trade" were left to follow their natural course, he argued, the South's cotton monopoly would crumble and the role of slavery in American life would fall away.

His theory was never put to the test: the month his article appeared, Brigadier General P. G. T. Beauregard's men fired on Fort Sumter, and war broke out. Adams would go on to fight for the Union at Gettysburg, and would later become an authority on the railroad industry, assuming the presidency of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1884.

By CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS JR.

IN THE YOUTHFUL West a new cry ... arises from one great and influential portion of the political and social thinkers of this country,—the cry that "There is no King but Cotton, and the African is its High-Priest" ... It is fair to presume that its reign has fully developed its policy and tendencies and is producing its fruit for good or evil, especially in the land of its disciples. It is well, therefore ... to try to disentangle the real questions at issue ... Looking at the policy and tendency of the reign of King Cotton ... to what end does it necessarily tend? To what results must it logically lead? ...

The Cotton States have turned all their energies to that one branch of industry. All other branches they abandon or allow to languish. They have no commerce of their own, few manufactories, fewer arts; and in their abandonment of self in their devotion to their King, they do not even raise their own hay or corn, dig their own coal, or fell their own timber; and at present, Louisiana is abandoning the sugar-culture, one of the few remaining exports of the South, to share more largely in the monopoly of cotton. Thus the community necessarily loses its fair proportions; it ceases to be self-sustaining; it exercises one faculty alone, until all the others wither and become impotent for very lack of use ...

Is there any result, any agency which can destroy this dynasty, and restore us as a people to the firm foundations upon which our experiment was begun? Can the present agitation effect this result? If it could, the country might joyfully bid a long farewell to "the canker of peace" and "hail the blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire"; but the sad answer, that it cannot ... seems almost too evident for discussion ... The remedy we must look for—the only one which can meet the exigencies of the case—must be one which will restore to the South the attributes of a democracy. It must cause our Southern brethren of their own free will to reverse their steps,—to return from their divergence ... It must lead them to new paths of industry. It must gently persuade them that a true national prosperity is not the result of a total abandonment of the community to the culture of one staple. It must make them self-dependent, so that no longer they shall have to import their corn from the Northwest, their lumbermen and hay from Maine, their manufactures from Massachusetts, their minerals from Pennsylvania, and to employ the shipping of the world ...

The world at present pays them an annual bribe of some $65,000,000 to learn none of these lessons. Their material interest teaches them to bow down to the shrine of King Cotton. Here, then, lies the remedy with the disease. The prosperity of the country in general, and of the South in particular, demands that the reign of King Cotton should cease,—that his dynasty should be destroyed. This result can be obtained but in one way, and that seemingly ruinous. The present monopoly in their great

In a scene typical of Southern plantation life around the time of the war, African Americans prepare cotton for a cotton gin.

staple commodity enjoyed by the South must be destroyed, and forever ...

If saved at all from the blight of this monopoly, the South will be saved, not in New York or Boston, but in Liverpool,—not by the thinkers of America, but by the merchants of England. The real danger of the Cotton dynasty lies not in the hostility of the North, but in the exigencies of the market abroad ... The operation of the laws of trade, as touching this monopoly, is beautifully simple. Already the indications are sufficient to tell us, that, under the sure, but silent working of those laws, the very profits of the Southern planter foreshadow the destruction of his monopoly. His dynasty rests upon the theory, that his negro is the only practical agency for the production of his staple. But the supply of African labor is limited, and the increased profit on cotton renders the cost of that labor heavier in its turn,—the value of the negro rising one hundred dollars for every additional cent of profit on a pound of cotton. The increased cost of the labor increases the cost of producing the cotton. The result is clear and the history of the cotton-trade has twice verified it. The increased profits on the staple tempt competition ... It is not credible that all the land adapted to the growth of the cotton-plant is confined to America; and, at the present value of the commodity, the land adapted to its growth would be sought out and used, though buried now in the jungles of India, the wellnigh impenetrable wildernesses of Africa, the table-lands of South America, or the islands of the Pacific ... Already, under the increased consumption, one-third of the cotton consumed at Liverpool is the product of climes other than our own ... To-day, India, for home-consumption and exportation, produces twice the amount of cotton produced in America; and, under the increased profit of late years, the importation into England from that country has risen from 12,324,200 pounds in 1830, to 77,011,839 pounds in 1840, and, finally, to 250,338,144 pounds in 1857, or nearly twenty per cent. of the whole amount imported, and more than one-fourth of the whole amount imported from America ... The interior of Africa, the great unknown and unexplored land, which for centuries has baffled the enterprise of travelers, seems about to make known her secrets under the persuasive arguments of trade, and to make her cotton, and not her children, her staple export in the future. In the last fact is to be seen a poetic justice. Africa, outraged, scorned, down-trodden, is, perhaps, to drag down forever the great enslaver of her offspring ...

The reign of King Cotton at present prices may be expected to continue some ten years longer ... The change from monopoly to competition, distributed over many years, will come with no sudden and destructive shock, but will take place imperceptibly. The fall of the dynasty will be gradual; and with the dynasty must fall its policy. Its fruits must be eradicated by time ... Education will be more sought for, as the policy which resisted it, and made its diffusion impossible, ceases to exist. With the growth of other branches of industry, labor will become respectable and profitable, and laborers will flock to the country; and a new, a purer, and more prosperous future will open upon the entire Republic ... And thus the peaceful laws of trade may do the work which agitation has attempted in vain. *A*

TIMOTHY H. O'SULLIVAN/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Recollections of Lincoln

BACKGROUND

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, a country lawyer who had served a two-year stint in Congress in the 1840s, was roused by his dismay over the Kansas-Nebraska Act to return to politics, challenging the senator from Illinois Stephen A. Douglas—the author of the law—for his seat in 1858. The bid was unsuccessful, but Americans everywhere were riveted by their debates.

The contrasts between the two men were striking: Douglas, a charismatic politician known as "the little giant" for his small stature and outsized effectiveness, argued for compromise, while Lincoln, a homely man with an oddly high-pitched voice, argued for holding a firm line against slavery's spread.

Henry Villard, a journalist covering the debates, met Lincoln at the second matchup and kept in touch. Years later, *The Atlantic* published an excerpt from Villard's memoirs in which he recalled his impressions of this aspiring politician, who, with his penchant for dirty jokes, had seemed like a surprising candidate.

By HENRY VILLARD

THE FIRST JOINT debate between Douglas and Lincoln which I attended (the second in the series of seven) took place on the afternoon of August 27, 1858, at Freeport, Illinois. It was the great event of the day, and attracted an immense concourse of people from all parts of the state. Douglas spoke first for an hour, followed by Lincoln for an hour and a half; upon which the former closed in another half hour. The Democratic spokesman commanded a strong, sonorous voice, a rapid, vigorous utterance, a telling play of countenance, impressive gestures, and all the other arts of the practiced speaker. As far as all external conditions were concerned, there was nothing in favor of Lincoln. He had a lean, lank, indescribably gawky figure, an odd-featured, wrinkled, inexpressive, and altogether uncomely face. He used singularly awkward, almost absurd, up-and-down and sidewise movements of his body to give emphasis to his arguments. His voice was naturally good, but he frequently raised it to an unnatural pitch. Yet the unprejudiced mind felt at once that, while there was on the one side a skillful dialectician and debater arguing a wrong and weak cause, there was on the other a thoroughly earnest and truthful man, inspired by sound convictions in consonance with the true spirit of American institutions. There was nothing in all Douglas's powerful effort that appealed to the higher instincts of human nature, while Lincoln always touched sympathetic chords. Lincoln's speech excited and sustained the enthusiasm of his audience to the end. When he had finished, two stalwart young farmers rushed on the platform, and, in spite of his remonstrances, seized and put him on their shoulders and carried him in that uncomfortable posture for a considerable distance. It was really a ludicrous sight to see the grotesque figure holding frantically to the heads of his supporters, with his legs dangling from their shoulders, and his pantaloons pulled up so as to expose his underwear almost to his knees. Douglas made dexterous use of this incident in his next speech, expressing sincere regret that, against his wish, he had used up his old friend Lincoln so completely that he had to be carried off the stage. Lincoln retaliated by saying at the first opportunity that he had known Judge Douglas long and well, but there was nevertheless one thing he could not say of him, and that was that the Judge always told the truth.

I was introduced to Lincoln at Freeport, and met him frequently afterwards in the course of the campaign. I must say frankly that, although I found him most approachable, good-natured, and full of wit and humor, I could not take a real personal liking to the man, owing to an inborn weakness for which he was even then notorious and so remained during his great public career. He was inordinately fond of jokes,

Abraham Lincoln, shown here in an 1864 photograph taken in Mathew Brady's studio, was one of the first politicians to recognize the power of photography. He understood that images would connect him to the electorate and also that people would read character from likeness. In this way, Lincoln helped color his legacy not just with the words he left behind, but also with images.

ANTHONY BERGER/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

anecdotes, and stories. He loved to hear them, and still more to tell them himself out of the inexhaustible supply provided by his good memory and his fertile fancy. There would have been no harm in this but for the fact that, the coarser the joke, the lower the anecdote, and the more risky the story, the more he enjoyed them, especially when they were of his own invention. He possessed, moreover, a singular ingenuity in bringing about occasions in conversation for indulgences of this kind. I have to confess, too, that aside from the prejudice against him which I felt on this account, I shared the belief of a good many independent thinkers at the time, including prominent leaders of the Republican party, that, with regard to separating more effectively the anti-slavery Northern from the pro-slavery Southern wing of the Democracy, it would have been better if the reëlection of Douglas had not been opposed.

The party warfare was hotly continued in all parts of the state from early summer till election day in November. Besides the seven joint debates, both Douglas and Lincoln spoke scores of times separately, and numerous other speakers from Illinois and other states contributed incessantly to the agitation. The two leaders visited almost every county in the state. I heard four of the joint debates, and six other speeches by Lincoln and eight by his competitor. Of course, the later efforts became substantial repetitions of the preceding ones, and to listen to them grew more and more tiresome to me. As I had seen something of political campaigns before, this one did not exercise the full charm of novelty upon me ...

I firmly believe that, if Stephen A. Douglas had lived, he would have had a brilliant national career. Freed by the Southern rebellion from all identification with pro-slavery interests, the road would have been open to the highest fame and position for which his unusual talents qualified him. As I took final leave of him and Lincoln, doubtless neither of them had any idea that within two years they would be rivals again in the Presidential race. I had it from Lincoln's own lips that the United States Senatorship was the greatest political height he at the time expected to climb. He was full of doubt, too, of his ability to secure the majority of the Legislature against Douglas. These confidences he imparted to me on a special occasion which I must not omit to mention in detail before leaving this subject.

He and I met accidentally, about nine o'clock on a hot, sultry evening, at a flag railroad station about twenty miles west of Springfield, on my return from a great meeting at Petersburg in Menard County. He had been driven to the station in a buggy and left there alone. I was already there. The train that we intended to take for Springfield was about due. After vainly waiting for half an hour for its arrival, a thunderstorm compelled us to take refuge in an empty freight car standing on a side track, there being no buildings of any sort at the station. We squatted down on the floor of the car and fell to talking on all sorts of subjects. It was then and there he told me that, when he was clerking in a country store, his highest political ambition was to be a member of the state Legislature. "Since then, of course," he said laughingly, "I have grown some, but my friends got me into *this* business [meaning the canvass]. I did not consider myself qualified for the United States Senate, and it took me a long time to persuade myself that I was. Now, to be sure," he continued, with another of his peculiar laughs, "I am convinced that I am good enough for it; but, in spite of it all, I am saying to myself every day: 'It is too big a thing for you; you will never get it.' [My wife] insists, however, that I am going to be Senator and President of the United States, too." These last words he followed with a roar of laughter, with his arms around his knees, and shaking all over with mirth at his wife's ambition. "Just think," he exclaimed, "of such a sucker as me as President!" ...

[*FROM THE EDITORS, 1904*—In the last days of November, 1860, the Associated Press sent Mr. Villard to Springfield, Illinois, to report current events at that place by telegraph, until the departure of Mr. Lincoln for Washington. This duty brought Mr. Villard into daily relations with the President-elect, who gave him a most friendly welcome and bade him to ask for information at any time he wished it.]

SPRINGFIELD

Mr. Lincoln soon found, after his election, that his modest two-story frame dwelling was altogether inadequate for the throng of local callers and of visitors from a distance, and, accordingly, he gladly availed himself of the offer of the use of the governor's room in the Capitol building. On my arrival, he had already commenced spending a good part of each day in it. He appeared daily, except Sundays, between nine and ten o'clock, and held a reception till noon, to which all comers were admitted, without even the formality of first sending in cards. Whoever chose to call received the same hearty greeting ...

"[My wife] insists, however, that I am going to be Senator and President of the United States, too." These last words Lincoln followed with a roar of laughter.

I was present almost daily for more or less time during his morning receptions. I generally remained a silent listener, as I could get at him at other hours when I was in need of information ... The most remarkable and attractive feature of those daily "levees," however, was his constant indulgence of his story-telling propensity. Of course, all the visitors had heard of it and were eager for the privilege of listening to a practical illustration of his preëminence in that line. He knew this, and took special delight in meeting their wishes ...

I am sorry to state that he often allowed himself altogether too much license in the concoction of the stories. He seemed to be bent upon making his hit by fair means or foul. In other words, he never hesitated to tell a coarse or even outright nasty story, if it served his purpose. All his personal

Lincoln, along with his sons Willie and Tad, outside his Springfield, Illinois, home before beginning his first term as president.

JOHN ADAMS WHIPPLE/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

friends could bear testimony on this point. It was a notorious fact that this fondness for low talk clung to him even in the White House. More than once I heard him "with malice aforethought" get off purposely some repulsive fiction in order to rid himself of an uncomfortable caller. Again and again I felt disgust and humiliation that such a person should have been called upon to direct the destinies of a great nation in the direst period of its history. Yet his achievements during the next few years proved him to be one of the great leaders of mankind in adversity, in whom low leanings only set off more strikingly his better qualities ...

No one who heard him talk upon the [secession] question could fail to discover his "other side," and to be impressed with his deep earnestness, his anxious contemplation of public affairs, and his thorough sense of the extraordinary responsibilities that were coming upon him. He never refused to talk with me about secession, but generally evaded answers to specific interrogatories, and confined himself to generalizations. I was present at a number of conversations which he had with leading public men upon the same subject, when he showed the same reserve. He did not hesitate to say that the Union ought to, and in his opinion would, be preserved, and to go into long arguments in support of the proposition, based upon the history of the republic, the homogeneity of the population, the natural features of the country, such as the common coast, the rivers and mountains, that compelled political and commercial unity. But he could not be got to say what he would do in the face of Southern secession, except that as President he should be sworn to maintain the Constitution of the United States, and that he was therefore bound to fulfill that duty. He met in the same general way the frequent questions whether he should consider it his duty to resort to coercion by force of arms against the states engaged in attempts to secede. In connection therewith I understood him, however, several times to express doubts as to the practicability of holding the slave states in the Union by main force, if they were all determined to break it up. He was often embarrassed by efforts of radical anti-slavery men to get something out of him in encouragement of their hopes that the crisis would result in the abolition of slavery. He did not respond as they wished, and made it clear that he did not desire to be considered an "abolitionist," and that he still held the opinion that property in slaves was entitled to protection under the Constitution, and that its owners could not be deprived of it without due compensation. Consciously or unconsciously, he, like everybody else, must have been influenced in his views by current events. As political passion in the South rose higher and higher, and actual defiance of Federal authority by deeds of violence occurred almost daily after his election, culminating in the formal secession of seven states and the establishment of the Southern Confederacy under Jefferson Davis at Montgomery, Alabama, the belief, which he doubtless had originally, that by a conciliatory course as President he could pacify the rebellious states, must have become shaken. Still, I think I interpret his views up to the time of his departure for Washington correctly in saying that he had not lost faith in the preservation of peace between the North and the South, and he certainly did not dream that his principal duty would be to raise great armies and fleets, and the means to maintain them, for the suppression of the most determined and sanguinary rebellion, in defense of slavery, that our planet ever witnessed. A

The Election in November

BACKGROUND

IN PRINCIPLE, *The Atlantic*'s first editor, James Russell Lowell, was committed to the idea that the magazine would be open to all points of view, and—as pledged in the first issue—"the organ of no party or clique." But when it came to slavery, abolitionism was the only acceptable stance. Lowell, after all, was a supporter of the American Anti-Slavery League, and in the 1840s had become consumed with writing for and editing the abolitionist journal *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. A heavy-handed editor, he was known to have inserted his abolitionist views into another writer's work, with fraught consequences: Parke Godwin, *The Atlantic*'s first political reporter, quit when a report on the Buchanan administration he submitted for the April 1858 issue ended up in the magazine mysteriously containing four pages of strongly worded anti-slavery rhetoric.

In 1860, as the presidential election approached, Lowell threw the weight of *The Atlantic* behind the anti-slavery Republican candidate, commending Abraham Lincoln as a "statesman" and a powerful voice against the spread of slavery, and predicting that the election would be "a turning-point in our history."

By JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

WE ARE APPROACHING ... a crisis in our domestic policy more momentous than any that has arisen since we became a nation ...

In a society like ours, where every man may transmute his private thought into history and destiny by dropping it into the ballot-box, a peculiar responsibility rests upon the individual ... Every fourth year the people are called upon to pronounce upon the conduct of their affairs ... In exercising his right [the individual voter] becomes for the moment an integral part of the governing power ...

Whatever be the effect of slavery upon the States where it exists, there can be no doubt that its moral influence upon the North has been most disastrous. It has compelled our politicians into that first fatal compromise with their moral instincts and hereditary principles which makes all consequent ones easy ... We have been asked to admit, first, that it was a necessary evil; then that it was a good both to master and slave; then that it was the corner-stone of free institutions; then that it was a system divinely instituted under the Old Law and sanctioned under the New. With a representation, three-fifths of it based on the assumption that negroes are men, the South turns upon us and insists on our acknowledging that they are things. After compelling her Northern allies to pronounce the "free and equal" clause of the preamble to the Declaration of Independence (because it stood in the way of enslaving men) a manifest absurdity, she has declared, through the Supreme Court of the United States, that negroes are not men in the ordinary meaning of the word. To eat dirt is bad enough, but to find that we have eaten more than was necessary may chance to give us an indigestion. The slaveholding interest has gone on step by step, forcing concession after concession, till it needs but little to secure it forever in the political supremacy of the country. Yield to its latest demand,—let it mould the evil destiny of the Territories,—and the thing is done past recall. The next Presidential Election is to say *Yes* or *No* ...

We believe that this election is a turning-point in our history; for, although there are four candidates, there are really, as everybody knows, but two parties, and a single question that divides them ...

No question of the abstract right of property has ever entered directly into our politics, or ever will,—the point at issue being, whether a certain exceptional kind of property, already privileged beyond all others, shall be entitled to still further privileges at the expense of every other kind. The extension of slavery over new territory

means just this,—that this one kind of property, not recognized as such by the Constitution, or it would never have been allowed to enter into the basis of representation, shall control the foreign and domestic policy of the Republic.

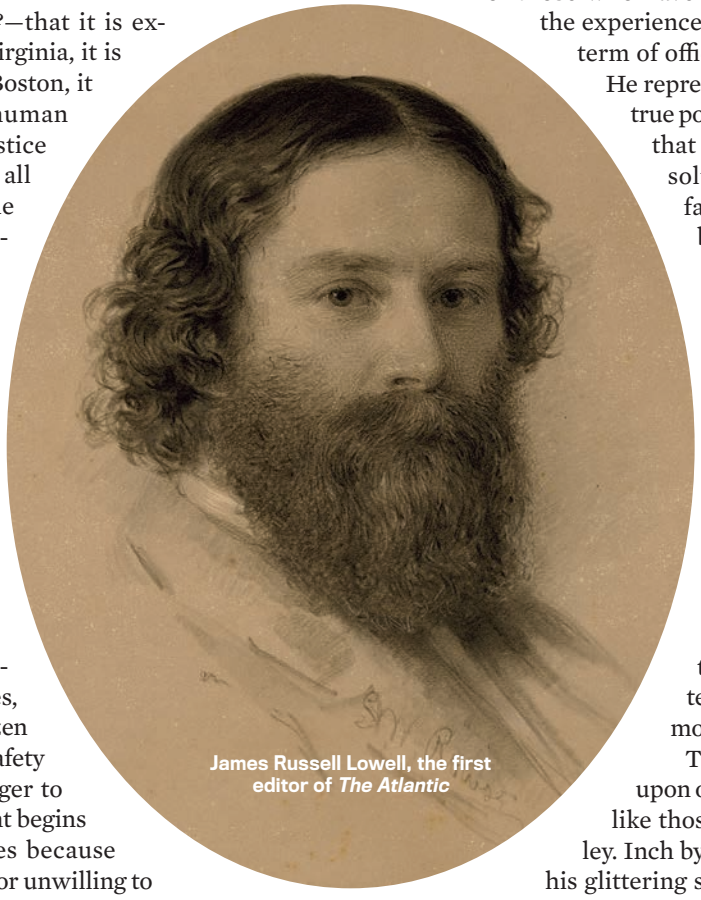
A great deal is said, to be sure, about the rights of the South; but has any such right been infringed? When a man invests money in any species of property, he assumes the risks to which it is liable. If he buy a house, it may be burned; if a ship, it may be wrecked; if a horse or an ox, it may die. Now the disadvantage of the Southern kind of property is,—how shall we say it so as not to violate our Constitutional obligations?—that it is exceptional. When it leaves Virginia, it is a thing; when it arrives in Boston, it becomes a man, speaks human language, appeals to the justice of the same God whom we all acknowledge, weeps at the memory of wife and children left behind,—in short, hath the same organs and dimension that a Christian hath, and is not distinguishable from ordinary Christians ...

The discussion of Slavery is said to be dangerous, but dangerous to what? ...

We are gravely requested to have no opinion, or, having one, to suppress it, on the one topic that has occupied caucuses, newspapers, Presidents' messages, and Congress, for the last dozen years, lest we endanger the safety of the Union. The true danger to popular forms of government begins when public opinion ceases because the people are incompetent or unwilling to think. In a democracy it is the duty of every citizen to think; but unless the thinking result in a definite opinion, and the opinion lead to considerate action, they are nothing. If the people are assumed to be incapable of forming a judgment for themselves, the men whose position enables them to guide the public mind ought certainly to make good their want of intelligence. But on this great question, the wise solution of which, we are every day assured, is essential to the permanence of the Union, Mr. Bell has no opinion at all, Mr. Douglas says it is of no consequence which opinion prevails, and Mr. Breckinridge tells us vaguely that "all sections have an equal right in the common Territories" ...

The claim of *equal rights* in the Territories is a specious fallacy. Concede the demand of the slavery-extensionists, and you give up every inch of territory to slavery, to the absolute exclusion of freedom. For what they ask (however they may disguise it) is simply this,—that their *local law* be made the law of the land, and coextensive with the limits of the General Government ...

We are persuaded that the election of Mr. Lincoln will do more than anything else to appease the excitement of the country. He has proved both his ability and his integrity; he has had experience enough in public affairs to make him a statesman, and not enough to make him a politician. That he has not had more will be no objection to him in the eyes of those who have seen the administration of the experienced public functionary whose term of office is just drawing to a close. He represents a party who know that true policy is gradual in its advances, that it is conditional and not absolute, that it must deal with fact and not with sentiments, but who know also that it is wiser to stamp out evil in the spark than to wait till there is no help but in fighting fire with fire. They are the only conservative party, because they are the only one based on an enduring principle, the only one that is not willing to pawn tomorrow for the means to gamble with today. They have no hostility to the South, but a determined one to doctrines of whose ruinous tendency every day more and more convinces them.



James Russell Lowell, the first editor of *The Atlantic*

The encroachments of Slavery upon our national policy have been like those of a glacier in a Swiss valley. Inch by inch, the huge dragon with his glittering scales and crests of ice coils itself onward, an anachronism of summer, the relic of a bygone world where such monsters swarmed. But it has its limit, the kindlier forces of Nature work against it, and the silent arrows of the sun are still, as of old, fatal to the frosty Python. Geology tells us that such enormous devastators once covered the face of the earth, but the benignant sunlight of heaven touched them, and they faded silently, leaving no trace but here and there the scratches of their talons, and the gnawed boulders scattered where they made their lair. We have entire faith in the benignant influence of Truth, the sunlight of the moral world, and believe that slavery, like other worn-out systems, will melt gradually before it. "All the earth cries out upon Truth, and the heaven blesseth it; ill works shake and tremble at it, and with it is no unrighteous thing." A

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Charleston Under Arms

BACKGROUND

ON DECEMBER 20, 1860, fearing the consequences of Abraham Lincoln's election as president the previous month, South Carolina withdrew from the Union. But federal forces still held Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, and a tense standoff ensued as Confederate forces massed along the shore.

A month into the standoff, the Connecticut-born journalist John William De Forest ventured south to Charleston, where he wandered the streets, took note of the mood, and asked South Carolinians for their thoughts, recording his observations for the pages of *The Atlantic*. The month his piece was published, Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter and the Civil War began.

By JOHN WILLIAM DE FOREST

ON SATURDAY MORNING, January 19, 1861, the steamer Columbia, from New York, lay off the harbor of Charleston in full sight of Fort Sumter. It is a circumstance which perhaps would never have reached the knowledge of the magazine-reading world, nor have been of any importance to it, but for the attendant fact that I, the writer of this article, was on board the steamer. It takes two events to make a consequence, as well as two parties to make a bargain.

The sea was smooth; the air was warmish and slightly misty; the low coast showed bare sand and forests of pines ...

And here, in the midst of all things ... at the entrance of the harbor proper, and nearly equidistant from either shore, though nearest the southern, frowned Fort Sumter, a huge and lofty and solid mass of brickwork with stone embrasures, all rising from a foundation of ragged granite boulders washed by the tides. The port-holes were closed; a dozen or so of monstrous cannon peeped from the summit; two or three sentinels paced slowly along the parapet; the stars and stripes blew out from the lofty flag-staff ... Its whole air is massive, commanding, and formidable.

Eighty or a hundred citizens, volunteers, cadets from the military academy, policemen, and negroes, greeted the arrival of the Columbia at her wharf ...

[Charleston's] streets are well-policed, untrodden by mobs, and as orderly as those of most cities ... in short, the revolution so far has been political, and not social. At the same time exports and imports have nearly ceased; business, even in the retail form, is stagnant; the banks have suspended; debts are not paid.

After dinner I walked up to the Citadel square and saw a drill of the Home Guard. About thirty troopers, all elderly men, and several with white hair and whiskers, uniformed in long overcoats of homespun gray, went through some of the simpler cavalry evolutions in spite of their horses' teeth. The Home Guard is a volunteer police force, raised because of the absence of so many of the young men of the city at the islands, and because of the supposed necessity of keeping a strong hand over the negroes. A malicious citizen assured me that it was in training to take Fort Sumter by charging upon it at low water ...

Our hotel was full of legislators and volunteer officers, mostly planters or sons of planters, and almost without exception men of standing and property. South Carolina is an oligarchy in spirit, and allows no plebeians in high places. Two centuries of plenteous feeding and favorable climate showed their natural results in the *physique* of these people. I do not think that I exaggerate, when I say that they averaged six feet

or nearly in height, and one hundred and seventy pounds or thereabouts in weight ... They struck me as less tidy than the same class when I saw it four years ago; and I made a similar remark concerning the citizens of Charleston,—not only men, but women,—from whom dandified suits and superb silks seem to have departed during the present martial time. Indeed, I heard that economy was the order of the day; that the fashionables of Charleston bought nothing new, partly because of the money pressure, and partly because the guns of Major Anderson might any day send the whole city into mourning; that patrician families had discharged their foreign cooks and put their daughters into the kitchen; that there were no concerts, no balls, and no marriages ...

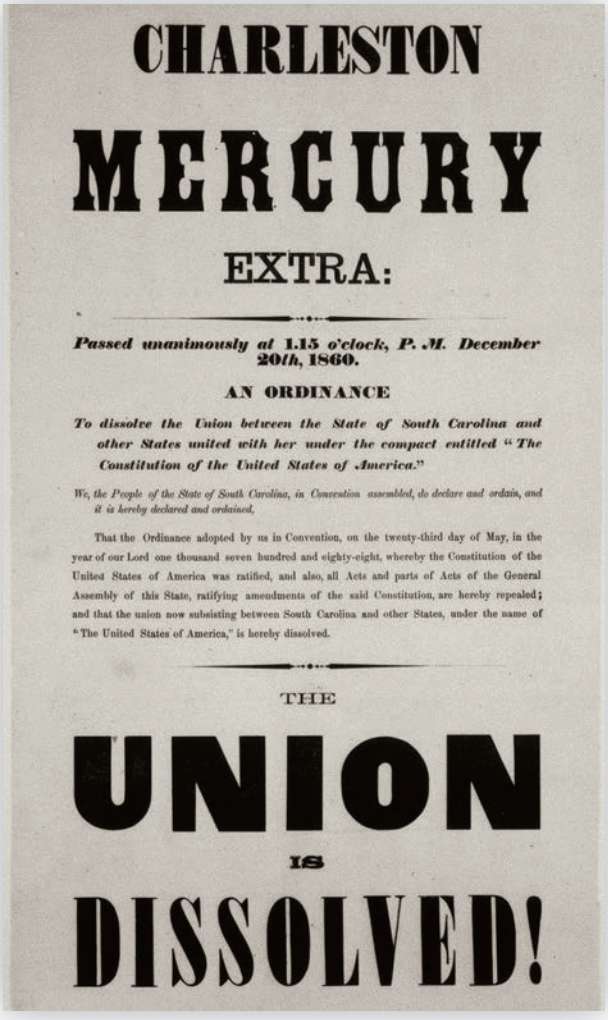
My first conversation in Charleston on Secession was with an estimable friend, Northern-born, but drawing breath of Southern air ever since he attained the age of manhood. After the first salutation, he sat down, his hands on his knees, gazing on the floor, and shaking his head soberly, if not sadly.

"You have found us in a pretty fix,—in a pretty fix!"

"But what are you going to do? Are you really going out? *You* are not a politician, and will tell me the honest facts."

"Yes, we are going out,—there is no doubt of it. I have not been a seceder,—I have even been called one of the disaffected; but I am obliged to admit that secession is the will of the community. Perhaps you at the North don't believe that we are honest in our professions and actions. We are so. The Carolinians really mean to go out of the Union, and don't mean to come back. They say that they *are* out, and they believe it. And now, what are you going to do with us? What is the feeling at the North?"

"The Union must and shall be preserved, at all hazards. That famous declaration expresses the present Northern popular sentiment. When I left, people were growing martial; they were joining military companies; they wanted to fight; they were angry."



CHARLESTON

MERCURY

EXTRA:

Passed unanimously at 1.15 o'clock, P. M. December 20th, 1860.

AN ORDINANCE

To dissolve the Union between the State of South Carolina and other States united with her under the compact entitled "The Constitution of the United States of America."

We, the People of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained,

That the Ordinance adopted by us in Convention, on the twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, whereby the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified, and also, all Acts and parts of Acts of the General Assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed; and that the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of "The United States of America," is hereby dissolved.

THE

UNION

IS

DISSOLVED!

On December 20, 1860, moments after South Carolinians voted to secede from the Union, the Charleston *Mercury* rushed this one-page extra edition into circulation.

CHARLESTON *MERCURY*, PUBLISHER/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

"So I supposed. That agrees with what I hear by letter. Well, I am very sorry for it. Our people here will not retreat; they will accept a war, first. If you preserve the Union, it must be by conquest. I suppose you can do it, if you try hard enough. The North is a great deal stronger than the South; it can desolate it,—crush it. But I hope it won't be done ... Our people believe that the States are independent and have a right to recede from the Confederation without asking its leave. With few exceptions, all agree on that; it is honest, common public opinion. The South Carolinians sincerely think that they are exercising a right, and you may depend that they will not be reasoned nor frightened out of it; and if the North tries coercion, there will be war. I don't say this defiantly, but sadly, and merely because I want you to know the truth" ...

Such was the substance of several conversations ...

"Why do you venture on this doubtful future?" I asked of one gentleman ... "Your great grievance is the election of Lincoln?"

"Yes" ...

"Is Lincoln considered here to be a bad or dangerous man?"

"Not personally. I understand that he is a man of excellent private character, and I have nothing to say against him as a ruler, inasmuch as he has never been tried. Mr. Lincoln is simply a sign to us that we are in danger, and must provide for our own safety."

"You secede, then, solely because you think his election proves that the mass of the Northern people is adverse to you and your interests?"

"Yes."

"So Mr. Wigfall of Texas hit the nail on the head, when he said substantially that the South cannot be at peace with the North until the latter concedes that slavery is right?"

"Well,—I admit it; that is precisely it."

I desire the reader to note the loyal frankness, the unshrinking honesty of these avowals, so characteristic of the South Carolina *morale* ... All those Charlestonians whom I

talked with I found open-hearted in their secession, and patient of my open-heartedness as an advocate of the Union ...

"But have you looked at the platform of the Republicans?" I proceeded. "It is not adverse to slavery in the States; it only objects to its entrance into the Territories; it is not an Abolition platform."

"We don't trust in the platform; we believe that it is an incomplete expression of the party creed,—that it suppresses more than it utters. The spirit which keeps the Republicans together is enmity to slavery, and that spirit will never be satisfied until the system is extinct" ...

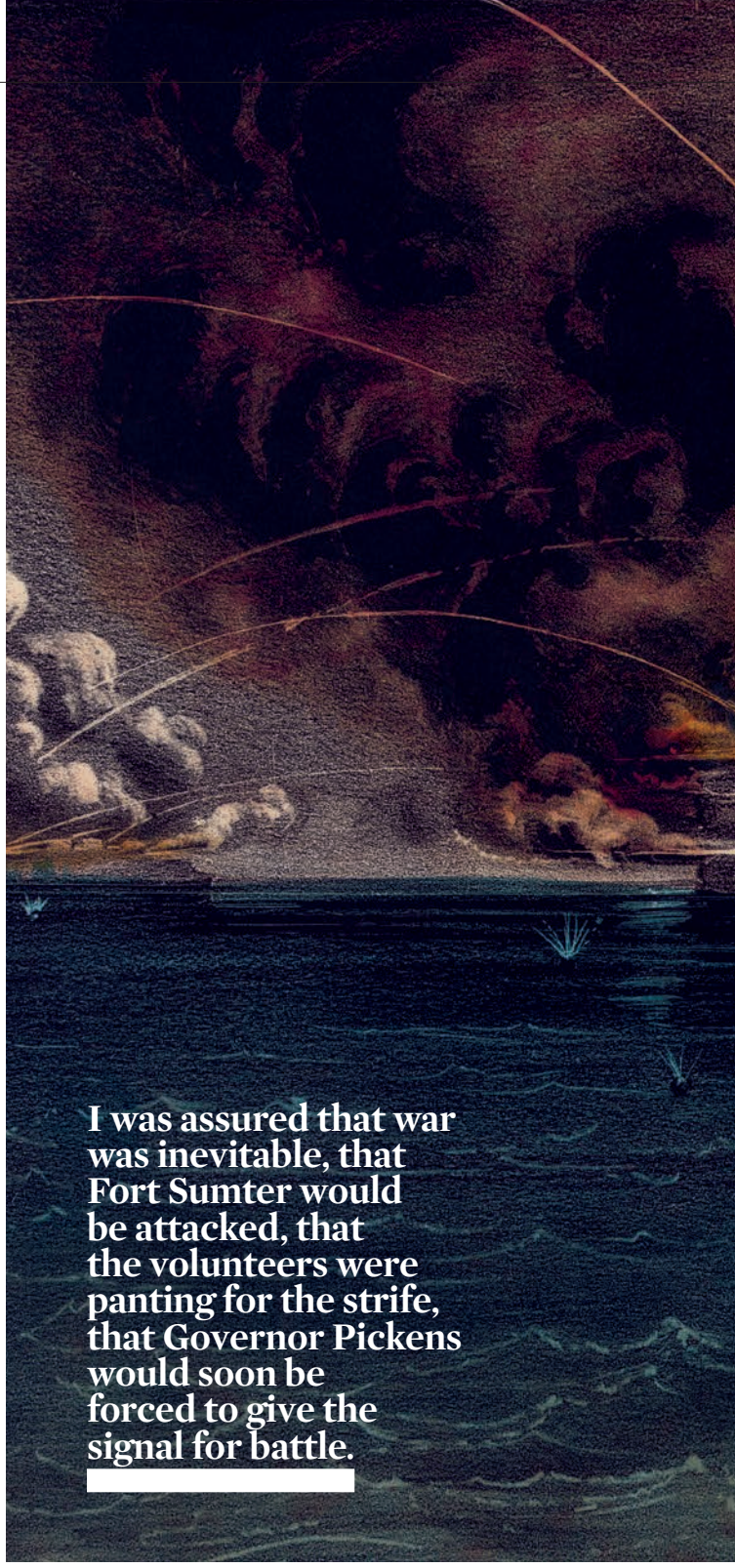
When I asked one gentleman what the South expected to gain by going out, he replied, "First, safety. Our slaves have heard of Lincoln,—that he is a black man, or black Republican, or black something,—that he is to become ruler of this country the fourth of March,—that he is a friend of theirs, and will free them. We must establish our independence in order to make them believe that they are beyond his help" ...

My impression is, that a prevalent, though not a universal fear, existed lest the negroes should rise in partial insurrections on or about the fourth of March. A Northern man, who had lived for several years in the back-country of South Carolina, had married there, and had lately travelled through a considerable portion of the South, informed me that many of the villages were lately forming Home Guards, as a measure of defence against the slave population ...

[Peaceable secession] is what is most particularly desired at Charleston, and, I believe, throughout the Cotton States ... Not only Governor Pickens and his Council, but nearly all the influential citizens, were opposed to bloodshed. They demanded independence and Fort Sumter, but desired and hoped to get both by argument ...

"We shall never attack Fort Sumter," said one gentleman. "Don't you see why? I have a son in the trenches, my next neighbor has one, everybody in the city has one. Well, we shan't let our boys fight; we can't bear to lose them. We don't want to risk our handsome, genteel, educated young fellows against a gang of Irishmen, Germans, British deserters, and New York roughs, not worth killing, and yet instructed to kill to the best advantage. We can't endure it, and we shan't do it" ...

Other men, anti-secessionists even, assured me that war was inevitable, that Fort Sumter would be attacked, that the volunteers were panting for the strife, that Governor Pickens was excessively unpopular because of his peaceful inclinations, and that he would soon be forced to give the signal for battle ... Several dull and costly weeks had passed since the passage of the secession ordinance. Stump-speeches, torchlight-processions, fireworks, and other jubilations, were among bygone things ... It must not be understood, however, that there was any visible discontent or even discouragement. "We are suffering in our affairs," said a business-man to me; "but you will hear no grumbling." "We expect to be poor, very poor, for two or three years," observed a lady; "but we are willing to bear it, for the sake of the noble and prosperous end" ...



I was assured that war was inevitable, that Fort Sumter would be attacked, that the volunteers were panting for the strife, that Governor Pickens would soon be forced to give the signal for battle.

During the ten days of my sojourn, Charleston was full of surprising reports and painful expectations. If a door slammed, we stopped talking, and looked at each other; and if the sound was repeated, we went to the window and listened for Fort Sumter. Every strange noise was metamorphosed by the watchful ear into the roar of cannon or the rush of soldiery. Women trembled at the salutes which were fired in honor of the secession of other States, fearing lest the struggle had commenced and the dearly-loved son or

A Currier & Ives lithograph depicting the bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, April 1861

CURRIER & IVES/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

brother in volunteer uniform was already under the storm of the columbiads ...

A favorite subject of argument appeared to be whether Fort Sumter ought to be attacked immediately or not. A lieutenant standing near me talked long and earnestly regarding this matter with a civilian friend, breaking out at last in a loud tone,—

"Why, good Heaven, Jim! do you want that place to go peaceably into the hands of Lincoln?"

"No, Fred, I do not. But I tell you, Fred, when that fort is attacked, it will be the bloodiest day,—the bloodiest day!—the bloodiest——!!"

And here, unable to express himself in words, Jim flung his arms wildly about, ground his tobacco with excitement, spit on all sides, and walked away, shaking his head, I thought, in real grief of spirit ...

Four days more had I in Charleston, waiting from tide to tide for a chance to sail to New York, and listening from hour to hour for the guns of Fort Sumter. A

1861–1865

PART II
THE WAR

THE CONFEDERATES' ATTACK ON FORT SUMTER in April 1861, and Lincoln's subsequent call to arms, abruptly transformed the country into a battleground, and its citizens—Northerners and Southerners—into mortal enemies. Shortly after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Walt Whitman would write, "Future years will never know the seething hell ... of the Secession war ... The real war will never get in the books." Indeed, the horrors of the war years seemed to defy description. But *The Atlantic*, publishing prose and poetry by authors including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Louisa May Alcott, and John Greenleaf Whittier, tried to capture the war, in all its complexity, as it raged.

George Armstrong Custer, in an ambrotype portrait made while he was a student at West Point. Custer graduated in 1861 and promptly joined the war effort. By age 23, he was a brigadier general in the Union army. He went on to play a leading role at Gettysburg.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Our March to Washington

BACKGROUND

FOLLOWING HIS GRADUATION from Yale in 1848, Theodore Winthrop rambled widely in Europe and the United States, churning out travel pieces, novels, and poetry. But aside from a handful of magazine pieces, he managed to get none of his work published. When President Lincoln issued a call for military volunteers in April 1861, Winthrop immediately joined up with New York's Seventh Regiment (popularly known as the "silk-stocking regiment" for its preponderance of aristocratic college men), and on April 19, he set off with his comrades for Washington.

En route, he kept a lively record of their journey. His account ran as a dispatch in the June *Atlantic*, and he agreed to send more dispatches from the war front. In his second installment, he described his company's boisterous days quartered in the nation's as-yet-unfinished Capitol building.

He began a third dispatch, but it was never to be finished. On June 10, Winthrop was shot in the chest at the Battle of Big Bethel, the war's first land battle. Instead of running his finished dispatch in the next issue, the magazine printed the incomplete report—along with his obituary.

■ *By* THEODORE WINTHROP

WE SAID GOODBYE to Broadway, moved down Cortlandt Street under a bower of flags, and at half-past six shoved off in the ferry-boat.

Everybody has heard how Jersey City turned out and filled up the Railroad Station, like an opera-house, to give God-speed to us as a representative body ... The State of New Jersey, along the railroad line, stood through the evening and the night to shout their quota of good wishes. At every station the Jerseymen were there, uproarious as Jerseymen, to shake our hands and wish us a happy despatch. I think I did not see a rod of ground without its man, from dusk till dawn, from the Hudson to the Delaware.

Upon the train we made a jolly night of it. All knew that the more a man sings, the better he is likely to fight. So we sang more than we slept, and, in fact, that has been our history ever since ...

Has anybody seen Annapolis? It is a picturesque old place, sleepy enough, and astonished to find itself wide-awaked by a war and obliged to take responsibility and share for good and ill in the movement of its time. The buildings of the Naval Academy stand parallel with the river Severn, with a green plateau toward the water and a lovely green lawn toward the town. All the scene was fresh and fair with April, and I fancied ... that I discerned the sweet fragrance of apple-blossoms coming with the spring-time airs ...

At dusk we were marched up to the Academy and quartered about in the buildings,—some in the fort, some in the recitation-halls. We lay down on our blankets and knapsacks ...

REVEILLE. As nobody pronounces this word *à la française*, as everybody calls it "Revelee," why not drop it, as an affectation, and translate it the "Stir your Stumps," the "Peel your Eyes," the "Tumble Up," or literally the "Wake"?

Our snorers had kept up this call so lustily since midnight, that, when the drums sounded it, we were all ready ...

Before the main body of the regiment marches, we learn that the "Baltic" and other transports came in last night with troops from New York and New England, enough to hold Annapolis against a square league of Plug Uglies. We do not go on without having our rear protected and our communications open. It is strange to be compelled to think of these things in peaceful America ...

At half-past seven we take up our line of march, pass out of the charming grounds of the Academy, and move through the quiet, rusty, picturesque old town ...

The main body of the regiment, under Major Shaler, a tall, soldierly fellow, with a moustache of the fighting-color, tramped on their own pins to the watering-place, eight

ORIGINALLY TITLED "NEW YORK SEVENTH REGIMENT: OUR MARCH TO WASHINGTON" AND "WASHINGTON AS A CAMP"

Filled with members of the New York elite, the Seventh New York Regiment, shown here while encamped in Washington, D.C., was often called the "silk-stocking regiment."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

miles or so from Annapolis. There troops and train came to a halt, with the news that a bridge over a country road was broken a mile farther on.

It had been distinctly insisted upon, in the usual Southern style, that we were not to be allowed to pass through Maryland, and that we were to be "welcomed to hospitable graves." The broken bridge was a capital spot for a skirmish. Why not look for it here?

We looked; but got nothing ... They have not faith enough in their cause to risk their lives for it, even behind a tree or from one of these thickets, choice spots for ambush.

So we had no battle there, but a battle of the elements. The volcanic heat of the morning was followed by a furious storm of wind and a smart shower. The regiment wrapped themselves in their blankets and took their wetting with more or less satisfaction. They were receiving samples of all the different little miseries of a campaign ...

And so begins our night-march ...

It was full-moonlight and the night inexpressibly sweet and serene. The air was cool and vivified by the gust and shower of the afternoon. Fresh spring was in every breath. Our fellows had not forgotten that this morning they were hot and disgusted. Every one hugged his rifle as if it were the arm of the Girl of his Heart, and stepped out gaily for the promenade ...

Our line extended a half-mile along the track. It was beautiful to stand on the bank above a cutting and watch the files strike from the shadow of a wood into a broad flame of moonlight, every rifle sparkling up alert as it came forward. A beautiful sight to see the barrels writing themselves upon the dimness, each a silver flash ...

At last we issued from the damp woods, two miles below the railroad junction ...

We still had no certain information. Until we actually saw the train awaiting us, and the Washington companies, who had come down to escort us, drawn up, we did not know whether our Uncle Sam was still a resident of the capital.

We packed into the train, and rolled away to Washington ...

We marched up to the White House, showed ourselves

to the President, made our bow to him as our host, and then marched up to the Capitol, our grand lodgings.

There we are now, quartered in the Representatives Chamber.

And I must hastily end this first sketch of the Great Defence. May it continue to be as firm and faithful as it is this day!

I have scribbled my story with a thousand men stirring about me. If any of my sentences miss their aim, accuse my comrades and the bewilderment of this martial crowd. For here are four or five thousand others on the same business as ourselves, and drums are beating, guns are clanking, companies are tramping all the while ...

THEY GAVE US the Representatives Chamber for quarters ...

Some of our companies were marched upstairs into the galleries. The sofas were to be their beds ...

Most of us were bestowed in the amphitheatre. Each desk received its man. He was to scribble on it by day, and sleep under it by night. When the desks were all taken, the companies overflowed into the corners and into the lobbies. The staff took committee-rooms. The Colonel reigned in the Speaker's parlor ...

We drilled morning, noon, and evening, almost hourly, in the pretty square east of the building ...

In the rests between our drills we lay under the young shade on the sweet young grass, with the odors of snowballs and horse-chestnut blooms drifting to us with every whiff of breeze, and amused ourselves with watching the evolutions of our friends of the Massachusetts Eighth, and other less experienced soldiers, as they appeared upon the field ...

But the best of the entertainment was within the Capitol. Some three thousand or more of us were now quartered there ...

We all fraternized. There was a fine enthusiasm among us: not the soldierly rivalry in discipline that may grow up in future between men of different States acting together, but the brotherhood of ardent fellows first in the field and earnest in the cause ...

We joked, we shouted, we sang, we mounted the Speaker's desk and made speeches ...

It was infinitely picturesque in these dim vaults by night. Sentries were posted at every turn. Their guns gleamed in the gaslight ...

When we had been ten days in our showy barracks we began to quarrel with luxury. What had private soldiers to do with the desks of law-givers? Why should we be allowed to revel longer in the dining-rooms of Washington hotels, partaking the admirable dainties there?

There was a fine enthusiasm among us: not the soldierly rivalry that may grow up in future between men of different States, but the brotherhood of ardent fellows first in the field and earnest in the cause.

The May sunshine, the birds and the breezes of May, invited us to Camp,—the genuine thing, under canvas. Besides, Uncles Sam and Abe wanted our room for other company. Washington was filling up fast with uniforms. It seemed as if all the able-bodied men in the country were moving, on the first of May, with all their property on their backs, to agreeable, but dusty lodgings on the Potomac.

We also made our May move. One afternoon, my company, the Ninth, and the Engineers, the Tenth, were detailed to follow Captain Vielé, and lay out a camp on Meridian Hill ...

Boom!

I would rather not believe it; but it is—yes, it is—the morning gun, uttering its surly "Hullo!" to sunrise.

Yes,—and, to confirm my suspicions, here rattle in the drums and pipe in the fifes, wooing us to get up, *get up*, with music too peremptory to be harmonious.

I rise up *sur mon séant* and glance about me. I, Private W., chance, by reason of sundry chances, to be a member of a company recently largely recruited and bestowed all together in a big marquee. As I lift myself up, I see others lift themselves up on those straw bags we kindly call our mattresses. The tallest man of the regiment, Sergeant K., is on one side of me. On the other side I am separated from two of the fattest men of the regiment by Sergeant M., another excellent fellow, prime cook and prime forager.

We are all presently on our pins,—K. on those lengthy continuations of his, and the two stout gentlemen on their stout supporters. The deep sleepers are pulled up from those abysses of slumber where they had been choking, gurgling, strangling, death-rattling all night. There is for a moment a sound of legs rushing into pantaloons and arms plunging into jackets.

Then, as the drums and fifes whine and clatter their last notes, at the flap of our tent appears our orderly, and fierce in the morning sunshine gleams his moustache,—one month's growth this blessed day. "Fall in, for roll-call!" he cries, in a ringing voice. The orderly can speak sharp, if need be.

We obey. Not "Walk in!" "March in!" "Stand in!" is the order; but "Fall in!" as sleepy men must. Then the orderly calls off our hundred. There are several boyish voices which reply, several comic voices, a few mean voices, and some so earnest and manly and alert that one says to himself, "Those are the men for me, when work is to be done!" I read the character of my comrades every morning in each fellow's monosyllable "Here!"

When the orderly is satisfied that not one of us has run away and accepted a Colonelcy from the Confederate States since last roll-call, he notifies those unfortunates who are to be on guard for the next twenty-four hours of the honor and responsibility placed upon their shoulders. Next he tells us

what are to be the drills of the day. Then, "Right face! Dismissed! Break ranks! March!"

With ardor we instantly seize tin basins, soap, and towels, and invade a lovely oak-grove at the rear and left of our camp. Here is a delicious spring into which we have fitted a pump. The sylvan scene becomes peopled with "National Guards Washing,"—a scene meriting the notice of Art as much as any "Diana and her Nymphs." But we have no Poussin to paint us in the dewy sunlit grove. Few of us, indeed, know how picturesque we are at all times and seasons.

After this *beau idéal* of a morning toilet comes the anteprandial drill. Lieutenant W. arrives, and gives us a little appetizing exercise in "Carry arms!" "Support arms!" "By the right flank, march!" "Double quick!"

Breakfast follows. My company messes somewhat helter-skelter in a big tent. We have very tolerable rations. Sometimes luxuries appear of potted meats and hermetical vegetables, sent us by the fond New Yorkers. Each little knot of fellows, too, cooks something savory. Our table-furniture is not elegant, our plates are tin, there is no silver in our forks; but *à la guerre, comme à la guerre*. Let the scrubs growl! Lucky fellows, if they suffer no worse hardships than this!

By-and-by, after breakfast, come company drills, bayonet-practice, battalion-drills, and the heavy work of the day. Our handsome Colonel, on a nice black nag, manœuvres his thousand men of the line-companies on the parade for two or three hours. Two thousand legs step off accurately together. Two thousand pipe-clayed cross-belts—whitened with infinite pains and waste of time, and offering a most inviting mark to a foe—restrain the beating bosoms of a thousand braves, as they—the braves, not the belts—go through the most intricate evolutions unerringly. Watching these battalion movements, Private W., perhaps, goes off and inscribes in his journal ...

Private W. avows without fear that about noon, at Camp Cameron, he takes a hearty dinner, and with satisfaction. Private W. has had his feasts in cot and chateau in the Old World and New. It is the conviction of said private that nowhere and no-when has he expected his ration with more interest, and remembered it with more affection, than here ...

In the afternoon comes target-practice, skirmishing-drill, more company- or recruit-drill, and at half-past five, our evening parade. Let me not forget tent-inspection, at four, by the officer of the day, when our band plays deliciously.

At evening parade all Washington appears. A regiment of ladies, rather indisposed to beauty, observe us. Sometimes the Dons arrive,—Secretaries of State, of War, of Navy—or military Dons, bestriding prancing steeds ...

Wondrous gymnasts are some of the Seventh, and after evening parade they often give exhibitions of their prowess to circles of admirers ...

Then comes sweet evening. The moon rises. It seems always full moon at Camp Cameron. Every tent becomes a little illuminated pyramid. Cooking-fires burn bright along the alleys. The boys lark, sing, shout, do all those merry things that make the entertainment of volunteer service. The gentle moon looks on, mild and amused, the fairest lady of all that visit us.

At last, when the songs have been sung and the hundred rumors of the day discussed, at ten the intrusive drums and scolding fifes get together and stir up a concert, always premature, called tattoo. The Seventh Regiment begins to peel for bed: at all events, Private W. does; for said W. takes, when he can, precious good care of his cuticle, and never yields to the lazy and unwholesome habit of soldiers,—sleeping in the clothes. At taps—half-past ten—out go the lights. If they do not, presently comes the sentry's peremptory command to put them out. Then, and until the dawn of another day, a cordon of snorers inside of a cordon of sentries surrounds our national capital ...

And that is the history of any day at Camp Cameron. It is monotonous, it is not monotonous, it is laborious, it is lazy, it is a bore, it is a lark, it is half war, half peace, and totally attractive, and not to be dispensed with from one's experience in the nineteenth century. A

Voluntaries

By RALPH WALDO EMERSON | OCTOBER 1863

BACKGROUND **THE SOUTH'S CONQUEST of Fort Sumter in April 1861 spurred a frenzy of military enlistment on both sides. Most volunteers, having no experience of war or of rigorous military training, imagined they were signing up for a short-lived, rousing adventure. But as the conflict dragged on and casualties mounted, recruitment became more difficult, even as the need for reinforcements grew.**

In the fall of 1863, in the poem "Voluntaries," Ralph Waldo Emerson paid tribute to those prepared to sacrifice all for the sake of the Union. The final four lines of the stanza below are among Emerson's most famous, and have been inscribed on veterans' memorials around the country.

In an age of fops and toys,
Wanting wisdom, void of right,
Who shall nerve heroic boys
To hazard all in Freedom's fight,—
Break sharply off their jolly games,
Forsake their comrades gay,
And quit proud homes and youthful dames,
For famine, toil, and fray?
Yet on the nimble air benign
Speed nimbler messages,
That waft the breath of grace divine
To hearts in sloth and ease.
So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*.

Bread and the Newspaper

BACKGROUND

THE EMINENT DOCTOR, poet, and essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., one of the magazine's founders (it was Holmes who suggested the name *The Atlantic*), helped establish the magazine's early popularity with his beloved series, The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table, about a fictional Boston boardinghouse where residents engaged in wide-ranging philosophical discussions and witty repartee. One of Holmes's Autocrat characters even gave Boston its enduring nickname, "The Hub," declaring, "[The] Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man, if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar."

Five months into the war, in "Bread and the Newspaper," Holmes described the tense mood on the home front, marveling at how the nation's burgeoning railroad networks were keeping the country in "perpetual intercommunication," delivering "almost hourly paragraphs, laden with truth or falsehood as the case may be."

By OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES SR.

WE ALL KNOW what the *war fever* is in our young men,—what a devouring passion it becomes in those whom it assails. Patriotism is the fire of it, no doubt, but this is fed with fuel of all sorts. The love of adventure, the contagion of example, the fear of losing the chance of participating in the great events of the time, the desire of personal distinction, all help to produce those singular transformations which we often witness, turning the most peaceful of our youth into the most ardent of our soldiers. But something of the same fever in a different form reaches a good many non-combatants, who have no thought of losing a drop of precious blood belonging to themselves or their families. Some of the symptoms we shall mention are almost universal; they are as plain in the people we meet everywhere as the marks of an influenza, when that is prevailing.

The first is a nervous restlessness of a very peculiar character. Men cannot think, or write, or attend to their ordinary business. They stroll up and down the streets, they saunter out upon the public places ...

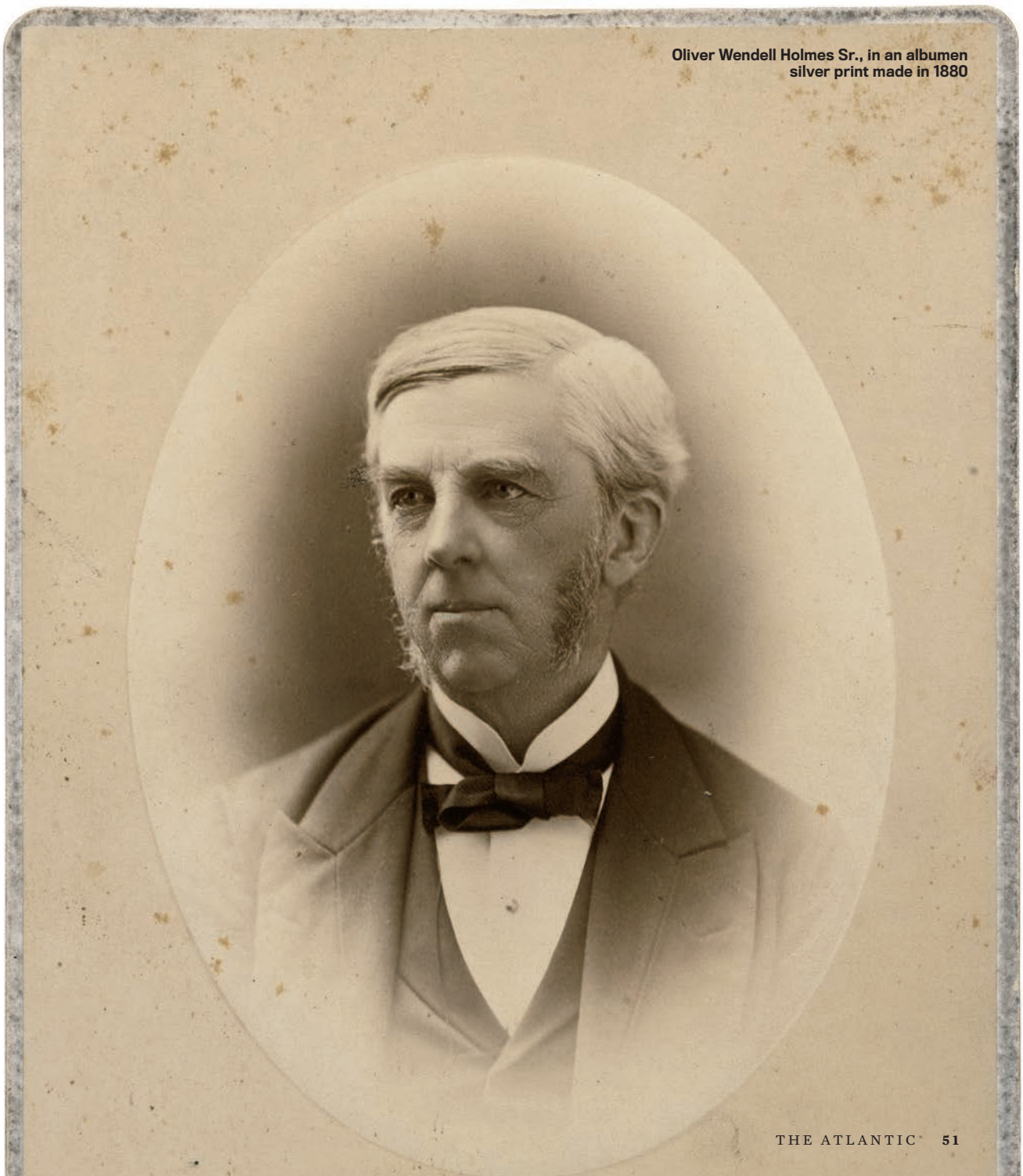
Another symptom of our excited condition is seen in the breaking up of old habits. The newspaper is as imperious as a Russian Ukase; it will be had, and it will be read. To this all else must give place. If we must go out at unusual hours to get it, we shall go, in spite of after-dinner nap or evening somnolence. If it finds us in company, it will not stand on ceremony, but cuts short the compliment and story by divine right of its telegraphic despatches.

War is a very old story, but it is a new one to this generation of Americans ... We are learning many strange matters from our fresh experience. And besides, there are new conditions of existence which make war as it is with us very different from war as it has been.

The first and obvious difference consists in the fact that the whole nation is now penetrated by the ramifications of a network of iron nerves which flash sensation and volition backward and forward to and from towns and provinces as if they were organs and limbs of a single living body. The second is the vast system of iron muscles which, as it were, move the limbs of the mighty organism one upon another. What was the railroad-force which put the Sixth Regiment in Baltimore on the 19th of April but a contraction and extension of the arm of Massachusetts with a clenched fist full of bayonets at the end of it?

This perpetual intercommunication, joined to the power of instantaneous action, keeps us always alive with excitement. It is not a breathless courier who comes

back with the report from an army we have lost sight of for a month, nor a single bulletin which tells us all we are to know for a week of some great engagement, but almost hourly paragraphs, laden with truth or falsehood as the case may be, making us restless always for the last fact or rumor they are telling. And so of the movements of our armies. To-night the stout lumbermen of Maine are encamped under their own fragrant pines. In a score or two of hours they are among the tobacco-fields and the slave-pens of Virginia. The war passion burned like scattered coals of fire in the households of Revolutionary times; now it rushes all through the land like a flame over the prairie. And this instant diffusion of every fact and feeling produces another singular effect in the equalizing and steadying of public opinion. We may not be able to see a month ahead of us; but as to what has passed, a week afterwards it is as thoroughly talked out and judged as it would have been in a whole season before our national nervous system was organized. A



Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., in an albumen silver print made in 1880

JAMES NOTMAN/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

The Advantages of Defeat

BACKGROUND

IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER of 1861, the armies on both sides massed and trained for battle. Finally, on July 16, Union forces headed south, intending to take the Confederate capital of Richmond and put a quick end to the war. So confident was the North in the superiority of its forces that scores of civilians traveled south as well, picnic baskets and champagne in hand, expecting to witness the Union's triumph. But when the armies met on July 21, the expected Union victory became a thoroughgoing Union rout.

Two months later, the prominent scholar and social critic Charles Eliot Norton sought to put the Union's dramatic defeat at Bull Run in a positive light, arguing that such setbacks would only make for greater Union resolve and a more meaningful ultimate victory. Over time, other commentators would come to agree with this perspective (see "American Civilization," page 66, and "Late Scenes in Richmond," page 104), observing that had the Confederate capital fallen easily at the outset of the war, the victory might have been solely military and likely would not have involved the freeing of the slaves.

By CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

WHEN THE NEWS flashed over the country, on Monday, the 22d of July, that our army, whose advance into Virginia had been so long expected, and had been watched with such intense interest and satisfaction,—that our army had been defeated, and was flying back in disorder to the intrenchments around Washington, it was but natural that the strong revulsion of feeling and the bitter disappointment should have been accompanied by a sense of dismay, and by alarm as to what was to follow ...

It is now plain that our defeat at Bull Run was in no true sense a disaster; that we not only deserved it, but needed it; that its ultimate consequences are better than those of a victory would have been ...

None who lived through the months of April and May can ever forget the heroic and ideal sublimity of the time. But as the weeks went on, as the immediate alarm that had roused the invincible might of the people passed away, something of the spirit of over-confidence, of excited hope, of satisfied vanity mingled with and corrupted the earlier and purer emotion. The war was to be a short one. Our enemies would speedily yield before the overwhelming force arrayed against them; they would run from Northern troops; we were sure of easy victory. There was little sober foreboding, as our army set out from Washington on its great advance. The troops moved forward with exultation, as if going on a holiday and festive campaign; and the nation that watched them shared in their careless confidence, and prophesied a speedy triumph. But the event showed how far such a spirit was from that befitting a civil war like this. Never were men engaged in a cause which demanded more seriousness of purpose, more modesty and humility of pretension.

The duty before us is honorable in proportion to its difficulty ... We are not making war to reestablish an old order of things, but to set up a new one. We are not giving ourselves and our fortunes for the purpose of fighting a few battles, and then making peace, restoring the Southern States to their old place in the Union,—but for the sake of destroying the root from which this war has sprung, and of making another such war impossible. It is not worth while to do only half or a quarter of our work. But if we do it thoroughly, as we ought, the war must be a long one, and will require from us long sacrifices ...

If defeat has brought us shame, it has brought us also firmer resolve. No man can be said to know himself, or to have assurance of his force of principle and character, till he has been tested by the fires of trial in the crucible of defeat. The same is true of a nation. The test of defeat is the test of its national worth. Defeat shows whether

The hastily dug graves left on the field after the Battle of Bull Run in July 1861 presaged the terrible fighting to come in the next four years.

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it deserves success. We may well be grateful and glad for our defeat of the 21st of July, if we wrest from it the secrets of our weakness, and are thrown back by it to the true sources of strength. If it has done its work thoroughly, if we profit sufficiently by the advantages it has afforded us, we may be well content that so slight a harm has brought us so great a good. But if not, then let us be ready for another and another defeat, till our souls shall be tempered and our forces disciplined for the worthy attainment of victory. For victory we shall in good time have. A

Chiefly About War Matters, by a Peaceable Man

BACKGROUND

DURING THE CIVIL WAR ERA, Nathaniel Hawthorne was among *The Atlantic*'s most celebrated contributors. But his ambivalence about the slavery question and the merits of the war put him at odds with much of the New England literary milieu. "The politics of the Magazine suit Massachusetts tolerably well (and only tolerably)," he once observed, "but it does not fairly represent the feeling of the country at large."

In March of 1862, Hawthorne, along with the magazine's publisher, William Ticknor, headed to Washington to see the nation at war firsthand.

In "Chiefly About War Matters," Hawthorne conveyed his impressions. The magazine's editor, James T. Fields, was dismayed by the piece's irreverent tone and proposed cutting certain passages that, as he wrote to Hawthorne, "seem to me wd. outrage the feelings of many *Atlantic* readers." Hawthorne acquiesced, but impishly replaced the deleted passages with footnotes (italicized here) written in the voice of a fussy, dogmatic editor. "What a terrible thing it is," he griped to Fields, "to try to let off a little truth into this miserable humbug of a world!"

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

THERE IS NO remoteness of life and thought, no hermetically sealed seclusion, except, possibly, that of the grave, into which the disturbing influences of this war do not penetrate. Of course, the general heart-quake of the country long ago knocked at my cottage-door ... I gave myself up to reading newspapers and listening to the click of the telegraph, like other people; until, after a great many months of such pastime, it grew so abominably irksome that I determined to look a little more closely at matters with my own eyes.

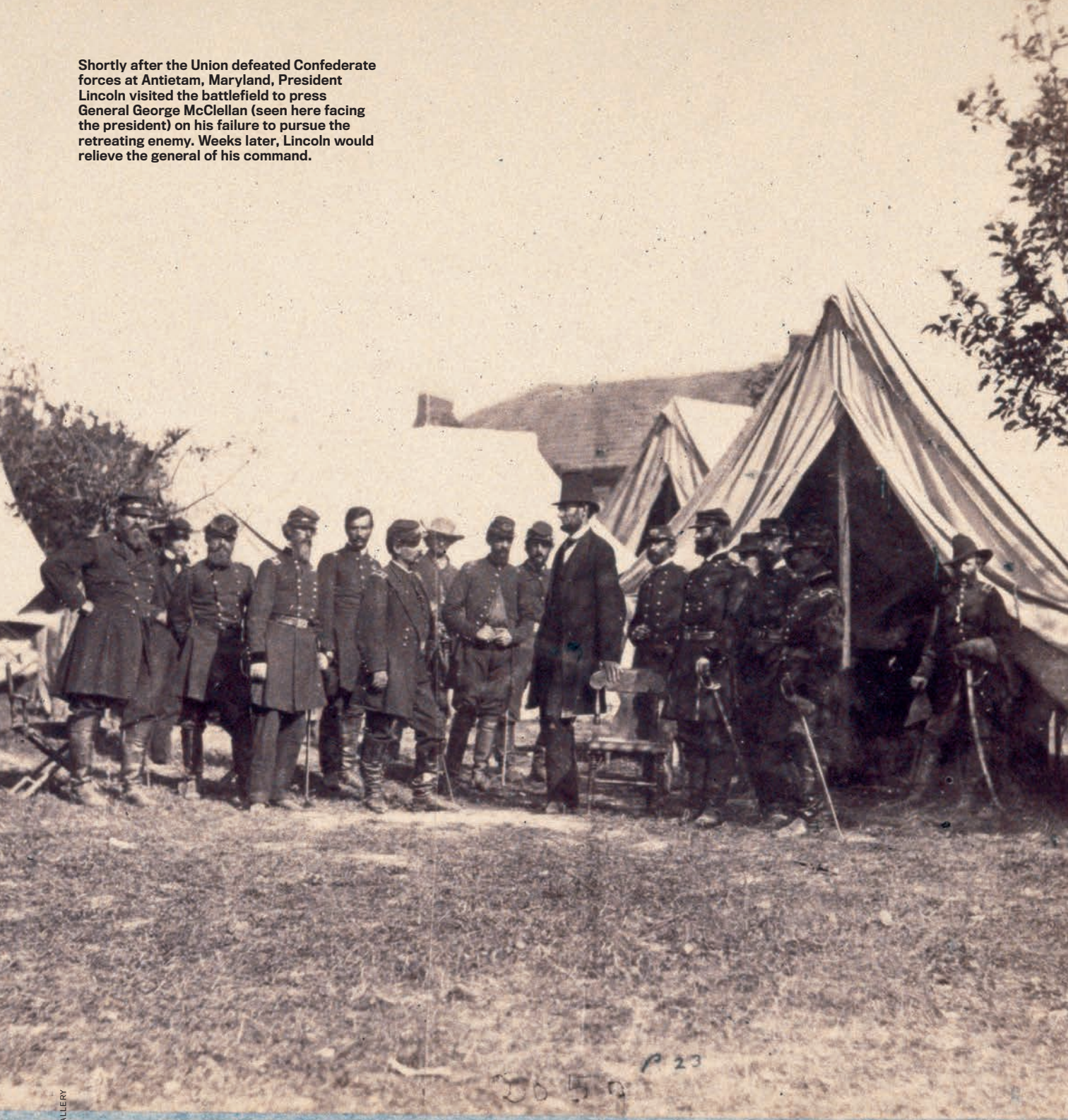
Accordingly we set out—a friend and myself—towards Washington ... It was a clear, frosty morning, when we started. The sun shone brightly on snow-covered hills in the neighborhood of Boston, and burnished the surface of frozen ponds; and the wintry weather kept along with us while we trundled through Worcester and Springfield, and all those old, familiar towns, and through the village-cities of Connecticut. In New York the streets were afloat with liquid mud and slosh. Over New Jersey there was still a thin covering of snow ... But when we reached Philadelphia, the air was mild and balmy; there was but a patch or two of dingy winter here and there, and the bare, brown fields about the city were ready to be green ...

On our way, we heard many rumors of the war, but saw few signs of it. The people were staid and decorous, according to their ordinary fashion; and business seemed about as brisk as usual,—though, I suppose, it was considerably diverted from its customary channels into warlike ones. In the cities, especially in New York, there was a rather prominent display of military goods at the shop-windows,—such as swords with gilded scabbards and trappings, epaulets, carabines, revolvers, and sometimes a great iron cannon at the edge of the pavement, as if Mars had dropped one of his pocket pistols there, while hurrying to the field. As railway-companions, we had now and then a volunteer in his French-gray greatcoat, returning from furlough, or a new-made officer in his new-made uniform, which was perhaps all of the military character that he had about him,—but proud of his eagle buttons, and likely enough to do them honor before the gilt should be wholly dimmed. The country, in short, so far as bustle and movement went, was more quiet than in ordinary times, because so large a proportion of its restless elements had been drawn towards the seat of conflict ...

Beyond Philadelphia there was a much greater abundance of military people. Between Baltimore and Washington a guard seemed to hold every station along the railroad; and frequently, on the hill-sides, we saw a collection of weather-beaten tents, the peaks of which, blackened with smoke, indicated that they had been made comfortable by stove-heat throughout the winter. At several commanding positions we saw fortifications, with

ORIGINALLY TITLED "CHIEFLY ABOUT WAR MATTERS"

Shortly after the Union defeated Confederate forces at Antietam, Maryland, President Lincoln visited the battlefield to press General George McClellan (seen here facing the president) on his failure to pursue the retreating enemy. Weeks later, Lincoln would relieve the general of his command.



President Lincoln and Gen. Mc Clellan on battle-field of Antietam, September 1862

ALEXANDER GARDNER/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

the muzzles of cannon protruding from the ramparts, the slopes of which were made of the yellow earth of that region, and still unsodded; whereas, till these troublous times, there have been no forts but what were grass-grown with the lapse of at least a lifetime of peace ...

We were not in time to see Washington as a camp. On the very day of our arrival sixty thousand men had crossed the Potomac on their march towards Manassas ...

The troops being gone, we had the better leisure and opportunity to look into other matters. It is natural enough to suppose that the centre and heart of Washington is the Capitol; and certainly, in its outward aspect, the world has not many statelier or more beautiful edifices, nor any, I should suppose, more skillfully adapted to legislative purposes, and to all accompanying needs. But, etc., etc. ...

We omit several paragraphs here, in which the author speaks of some prominent Members of Congress with a freedom that seems to have been not unkindly meant, but might be liable to misconstruction. As he admits that he never listened to an important debate, we can hardly recognize his qualification to estimate these gentlemen, in their legislative and oratorical capacities.

Everybody seems to be at Washington, and yet there is a singular dearth of imperatively noticeable people there. I question whether there are half a dozen individuals, in all kinds of eminence, at whom a stranger, wearied with the contact of a hundred moderate celebrities, would turn round to snatch a second glance. Secretary Seward, to be sure,—a pale, large-nosed, elderly man, of moderate stature, with a decided originality of gait and aspect, and a cigar in his mouth,—etc., etc.

We are again compelled to interfere with our friend's license of personal description and criticism. Even Cabinet Ministers (to whom the next few pages of the article were devoted) have their private immunities, which ought to be conscientiously observed,—unless, indeed, the writer chanced to have some very piquant motives for violating them.

Of course, there was one other personage, in the class of statesman, whom I should have been truly mortified to leave Washington without seeing; since (temporarily, at least, and by force of circumstances) he was the man of men ...

Nine o'clock had been appointed as the time for receiving the deputation, and we were punctual to the moment but not so the President, who sent us word that he was eating his breakfast, and would come as soon as he could. His appetite, we were glad to think, must have been a pretty fair one; for we waited about half an hour in one of his antechambers, and then were ushered into a reception-room, in one corner of which sat the Secretaries of War and of the Treasury, expecting, like ourselves, the termination of the Presidential breakfast ... We formed a very miscellaneous collection of people, mostly unknown to each other, and without any common sponsor, but all with an equal right to look our head-servant in the face. By-and-by there was a little stir on the staircase and in the passage-way, etc., etc.

We are compelled to omit two or three pages, in which the author describes the interview, and gives his idea of the personal appearance and deportment of the President. The sketch appears to have been written in a benign spirit, and perhaps conveys a not inaccurate impression of its august subject; but it lacks reverence*, and it pains us to see a gentleman of ripe age, and who has spent years under the corrective influence of foreign institutions, falling into the characteristic and most ominous fault of Young America.*

Good Heavens! What liberties I have been taking with one of the potentates of the earth, and the man on whose conduct more important consequences depend than on that of any other historical personage of the century! But with whom is an American citizen entitled to take a liberty, if not with his own chief magistrate? ...

Among other excursions to camps and places of interest in the neighborhood of Washington, we went, one day, to Alexandria. It is a little port on the Potomac, with one or two shabby wharves and docks, resembling those of a fishing village in New England, and the respectable old brick town rising gently behind. In peaceful times it no doubt bore an aspect of decorous quietude and dullness; but it was now thronged with the Northern soldiery ... I tried to imagine how very disagreeable the presence of a Southern army would be in a sober town of Massachusetts; and the thought considerably lessened my wonder at the cold and shy regards that are cast upon our troops, the gloom, the sullen demeanor, the declared or scarcely hidden sympathy with rebellion, which are so frequent here.

There was, and is, a most fierce and bitter outcry against General McClellan, accusing him of sloth, imbecility, cowardice, treasonable purposes, and, in short, utterly denying his ability as a soldier, and questioning his integrity as a man.

It is a strange thing in human life, that the greatest errors both of men and women often spring from their sweetest and most generous qualities; and so, undoubtedly, thousands of warm-hearted, sympathetic, and impulsive persons have joined the Rebels, not from any real zeal from the cause, but because, between two conflicting loyalties, they chose that which necessarily lay nearest the heart. There never existed any other Government against which treason was so easy, and could defend itself by such plausible arguments as against that of the United States. The anomaly of two allegiances (of which that of the State comes nearest home to a man's feeling, and includes the altar and the hearth, while the General

Women occasionally followed their husbands to battlefield camps, as may be shown in this image, which also includes three children and a puppy among members of the 31st Pennsylvania Infantry.

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Government claims his devotion only to an airy mode of law and has no symbol but a flag) is exceedingly mischievous in this point of view; for it has converted crowds of honest people into traitors who seem to themselves not merely innocent but patriotic, and who die for a bad cause with as quiet a conscience as if it were the best ... If a man loves his own State, therefore, and is content to be ruined with her, let us shoot him, if we can, but allow him an honorable burial in the soil he fights for ...

We do not thoroughly comprehend the author's drift in the foregoing paragraph, but are inclined to think its tone reprehensible, and its tendency impolitic in the present stage of our national difficulties.

Reaching the open country, we saw forts and camps on all sides; some of the tents being placed immediately on the ground, while others were raised over a basement of logs, laid lengthwise, like those of a log-hut, or driven vertically into the soil in a circle,—thus forming a solid wall, the chinks closed up with Virginia mud, and above it the pyramidal shelter of the tent. Here were in progress all the occupations, and all the idleness, of the soldier in the tented field: some were cooking the company-rations in pots hung over fires in the open air; some played at ball, or developed their muscular power by gymnastic exercise; some read newspapers; some smoked cigars or pipes; and many were cleaning their arms and accoutrements,—the more carefully, perhaps, because their division was to be reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief that afternoon; others sat on the ground, while their comrades cut their hair,—it being a soldierly fashion (and for excellent reasons) to crop it within an inch of the skull; others, finally, lay asleep in breast-high tents, with their legs protruding into the open air ...

Around all the encampments ... we saw the bare sites of what had evidently been tracts of hard-wood forest, indicated by the unsightly stumps ... Fifty years will not repair this desolation. An army destroys everything before and around it, even to the very grass ...

We now approached General McClellan's head-quarters, which, at that time, were established at Fairfield Seminary. The edifice was situated on a gentle elevation, amid very agreeable scenery, and, at a distance, looked like a gentleman's seat. Preparations were going forward for reviewing a division of ten or twelve thousand men, the various regiments composing which had begun to array themselves on an extensive plain, where, methought, there was a more convenient place for a battle than is usually found in this broken and difficult country ...

Now, at that juncture, and, in fact, up to the present moment, there was, and is, a most fierce and bitter outcry, and detraction loud and low, against General McClellan, accusing him of sloth, imbecility, cowardice, treasonable purposes, and, in short, utterly denying his ability as a soldier, and questioning his integrity as a man. Nor was this to be wondered

at; for when before, in all history, do we find a general in command of half a million of men, and in presence of an enemy inferior in numbers and no better disciplined than his own troops, leaving it still debatable, after the better part of a year, whether he is a soldier or no? The question would seem to answer itself in the very asking. Nevertheless, being most profoundly ignorant of the art of war, like the majority of the General's critics, and, on the other hand, having some considerable impressibility by men's characters, I was glad of the opportunity to look him in the face, and to feel whatever influence might reach me from his sphere. So I stared at him, as the phrase goes, with all the eyes I had; and the reader shall have the benefit of what I saw ...

He is only of middling stature, but his build is very compact and sturdy, with broad shoulders and a look of great physical vigor, which, in fact, he is said to possess,—he and Beauregard having been rivals in that particular, and both distinguished above other men. His complexion is dark and sanguine, with dark hair. He has a strong, bold, soldierly face, full of decision; a Roman nose, by no means a thin prominence, but very thick and firm; and if he follows it, (which I should think likely,) it may be pretty confidently trusted to guide him aright ...

If he is a coward, or a traitor, or a humbug, or anything less than a brave, true, and able man, that mass of intelligent soldiers, whose lives and honor he had in charge, were utterly deceived, and so was this present writer; for they believed in him, and so did I ...

Another of our excursions was to Harper's Ferry,—the Directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad having kindly invited us to accompany them on the first trip over the newly laid track, after its breaking up by the Rebels ...

A guardhouse stood on the slope of the hill; and in the level street at its base were the offices of the Provost-Marshal and other military authorities, to whom we forthwith reported ourselves. The Provost-Marshal kindly sent a corporal to guide us to the little building which John Brown seized upon as his fortress, and which, after it was stormed by the United States marines, became his temporary prison ...

I shall not pretend to be an admirer of old John Brown ... Nobody was ever more justly hanged ...

Can it be a son of old Massachusetts who utters this abominable sentiment? For shame!

But, coolly as I seem to say these things, my Yankee heart stirred triumphantly when I saw the use to which John Brown's fortress and prison house has now been put ... The engine-house is now a place of confinement for Rebel prisoners.

A Massachusetts soldier stood on guard but readily permitted our whole party to enter ... We found ourselves right in the midst of the Rebels, some of whom lay on heaps of straw, asleep, or, at all events, giving no sign of consciousness ...

Almost to a man, they were simple, bumpkin-like fellows, dressed in homespun clothes, with faces singularly vacant of meaning, but sufficiently good-humored: a breed of men, in short, such as I did not suppose to exist in this country, although I have seen their like in some other parts of the world. They were peasants, and of a very low order; a class of people with whom our Northern rural population has not a single trait in common. They were exceedingly respectful,—more so than a rustic New Englander ever dreams of being towards anybody, except perhaps his minister; and had they worn any hats, they would probably have been self-constrained to take them off, under the unusual circumstances of being permitted to hold conversation with well-dressed persons. It is my belief that not a single bumpkin of them all ... had the remotest comprehension of what they had been fighting for, or how they had deserved to be shut up in that dreary hole; nor, possibly, did they care to inquire into this latter mystery, but took it as a godsend to be suffered to lie here in a heap of unwashed human bodies, well warmed and well foddered to-day, and without the necessity of bothering themselves about the possible hunger and cold of to-morrow ...

We found ourselves in the midst of the Rebels. Almost to a man, they were simple, bumpkin-like fellows, with faces singularly vacant of meaning. They were a breed of men such as I did not suppose to exist in this country.

From these various excursions, and a good many others, (including one to Manassas,) we gained a pretty lively idea of what was going on ...

An observer, who kept both his eyes and heart open, would find it by no means difficult to discern that many residents and visitors of Washington so far sided with the South as to desire nothing more nor better than to see everything reëstablished on a little worse than its former basis. If the cabinet of Richmond were transferred to the Federal city, and the North awfully snubbed, at least, and driven back within its old political limits, they would deem it a happy day. It is no wonder, and if we look at the matter generously, no unpardonable crime. Very excellent people hereabouts remember the many dynasties in which the Southern character has been predominant, and contrast the genial courtesy, the warm and graceful freedom of that region, with what they call (though I utterly disagree with them) the frigidity of our Northern manners, and the Western plainness of the President. They have a conscientious, though mistaken belief, that the South was driven out of the Union by intolerable wrong on our part, and that we are responsible for having compelled true patriots to love only half their country instead of the whole, and brave soldiers to draw their swords against the Constitution which they would once have died for ...

Since the matter has gone so far, there seems to be no way but to go on winning victories, and establishing peace and a truer union in another generation, at the expense, probably,

of greater trouble, in the present one, than any other people ever voluntarily suffered. We woo the South "as the Lion woos his bride"; it is a rough courtship, but perhaps love and a quiet household may come of it at last. Or, if we stop short of that blessed consummation, heaven was heaven still, as Milton sings, after Lucifer and a third part of the angels had seceded from its golden palaces,—and perhaps all the more heavenly, because so many gloomy brows, and soured, vindictive hearts, had gone to plot ineffectual schemes of mischief elsewhere.

We regret the innuendo in the concluding sentence. The war can never be allowed to terminate, except in the complete triumph of Northern principles. A

The Cumberland

■ *By* HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW | DECEMBER 1862

BACKGROUND **THE CIVIL WAR marked a turning point in American naval technology. At the start of the war, the Confederate army was completely without ships, enabling Union naval forces to easily capture a succession of tactically important Southern strongholds along the coast. But the Confederates soon ordered the construction of a series of "ironclads"—a new breed of ships originally developed in Europe, covered with iron plating to protect them from enemy fire. Upon learning of the South's innovations, the North quickly engaged engineers to design ironclads of its own.**

In March 1862, the ironclad Confederate ship *Virginia* (which formerly belonged to the U.S. Navy and was known as the *Merrimack*) attacked large traditional Union warships off the coast of Virginia. The South's ironclad easily destroyed the *Cumberland*, the most powerful of the Union's old-style wooden-hulled ships, before sinking a second ship and driving a third aground. By nightfall, 250 Union sailors had been killed. But when the *Virginia* returned the next day to finish off the fleet, it found that Union backup had arrived in the form of a brand-new ironclad ship, the *Monitor*.

The battle between the *Virginia* and the *Monitor* ended in a draw after several hours, but as the first encounter between two ironclads, it garnered international attention and inspired navies around the world to abandon wooden-hulled construction. Nine months later, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow commemorated the fallen *Cumberland*—a once mighty, now obsolete ship.

At anchor in Hampton Roads we lay,
On board of the Cumberland sloop-of-war;
And at times from the fortress across the bay
The alarum of drums swept past,
Or a bugle blast
From the camp on the shore.

Then far away to the South uprose
A little feather of snow-white smoke,
And we knew that the iron ship of our foes
Was steadily steering its course
To try the force
Of our ribs of oak.

Down upon us heavily runs,
Silent and sullen, the floating fort;
Then comes a puff of smoke from her guns,
And leaps the terrible death,
With fiery breath,
From each open port.

We are not idle, but send her straight
Defiance back in a full broadside!
As hail rebounds from a roof of slate,
Rebounds our heavier hail
From each iron scale
Of the monster's hide.

"Strike your flag!" the rebel cries,
In his arrogant old plantation strain.
"Never!" our gallant Morris replies;
"It is better to sink than to yield!"
And the whole air pealed
With the cheers of our men.

Then, like a kraken huge and black,
She crushed our ribs in her iron grasp!
Down went the Cumberland all a wrack,
With a sudden shudder of death,
And the cannon's breath
For her dying gasp.

Next morn, as the sun rose over the bay,
Still floated our flag at the mainmast-head.
Lord, how beautiful was thy day!
Every waft of the air
Was a whisper of prayer,
Or a dirge for the dead.

Ho! brave hearts that went down in the seas!
Ye are at peace in the troubled stream.
Ho! brave land! with hearts like these,
Thy flag, that is rent in twain,
Shall be one again,
And without a seam!

My Hunt After the Captain

BACKGROUND

AFTER A SECOND VICTORY at Bull Run in 1862, General Lee invaded Maryland, where his troops clashed with Union forces at Antietam on September 17. The Battle of Antietam would prove the single bloodiest day of the war, leaving more than 17,000 injured and almost 4,000 dead.

In Massachusetts, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. received a telegram informing him that one of his sons, future Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., had been shot through the neck. The next day, he headed south to try to find his son.

In "My Hunt After the Captain," Holmes chronicled his desperate search, which took him by train and horse-drawn wagon through towns strewn with the dead and wounded, and propelled him from makeshift hospital to makeshift hospital. He helped however he could (he was a physician as well as a writer), asking everywhere for his son. Eventually he would find Oliver Jr. alive and well, but not before he had traipsed from Pennsylvania to Maryland and back.

By OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES SR.

IN THE DEAD of the night which closed upon the bloody field of Antietam, my household was startled from its slumbers by the loud summons of a telegraphic messenger. The air had been heavy all day with rumors of battle, and thousands and tens of thousands had walked the streets with throbbing hearts, in dread anticipation of the tidings any hour might bring.

We rose hastily, and presently the messenger was admitted. I took the envelope from his hand, opened it, and read:—

Hagerstown 17th

To———H——

Capt H——wounded shot through the neck thought not mortal at Keedysville

WILLIAM G LEDUC

Through the neck,—no bullet left in wound. Windpipe, food-pipe, carotid, jugular, half a dozen smaller, but still formidable, vessels, a great braid of nerves, each as big as a lamp-wick, spinal cord,—ought to kill at once, if at all. *Thought not* mortal, or *not thought* mortal,—which was it? The first; that is better than the second would be.—"Keedysville, a post-office, Washington Co., Maryland." Leduc? Leduc? Don't remember that name.—The boy is waiting for his money. A dollar and thirteen cents. Has nobody got thirteen cents? Don't keep that boy waiting,—how do we know what messages he has got to carry?

The boy *had* another message to carry. It was to the father of Lieutenant-Colonel Wilder Dwight, informing him that his son was grievously wounded in the same battle, and was lying at Boonsborough, a town a few miles this side of Keedysville. This I learned the next morning from the civil and attentive officials at the Central Telegraph-Office.

Calling upon this gentleman, I found that he meant to leave in the quarter past two o'clock train, taking with him Dr. George H. Gay, an accomplished and energetic surgeon, equal to any difficult question or pressing emergency. I agreed to accompany them, and we met in the cars. I felt myself peculiarly fortunate in having companions whose society would be a pleasure, whose feelings would harmonize with my own, and whose assistance I might, in case of need, be glad to claim.

It is of the journey which we began together, and which I finished apart, that I mean to give my "Atlantic" readers an account ...

By a mutual compact, we talked little in the cars. A communicative friend is the greatest nuisance to have at one's side during a railroad-journey ...

With the war under way, the 1,000-bed Armory Square Hospital was erected on the National Mall to treat Washington's influx of wounded soldiers.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

[In Philadelphia] I went straight to the house in Walnut Street where the Captain would be heard of, if anywhere in this region. His lieutenant-colonel was there, gravely wounded; his college-friend and comrade in arms, a son of the house, was there, injured in a similar way; another soldier, brother of the last, was there, prostrate with fever. A fourth bed was waiting ready for the Captain, but not one word had been heard of him, though inquiries had been made in the towns from and through which the father had brought his two sons and the lieutenant-colonel. And so my search is, like a "Ledger" story, to be continued ...

Not long after leaving Philadelphia, we passed a solitary sentry keeping guard over a short railroad-bridge. It was the first evidence that we were approaching the perilous borders, the marches where the North and South mingle their angry hosts, where the extremes of our so-called civilization meet in conflict, and the fierce slave-driver of the Lower Mississippi stares into the stern eyes of the forest-feller from the banks of the Aroostook. All the way along, the bridges were guarded more or less strongly ...

[In Baltimore] as we stood waiting on the platform [for a train to Frederick], a telegraphic message was handed in silence to my companion. Sad news: the lifeless body of the son he was hastening to see was even now on its way to him in Baltimore. It was no time for empty words of consolation: I knew what he had lost, and that now was not the time to intrude upon a grief borne as men bear it, felt as women feel it ...

Here, then, I parted, sorrowfully, from the companions with whom I set out on my journey ...

There was nothing worthy of special note in the trip to

Frederick, except our passing a squad of Rebel prisoners, whom I missed seeing, as they flashed by, but who were said to be a most forlorn-looking crowd of scarecrows. Arrived at the Monocacy River, about three miles this side of Frederick, we came to a halt, for the railroad-bridge had been blown up by the Rebels, and its iron pillars and arches were lying in the bed of the river ...

There was a great confusion of carriages and wagons at the stopping-place of the train ... At last I was lucky enough to light on a sturdy wagon, drawn by a pair of serviceable bays ...

So we set forth, the sturdy wagon, the serviceable bays, with James Grayden their driver ...

And now, as we emerged from Frederick, we struck at once upon the trail from the great battle-field. The road was filled with straggling and wounded soldiers. All who could travel on foot—multitudes with slight wounds of the upper limbs, the head or face—were told to take up their beds—a light burden, or none at all—and walk ... For more than a week there had been sharp fighting all along this road. Through the streets of Frederick, through Crampton's Gap, over South Mountain, sweeping at last the hills and the woods that skirt the windings of the Antietam, the long battle had travelled, like one of those tornadoes which tear their path through our fields and villages. The slain of higher condition, "embalmed" and iron-cased, were sliding off on the railways to their far homes; the dead of the rank-and-file were being gathered up and committed hastily to the earth; the gravely wounded were cared for hard by the scene of conflict, or pushed a little way along to the neighboring villages; while those who could walk were meeting us, as I have said, at every step in the road. It was a pitiable sight, truly pitiable, yet so vast, so far beyond the possibility of relief, that many single sorrows of small dimensions have wrought upon my feelings more than the sight of this great caravan of maimed pilgrims ... Among them were figures which arrested our attention and sympathy. Delicate boys, with more spirit than strength, flushed with fever or pale with exhaustion or haggard with suffering, dragged their weary limbs along ... At the road-side sat or lay others, quite spent with their journey ...

At intervals, a dead horse lay by the road-side, or in the fields, unburied, not grateful to gods or men ...

Full in the middle of the road, caring little for whom or what they met, came long strings of army-wagons, returning empty from the front after supplies ... Drawn by mules mostly, six, I think, to a wagon, powdered well with dust, wagon, beast, and driver, they came jogging along the road, turning neither to right nor left ... Sometimes a mule would give out on the road; then he was left where he lay, until by-and-by he would think better of it, and get up, when the first public wagon that came along would hitch him on, and restore him to the sphere of duty ...

The principal collections of the wounded were in the churches. Boards were laid over the tops of the pews, on these some straw was spread, and on this the wounded lay, with little or no covering other than such scanty clothes as they had on. There were wounds of all degrees of severity, but I heard no groans or murmurs. Most of the sufferers were hurt in the limbs, some had undergone amputation, and all had, I presume, received such attention as was required. Still, it was but a rough and dreary kind of comfort that the extemporized hospitals suggested. I could not help thinking the patients must be cold; but they were used to camp-life, and did not complain. The men who watched were not of the soft-handed variety of the race. One of them was smoking his pipe as he went from bed to bed. I saw one poor fellow who had been shot through the breast; his breathing was labored, and he was tossing, anxious and restless. The men were debating about the opiate he was to take, and I was thankful that I happened there at the right moment to see that he was well narcotized for the night. Was it possible that my Captain could be lying on the straw in one of these places? Certainly *possible*, but not probable; but as the lantern was held over each bed, it was with a kind of thrill that I looked upon the features it illuminated. Many times, as I went from hospital to hospital in my wanderings, I started as some faint resemblance—the shade of a young man's hair, the outline of his half-turned face—recalled the presence I was in search of ...

Many times, as I went from hospital to hospital in my wanderings, I started as some faint resemblance—the shade of a young man's hair, the outline of his half-turned face—recalled the presence I was in search of.

A ride of some three hours brought us to Boonsborough, where I roused the unfortunate army-surgeon who had charge of the hospitals, and who was trying to get a little sleep after his fatigues and watchings. He bore this cross very creditably, and helped me to explore all places where my soldier might be lying among the crowds of wounded ...

Just then, a medical officer came up.

"Do you know anything of Captain H., of the Massachusetts Twentieth?"

"Oh, yes; he is staying in that house. I saw him there, doing very well."

A chorus of hallelujahs arose in my soul ...

A cottage of squared logs, filled in with plaster, and whitewashed. A little yard before it, with a gate swinging. The door of the cottage ajar,—no one visible as yet. I push open the door and enter. An old woman, *Margaret Kitzmuller* her name proves to be, is the first person I see.

"Captain H. here?"

"Oh, no, Sir,—left yesterday morning for Hagerstown—in a milk-cart." A

Barbara Frietchie

■ *By* JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER | OCTOBER 1863

BACKGROUND **A PERSONALLY RETICENT but politically active early *Atlantic* contributor, John Greenleaf Whittier was an ardent abolitionist, involved in numerous anti-slavery groups and publications.**

In the poem excerpted here, which would become a favorite among Northerners, he mythologized an incident said to have occurred during the Maryland Campaign of 1862, in which an elderly woman named Barbara Fritchie (Whittier used an alternate spelling) refused to take down her Union flag as Stonewall Jackson's troops marched past her house. The poem later inspired a four-act play of the same name, and when Winston Churchill visited Maryland in 1943, he stopped at the Fritchie house and recited the poem from memory.

BRADY STUDIO/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Maryland Unionist Barbara Fritchie

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple- and peach-tree fruited deep,

Fair as a garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall,—

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic-window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced: the old flag met his sight.

"Halt!"—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
"Fire!"—out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf;

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

"Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word:

"Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tossed
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

The Man Without a Country

BACKGROUND

IN THE SUMMER of 1863, as the war ground on, the Boston minister Edward Everett Hale, a prolific author, set out to write a short story that would inspire patriotism. The tale he produced would become a classic. In it, a young Army officer named Philip Nolan gets caught up in a trial for treason. In an intemperate outburst, he shouts, "Damn the United States! I wish I may never hear of the United States again!" The court punishes him by granting his wish—sentencing him to life aboard a Navy ship where no one is ever to speak to him of the United States or allow him to set foot on U.S. land. Narrated by Frederic Ingham, a Naval officer who meets Nolan shipboard some years later, the story chronicles how over time Nolan comes to cherish and pine for the country he once thought so little of. At the close of the story, excerpted here, Ingham learns, via a letter from an old Navy friend, how Nolan got word in his final moments of the country he had come to love. Accounting for the popularity of the piece, Clifton Fadiman wrote in his 1949 introduction to the book *Masterpieces of World Literature*, "No story better expresses the spirit of American nationalism."

By EDWARD EVERETT HALE

SINCE WRITING THIS ... I have received from Danforth, who is on board the Levant, a letter which gives an account of Nolan's last hours ...

DEAR FRED,—I try to find heart and life to tell you that it is all over with dear old Nolan. I have been with him on this voyage more than I ever was, and I can understand wholly now the way in which you used to speak of the dear old fellow. I could see that he was not strong, but I had no idea the end was so near. The doctor had been watching him very carefully, and yesterday morning came to me and told me that Nolan was not so well, and had not left his state-room,—a thing I never remember before. He had let the doctor come and see him as he lay there,—the first time the doctor had been in the state-room,—and he said he should like to see me. Oh, dear! do you remember the mysteries we boys used to invent about his room, in the old Intrepid days? Well, I went in, and there, to be sure, the poor fellow lay in his berth, smiling pleasantly as he gave me his hand, but looking very frail. I could not help a glance round, which showed me what a little shrine he had made of the box he was lying in. The stars and stripes were triced up above and around a picture of Washington, and he had painted a majestic eagle, with lightnings blazing from his beak and his foot just clasping the whole globe, which his wings overshadowed. The dear old boy saw my glance, and said, with a sad smile, "Here, you see, I have a country!" And then he pointed to the foot of his bed, where I had not seen before a great map of the United States, as he had drawn it from memory, and which he had there to look upon as he lay. Quaint, queer old names were on it, in large letters: "Indiana Territory," "Mississippi Territory," and "Louisiana Territory," as I suppose our fathers learned such things: but the old fellow had patched in Texas, too; he had carried his western boundary all the way to the Pacific, but on that shore he had defined nothing.

"Oh, Danforth," he said, "I know I am dying. I cannot get home. Surely you will tell me something now?—Stop! stop! Do not speak till I say what I am sure you know, that there is not in this ship, that there is not in America,—God bless her!—a more loyal man than I. There cannot be a man who loves the old flag as I do, or prays for it as I do, or hopes for it as I do. There are thirty-four stars in it now, Danforth.

OPPOSITE: David Dixon Porter directed the Union's Mississippi Squadron and was instrumental in the siege at Vicksburg, which broke Confederate control of the river. In this Alexander Gardner photograph, he poses aboard his ship, the *Malvern*.

I thank God for that, though I do not know what their names are. There has never been one taken away: I thank God for that. I know by that, that there has never been any successful Burr. Oh, Danforth, Danforth," he sighed out, "how like a wretched night's dream a boy's idea of personal fame or of separate sovereignty seems, when one looks back on it after such a life as mine! But tell me,—tell me something,—tell me everything, Danforth, before I die!"

Ingham, I swear to you that I felt like a monster that I had not told him everything before ... "Mr. Nolan," said I, "I will tell you everything you ask about. Only, where shall I begin?"

Oh, the blessed smile that crept over his white face! and he pressed my hand and said, "God bless you!" "Tell me their names," he said, and he pointed to the stars on the flag. "The last I know is Ohio. My father lived in Kentucky. But I have guessed Michigan and Indiana and Mississippi,—that was where Fort Adams is,—they make twenty. But where are your other fourteen? You have not cut up any of the old ones, I hope?"

Well, that was not a bad text, and I told him the names, in as good order as I could, and he bade me take down his beautiful map and draw them in as I best could with my pencil. He was wild with delight about Texas, told me how his brother died there; he had marked a gold cross where he supposed his brother's grave was; and he had guessed at Texas. Then he was delighted as he saw California and Oregon;—that, he said, he had suspected partly, because he had never been permitted to land on that shore, though the ships were there so much ...

Then he settled down more quietly, and very happily, to hear me tell in an hour the history of fifty years.

How I wished it had been somebody who knew something! But I did as well as I could ...

I tell you, Ingham, it was a hard thing to condense the history of half a century into that talk with a sick man. And I do not now know what I told him,—of emigration, and the means of it,—of steamboats and railroads and telegraphs,—of inventions and books and literature,—of the colleges and West Point and the Naval School,—but with the queerest interruptions that ever you heard. You see it was Robinson Crusoe asking all the accumulated questions of fifty-six years! ...

I told him everything I could think of that would show the grandeur of his country and its prosperity; but I could not make up my mouth to tell him a word about this infernal Rebellion!

And he drank it in, and enjoyed it as I cannot tell you. He grew more and more silent, yet I never thought he was tired or faint. I gave him a glass of water, but he just wet his lips, and told me not to go away ...

I had no thought it was the end. I thought he was tired and would sleep. I knew he was happy, and I wanted him to be alone.

But in an hour, when the doctor went in gently, he found Nolan had breathed his life away with a smile. He had something pressed close to his lips. It was his father's badge of the Order of Cincinnati.

We looked in his Bible, and there was a slip of paper, at the place where he had marked the text,—

"They desire a country, even a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

On this slip of paper he had written:—

"Bury me in the sea; it has been my home, and I love it. But will not some one set up a stone for my memory at Fort Adams or at Orleans, that my disgrace may not be more than I ought to bear? Say on it,—

'In Memory of
PHILIP NOLAN,
Lieutenant in the Army of the United States.
He loved his country as no other man has loved her; but no man deserved less at her hands.'" A

ALEXANDER GARDNER/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

American Civilization

BACKGROUND

FOR ABOLITIONISTS, the key issue at stake in the war was slavery. But even President Lincoln, who found slavery repugnant, had run for office on a platform committed merely to containing the institution—rather than eliminating it altogether. As the war dragged on, however, and casualties mounted, the Union sought a way to break the stalemate. Both Congress and the president began to consider emancipation, which would change not only the moral but also the tactical calculus of the war.

In late January 1862, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered a lecture at the Smithsonian Institution, urging emancipation and emphasizing that only ending slavery would end the conflict. Two days later, he visited Lincoln at the White House. Three months after that, the text of his speech (along with some additional paragraphs commending Lincoln for steps he had since taken toward emancipation) appeared in *The Atlantic*. Within a year, Lincoln would issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

By RALPH WALDO EMERSON

THE HIGHEST PROOF of civility is, that the whole public action of the State is directed on securing the greatest good of the greatest number.

Our Southern States have introduced confusion into the moral sentiments of their people, by reversing this rule in theory and practice, and denying a man's right to his labor ...

Labor of each for all, is the health and virtue of all beings ... Well, now here comes this conspiracy of slavery,—they call it an institution, I call it a destitution,—this stealing of men and setting them to work,—stealing their labor, and the thief sitting idle himself ...

We cannot but remember that there have been days in American history, when, if the Free States had done their duty, Slavery had been blocked by an immovable barrier, and our recent calamities forever precluded. The Free States yielded, and every compromise was surrender, and invited new demands. Here again is a new occasion which Heaven offers to sense and virtue. It looks as if we held the fate of the fairest possession of mankind in our hands, to be saved by our firmness or to be lost by hesitation ...

Emancipation is the demand of civilization. That is a principle; everything else is an intrigue ...

Congress can, by edict, as a part of the military defense which it is the duty of Congress to provide, abolish slavery, and pay for such slaves as we ought to pay for. Then the slaves near our armies will come to us: those in the interior will know in a week what their rights are, and will, where opportunity offers, prepare to take them. Instantly, the armies that now confront you must run home to protect their estates, and must stay there, and your enemies will disappear ...

There can be no safety until this step is taken ... We have too much experience of the futility of an easy reliance on the momentary good dispositions of the public. There does exist, perhaps, a popular will that the Union shall not be broken,—that our trade, and therefore our laws, must have the whole breadth of the continent, and from Canada to the Gulf. But, since this is the rooted belief and will of the people, so much the more are they in danger, when impatient of defeats, or impatient of taxes, to go with a rush for some peace, and what kind of peace shall at that moment be easiest attained: they will

OPPOSITE: Shown in this 1861 cartoon, Union General in Chief Winfield Scott's plan to win the war involved sealing Confederate ports and gaining control of the Mississippi River. The notion was ridiculed by those who thought the war would be too brief to warrant such a strategy. As the war pressed on, though, the once-dismissed idea became a key factor in the Union's victory.

make concessions for it,—will give up the slaves; and the whole torment of the past half century will come back to be endured anew.

Neither do I doubt, if such a composition should take place, that the Southerners will come back quietly and politely, leaving their haughty dictation. It will be an era of good feelings. There will be a lull after so loud a storm; and, no doubt, there will be discreet men from that section who will earnestly strive to inaugurate more moderate and fair administration of the Government, and the North will for a time have its full share and more, in place and counsel. But this will not last,—not for want of sincere good-will in sensible Southerners, but because Slavery will again speak through them its harsh necessity. It cannot live but by injustice, and it will be unjust and violent to the end of the world.

The power of Emancipation is this, that it alters the atomic social constitution of the Southern people. Now their interest is in keeping out white labor; then, when they must pay wages, their interest will be to let it in, to get the best labor, and, if they fear their blacks, to invite Irish, German, and American laborers. Thus, whilst Slavery makes and keeps disunion, Emancipation removes the whole objection to union. Emancipation at one stroke elevates the poor white of the South, and identifies his interest with that of the Northern laborer ...

Since the above pages were written, President Lincoln has proposed to Congress that the Government shall cooperate with any State that shall enact a gradual abolishment of Slavery. In the recent series of national successes, this Message is the best. It marks the happiest day in the political year. The American Executive ranges itself for the first time on the side of freedom. If Congress has been backward, the President has advanced. This state-paper is the more interesting that it appears to be the President's individual act, done under a strong sense of duty. He speaks his own thought in his own style. All thanks and honor to the Head of the State! The Message has been received throughout the country with praise, and, we doubt not, with more pleasure than has been spoken. If Congress accords with the President, it is not yet too late to begin the emancipation; but we think it will always be too late to make it gradual. All experience agrees that it should be immediate. More and better than the President has spoken shall, perhaps, the effect of this Message be,—but, we are sure, not more or better than he hoped in his heart, when, thoughtful of all the complexities of his position, he penned these cautious words. A

MPI/GETTY IMAGES

The President's Proclamation

BACKGROUND

OVER THE COURSE of 1862, President Lincoln became increasingly convinced, for pragmatic as well as moral reasons, that emancipating the slaves in the rebel states would help the Union cause—undermining the South's economy, making former slaves available to replenish the Union's decimated army, and perhaps finally spurring anti-slavery but cotton-dependent Europe to throw its support to the North. The Confederate army's retreat following the clash at Antietam seemed a propitious moment to make the announcement. Five days after the battle, on September 22, Lincoln declared:

"On the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforth, and forever free."

In the November 1862 *Atlantic*, Emerson hailed the proclamation as the true purpose of the war and an act that would mean "the lives of our heroes have not been sacrificed in vain."

By RALPH WALDO EMERSON

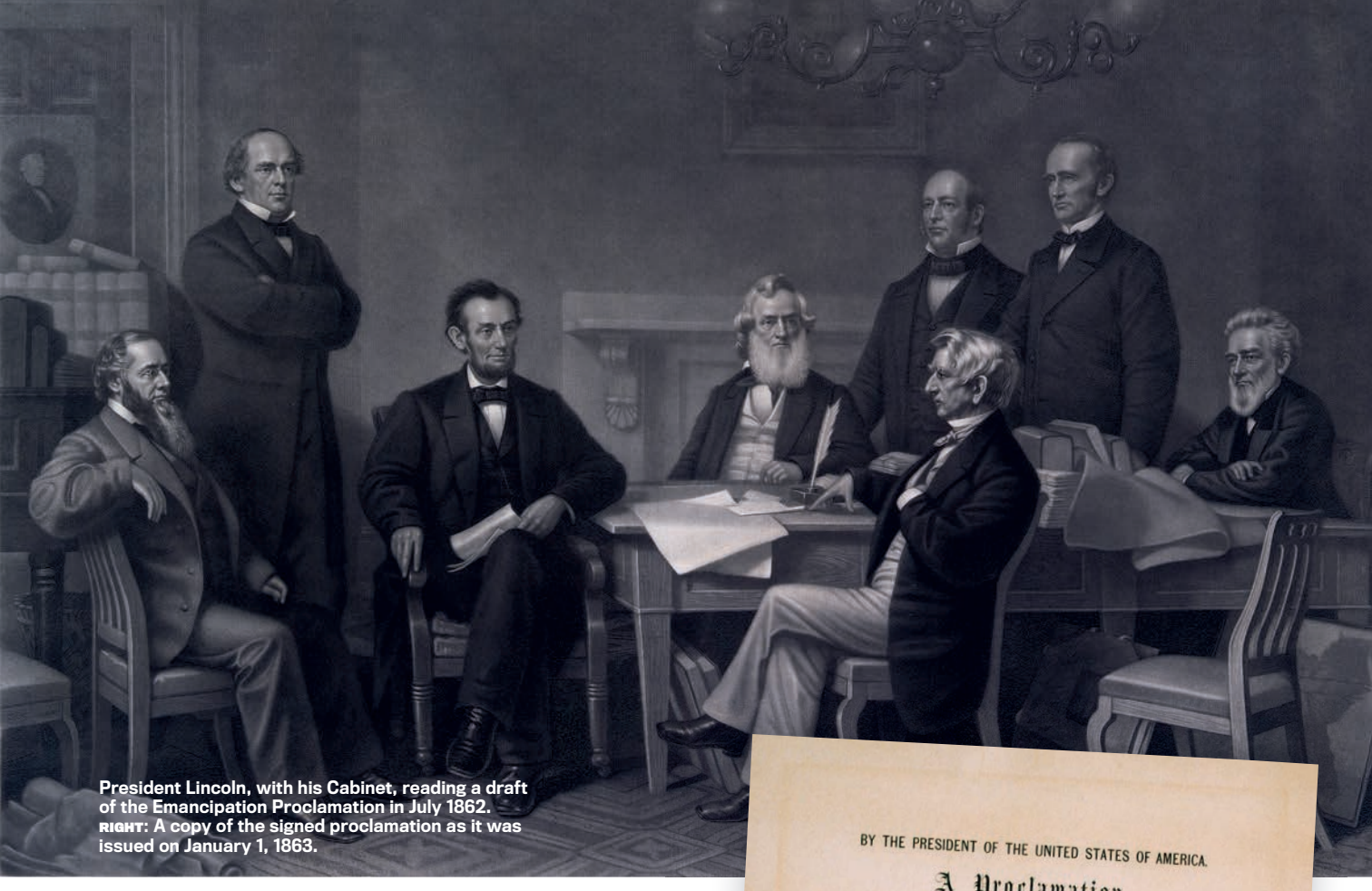
A DAY WHICH MOST of us dared not hope to see, an event worth the dreadful war, worth its costs and uncertainties, seems now to be close before us. October, November, December will have passed over beating hearts and plotting brains: then the hour will strike, and all men of African descent who have faculty enough to find their way to our lines are assured of the protection of American law ...

It is not a measure that admits of being taken back. Done, it cannot be undone by a new Administration. For slavery overpowers the disgust of the moral sentiment only through immemorial usage. It cannot be introduced as an improvement on the nineteenth century. This act makes that the lives of our heroes have not been sacrificed in vain. It makes a victory of our defeats. Our hurts are healed; the health of the nation is repaired. With a victory like this, we can stand many disasters. It does not promise the redemption of the black race: that lies not with us: but it relieves it of our opposition. The President by this act has paroled all the slaves in America; they will no more fight against us; and it relieves our race once for all of its crime and false position. The first condition of success is secured in putting ourselves right. We have recovered ourselves from our false position, and planted ourselves on a law of Nature ...

Of course, we are assuming the firmness of the policy thus declared. It must not be a paper proclamation. We confide that Mr. Lincoln is in earnest, and, as he has been slow in making up his mind, has resisted the importunacy of parties and of events to the latest moment, he will be as absolute in his adhesion. Not only will he repeat and follow up his stroke, but the nation will add its irresistible strength. If the ruler has duties, so has the citizen. In times like these, when the nation is imperilled, what man can, without shame, receive good news from day to day, without giving good news of himself? What right has any one to read in the journals tidings of victories, if he has not brought them by his own valor, treasure, personal sacrifice, or by service as good in his own department? With this blot removed from our national honor, this heavy load lifted off the national heart, we shall not fear henceforward to show our faces among mankind. We shall cease to be hypocrites and pretenders, but what we have styled our free institutions will be such ...

The cause of disunion and war has been reached, and begun to be removed ... The territory of the Union shines to-day with a lustre which every European emigrant can discern from far: a sign of inmost security and permanence ...

Whilst we have pointed out the opportuneness of the Proclamation, it remains to be said that the President had no choice. He might look wistfully for what variety of

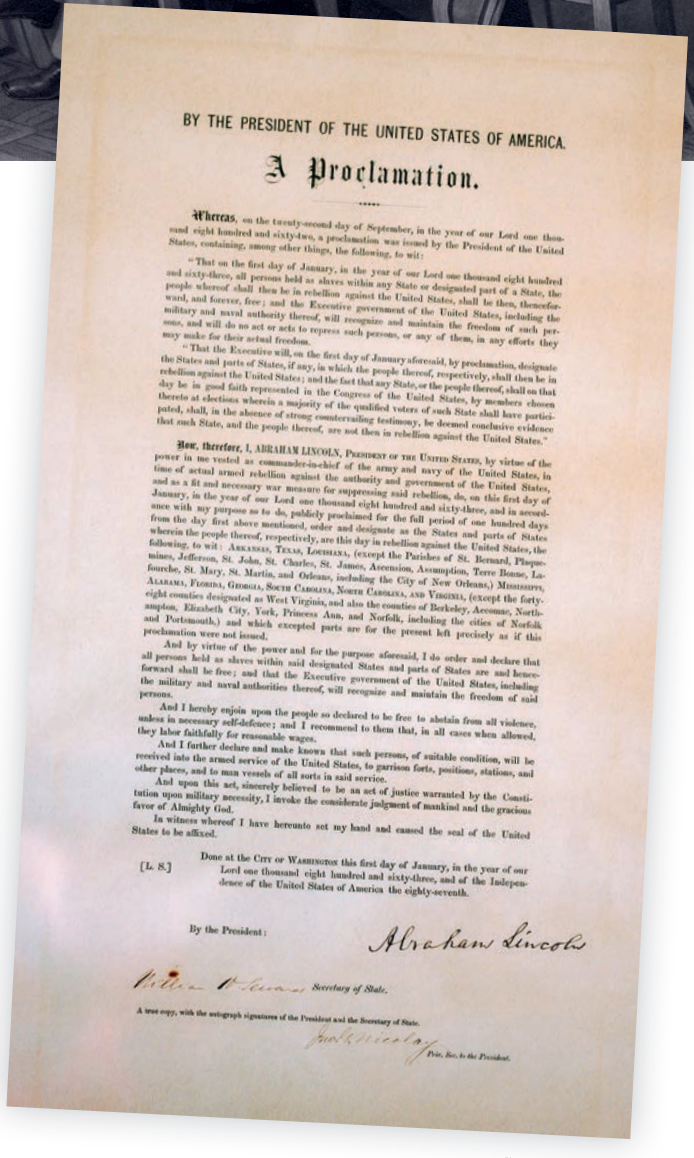


President Lincoln, with his Cabinet, reading a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation in July 1862. RIGHT: A copy of the signed proclamation as it was issued on January 1, 1863.

courses lay open to him: every line but one was closed up with fire ... The war existed long before the cannonade of Sumter, and could not be postponed. It might have begun otherwise or elsewhere, but war was in the minds and bones of the combatants, it was written on the iron leaf, and you might as easily dodge gravitation. If we had consented to a peaceable secession of the Rebels, the divided sentiment of the Border States made peaceable secession impossible, the insatiable temper of the South made it impossible, and the slaves on the border, wherever the border might be, were an incessant fuel to rekindle the fire. Give the Confederacy New Orleans, Charleston, and Richmond, and they would have demanded St. Louis and Baltimore. Give them these, and they would have insisted on Washington. Give them Washington, and they would have assumed the army and navy, and, through these, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. It looks as if the battle-field would have been at least as large in that event as it is now. The war was formidable, but could not be avoided. The war was and is an immense mischief, but brought with it the immense benefit of drawing a line ...

The aim of the war on our part is indicated by the aim of the President's Proclamation, namely, to break up the false combination of Southern society, to destroy the piratic feature in it which makes it our enemy only as it is the enemy of the human race, and so allow its reconstruction on a just and healthful basis. Then new affinities will act, the old repulsions will cease, and, the cause of war being removed, Nature and trade may be trusted to establish a lasting peace.

F. B. CARPENTER, PAINTER/A. H. RITCHIE, ENGRAVER/ LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; TIM SHAFFER/REUTERS/CORBIS



BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever, free; and the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit: Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans,) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth,) and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are and hencefoward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons, of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

[L. S.]

By the President:

Abraham Lincoln

William H. Seward, Secretary of State.

A true copy, with the autograph signatures of the President and the Secretary of State.

John G. Nicolay, Priv. Sec. to the President.

Women, Unite Against Slavery

BACKGROUND

IN THE WINTER of 1851, Harriet Beecher Stowe agreed to produce a serialized anti-slavery story for the abolitionist publication *The National Era*. The following year, the story was issued as the book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Stowe became an instant celebrity. The book proved popular in England, and a handful of British nobles were inspired by its message to write a petition, signed by hundreds of thousands of British women, addressed to "the Women of the United States of America," urging them to do more to protest slavery. (Slavery had been abolished in Britain in the 1830s.)

Nearly a decade later, when President Lincoln announced that the slaves would be freed, Stowe replied to the women of Britain in the pages of *The Atlantic*. America had now largely achieved the goal set out for it by Britain's petitioners, she noted, and yet, since the start of the war, anti-slavery Britain had not come forward in support of the North (a fact that many attributed to Britain's dependence on Southern cotton). Stowe now turned the petitioners' exhortation back upon them: "Sisters, what have *you* done, and what do you mean to do?"

By HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

A REPLY TO "The Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland to Their Sisters the Women of the United States of America" ...

Sisters,—More than eight years ago you sent to us in America a document with the above heading. It is as follows: ...

"We cannot be silent on those laws of your country which, in direct contravention of God's own law, 'instituted in the time of man's innocency,' deny in effect to the slave the sanctity of marriage, with all its joys, rights, and obligations; which separate, at the will of the master, the wife from the husband and the children from the parents ... We appeal to you, then, as sisters, as wives, and as mothers, to raise your voices to your fellow-citizens and your prayers to God for the removal of this affliction and disgrace from the Christian world" ...

This address, splendidly illuminated on vellum, was sent to our shores at the head of twenty-six folio volumes, containing considerably more than half a million of signatures of British women. It was forwarded to me with a letter from a British nobleman now occupying one of the highest official positions in England, with a request on behalf of these ladies that it should be in any possible way presented to the attention of my countrywomen ...

The signatures to this appeal ... represent all that Great Britain possesses, not only of highest and wisest, but of plain, homely common sense and good feeling. Names of wives of cabinet-ministers appear on the same page with the names of wives of humble laborers,—names of duchesses and countesses, of wives of generals, ambassadors, savans, and men of letters, mingled with names traced in trembling characters by hands evidently unused to hold the pen and stiffened by lowly toil ...

The time has come ... when such an astonishing page has been turned in the anti-slavery history of America, that the women of our country, feeling that the great anti-slavery work to which their English sisters exhorted them is almost done, may properly and naturally feel moved to reply to their appeal ...

Now, Sisters of England, in this solemn, expectant hour, let us speak to you of one thing which fills our hearts with pain and solicitude.

It is an unaccountable fact, and one which we entreat you seriously to ponder, that the party

OPPOSITE: Before submitting this essay to the magazine, Stowe—seen here in an 1853 portrait—traveled to Washington. It was upon this visit, late in 1862, that Lincoln is said to have greeted the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with the exclamation "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war!"

ORIGINALLY TITLED "A REPLY TO 'THE AFFECTIONATE AND CHRISTIAN ADDRESS OF MANY THOUSANDS OF WOMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND TO THEIR SISTERS THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'"

ALANSON FISHER/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

which has brought the cause of Freedom thus far on its way, during the past eventful year, has found little or no support in England. Sadder than this, the party which makes Slavery the chief cornerstone of its edifice finds in England its strongest defenders ...

Sisters of England, think it not strange, if we bring back the words of your letter, not in bitterness, but in deepest sadness, and lay them down at your door ... Sisters, what have *you* done, and what do you mean to do?

In view of the decline of the noble anti-slavery fire in England, in view of all the facts and admissions recited from your own papers, we beg leave in solemn sadness to return to you your own words ...

"We appeal to you, as sisters, as wives, and as mothers, to raise your voices to your fellow-citizens, and your prayers to God for the removal of this affliction and disgrace from the Christian world."

In behalf of many thousands of American women,

Harriet Beecher Stowe A

The Story of a Year

BACKGROUND

HENRY JAMES was 18 when the war broke out, but his father was protective of his shy second child and urged him not to enlist in the Union army. Instead James enrolled in law school, dropped out, and began to focus on his writing.

As of 1864, only one of his short stories had yet seen print—in an obscure New York publication. Setting his sights higher, he decided to try *The Atlantic*. He feared rejection, however, and asked the editors to send their response to a friend's address so that his family (especially his older brother, William, who was wont to tease) wouldn't see it. To his delight, the piece was accepted, and "The Story of a Year"—about the fate of a couple who get engaged just before the young man heads off to fight in Virginia—appeared in the March 1865 issue.

James's relationship with *The Atlantic* would prove long and fruitful: in the years to come, he would contribute numerous reviews, travel essays, and stories, and the magazine would serialize such classics as *Daisy Miller* and *The Portrait of a Lady*.

By HENRY JAMES

MY STORY BEGINS as a great many stories have begun within the last three years, and indeed as a great many have ended; for, when the hero is despatched, does not the romance come to a stop?

In early May, two years ago, a young couple I [knew] of strolled homeward from an evening walk, a long ramble among the peaceful hills which inclosed their rustic home. Into these peaceful hills the young man had brought, not the rumor, (which was an old inhabitant,) but some of the reality of war,—a little whiff of gunpowder, the clanking of a sword; for, although Mr. John Ford had his campaign still before him, he wore a certain comely air of camp-life which stamped him a very Hector to the steady-going villagers, and a very pretty fellow to Miss Elizabeth Crowe, his companion in this sentimental stroll. And was he not attired in the great brightness of blue and gold which befits a freshly made lieutenant? ...

These young people, I say, had been roaming. It was plain that they had wandered into spots where the brambles were thick and the dews heavy,—nay, into swamps and puddles where the April rains were still undried. Ford's boots and trousers had imbibed a deep foretaste of the Virginia mud; his companion's skirts were fearfully bedraggled. What great enthusiasm had made our friends so unmindful of their steps? What blinding ardor had kindled these strange phenomena: a young lieutenant scornful of his first uniform, a well-bred young lady reckless of her stockings? ...

Elizabeth (as I shall not scruple to call her outright) was leaning upon her companion's arm, half moving in concert with him, and half allowing herself to be led, with that instinctive acknowledgment of dependence natural to a young girl who has just received the assurance of lifelong protection ...

They made their way up a long swelling mound, whose top commanded the sunset. The dim landscape which had been brightening all day to the green of spring was now darkening to the gray of evening ...

Ford and Elizabeth had quietly watched this great mystery of the heavens.

"That is an allegory," said the young man, as the sun went under, looking into his companion's face, where a pink flush seemed still to linger: "it means the end of the war. The forces on both sides are withdrawn. The blood that has been shed gathers itself into a vast globule and drops into the ocean."

"I'm afraid it means a shabby compromise," said Elizabeth. "Light disappears, too, and the land is in darkness."

"Only for a season," answered the other. "We mourn our dead. Then light comes

again, stronger and brighter than ever. Perhaps you'll be crying for me, Lizzie, at that distant day."

"Oh, Jack, didn't you promise not to talk about that?" says Lizzie, threatening to anticipate the performance in question ...

"Jack," said she, after a pause, "I wonder how you 'll look when you get back."

Ford's soberness gave way to a laugh.

"Uglier than ever. I shall be all incrusted with mud and gore. And then I shall be magnificently sun-burnt, and I shall have a beard."

"Oh, you dreadful!" and Lizzie gave a little shout. "Really, Jack, if you have a beard, you'll not look like a gentleman."

"Shall I look like a lady, pray?" says Jack ...

"You've a very nice chin, my dear, and I think it's a shame to hide it."

"Yes, I know my chin's handsome; but wait till you see my beard."

"Oh, the vanity!" cried Lizzie, "the vanity of men in their faces!" ...

"If anything happens to me, you'll take comfort, won't you?"

"Never!" said Lizzie, tremulously.

"Oh, but you must ... Who am I that you should cry for me?"

"You are the best and wisest of men. I don't care; you *are*."

"Thank you for your great love, my dear. That's a delightful illusion. But I hope Time will kill it, in his own good way, before it hurts any one. I know so many men who are worth infinitely more than I—men wise, generous, and brave—that I shall not feel as if I were leaving you in an empty world."

"Oh, my dear friend!" said Lizzie, after a pause, "I wish you could advise me all my life."

"Take care, take care," laughed Jack; "you don't know what you are bargaining for" ...

They turned southward and went jolting down the hill.

"Do you mind this talk, Lizzie?" asked Ford.

"No," said Lizzie, swallowing a sob, unnoticed by her companion in the sublime egotism of protection; "I like it."

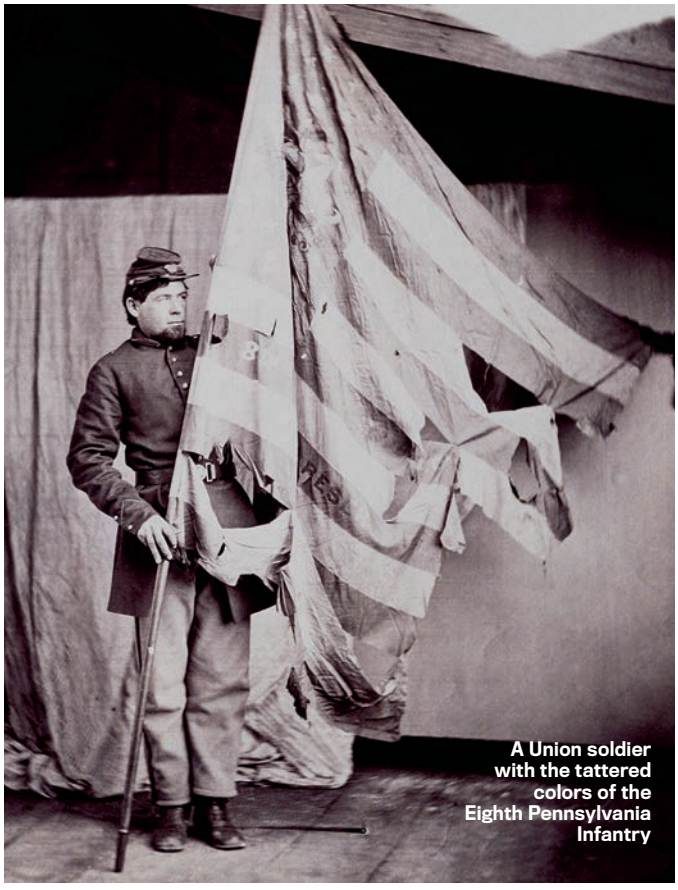
"Very well," said the young man, "I want my memory to help you. When I am down in Virginia, I expect to get a vast deal of good from thinking of you" ...

"And pray what am I to do," resumed Lizzie ... "while you are marching and countermarching in Virginia?"

"Your duty, of course," said Jack, in a steady voice ... "I think you will find the sun will rise in the east, my dear, just as it did before you were engaged."

"I'm sure I didn't suppose it wouldn't," says Lizzie.

"By duty I don't mean anything disagreeable, Liz," pursued the young man. "I hope you'll take your pleasure, too. I wish you might go to Boston, or even to Leatherborough, for a month or two."



A Union soldier with the tattered colors of the Eighth Pennsylvania Infantry

"What for, pray?"

"What for? Why, for the fun of it: to 'go out,' as they say."

"Jack, do you think me capable of going to parties while you are in danger?"

"Why not?" ...

"I wonder what your mother will say to the news" ...

"I think for the present our engagement had better be kept quiet."

Lizzie's heart sank with a sudden disappointment ...

"You see, I think secrecy would leave us much freer," said Jack,—"leave *you* much freer" ...

"I don't entirely understand you" ...

"There's no telling what may happen, Lizzie. I want you to marry me with your eyes open. I don't want you to feel tied down or taken in. You're very young, you know. You're responsible to yourself of a year hence. You're at an age when no girl can count safely from year's end to year's end" ...

Before many minutes they drew near home. There stood Mrs. Ford at the garden-gate, looking up and down the road, with a letter in her hand.

"Something for you, John," said his mother, as they approached. "It looks as if it came from camp.—Why, Elizabeth, look at your skirts!"

"I know it," says Lizzie, giving the articles in question a shake. "What is it, Jack?"

"Marching orders!" cried the young man. "The regiment leaves day after to-morrow. I must leave by the early train in the morning." *A*

CORBIS

The Ladies of New Orleans

BACKGROUND

OFTEN CRITICIZED as an opportunist with insufficient respect for authority, and widely regarded as incompetent on the battlefield, Union General Benjamin Butler managed to upset nearly everyone during his stint as the military governor of New Orleans. While in charge of the captured Southern city, he decreed that any woman "show[ing] contempt for any officer or soldier" would be treated under the law as a prostitute. One reporter wrote, "When was it ever heard before that the Commanding General of a conquering army was obliged to make a special order to protect, not the females of the conquered city, but one to protect the soldiery from the insults of the female population?"

Butler was not, however, without principle: early in the war, he pioneered the Union army's policy of refusing to return escaped slaves, and later he lobbied for equal pay for black soldiers. A year after the New Orleans debacle, Albert F. Puffer, an officer who had served on his staff there, set out to defend his boss. In this excerpt, Puffer addressed Butler's infamous "'Order No. 28,' relating to the conduct of women."

By ALBERT F. PUFFER

PROBABLY NOTHING IN the history of General Butler's administration in New Orleans drew from the foes of free government in every land such unmeasured execration as the celebrated "Order No. 28," relating to the conduct of women in the street, and I wish to give the most decided testimony upon this subject. That something was necessary to be done to stop the insults to which we were continually subjected by the other sex, I presume no one who is well informed as to their frequency and humiliating character will for a moment doubt. Upon our arrival in the city I flattered myself that such demonstrations would excite in me no sentiment more serious than pity for the childishness that prompted them; but I confess, that, after a day or two, the sneers and contortions of countenance, the angry withholding of the dress from contact with my person, and the abrupt departure from the sidewalk to the middle of the street to avoid even passing the hated uniform were too much for my philosophy, and gave me a sense of humiliation more painful than I can express. And yet the insults I received were slight, compared to those offered to many of our officers and men.

This condition of affairs continued about two weeks, until it became positively intolerable.

Young officers, too gallant, and too deeply imbued with the American respect for woman, to resent, by word or deed, the indignity, would come to the General with their cheeks crimson with shame and the effort to repress their just indignation, and beg him to take some measure for the suppression of the evil.

Most men would have seen no other solution of the difficulty than the arrest and punishment of a few of the offenders as a warning to the rest. But General Butler foresaw, what was afterwards proved in the case of Mrs. Larue, that the arrest of women would invariably provoke a street-disturbance, which might lead to bloodshed; he, therefore remembering an old ordinance of the city of London, republished it in the form of the General Order which has gained so universal a celebrity.

Mr. Monroe, who was mayor of the city at the time of its capture, came in a paroxysm of anger to protest against the order as a libel on every lady in New Orleans.

The General, with perfect good-nature, went over every word of it with him, explaining its origin and its intent, and demonstrating beyond doubt that it simply gave the female population of the city the opportunity to choose in which of the two categories they would be classed,—ladies or "common women,"—and assured the Mayor, that, above all, his idea was to promulgate such an order as would execute itself, and prevent the very thing which the Rebels have since charged upon him,—"a war upon women."

ORIGINALLY TITLED "OUR GENERAL"

Rose O'Neal Greenhow, a Southern sympathizer who used her position in Washington social circles to gather information, became one of the more interesting spies recruited by the Confederacy. She's shown here, visiting with her daughter, while held in the Old Capitol Prison in Washington.

ALEXANDER GARDNER/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Three times Mr. Monroe left the General with the firm conviction that the act was perfectly proper; but, instigated by crafty and able conspirators, of whom the ruling spirit was Mr. Pierre Soulè, he repeatedly returned with fresh attacks on the General's administration, and especially on this order, until, the General's patience being exhausted, he said to him,—"Mr. Mayor, you have played with me long enough. Your case is settled. The boat leaves for Fort Jackson this afternoon, and you must be ready to take passage on her at four o'clock."

I never witnessed greater forbearance than the General displayed in his treatment of the Mayor; indeed, I was at the time quite indignant that he allowed him such liberty of speech and action.

One word more about "Order No. 28." General Beauregard's fierce anger, and his horrible construction of its provisions, intended for effect on his troops, will be well remembered by my readers. It may not be uninteresting to them to know that Beauregard's sister in New Orleans, when asked her opinion of the order, answered,—"I have no interest in or objection to it; it does not apply to me." Is it difficult to guess to which class she belonged?

Can I say anything stronger in vindication of the propriety of this order, or of the General's sagacity in issuing it, than that the first twenty-four hours after its promulgation witnessed a complete, and, it seemed to us who were there, almost miraculous, change in the deportment of the ladies of the Crescent City? A

Leaves From an Officer's Journal

BACKGROUND

THE PRELIMINARY
Emancipation Proclamation announced by President Lincoln in September 1862 allowed the Union army to recruit blacks. Within weeks, preparations began for the organization and training of the first official black regiment, the First South Carolina Volunteers. The New England minister and frequent *Atlantic* contributor Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who had previously served as a captain in the 51st Massachusetts Infantry, was appointed colonel of the new regiment (black regiments were almost always commanded by white officers). He kept a diary of the experience, which was later excerpted in *The Atlantic* as "Leaves From an Officer's Journal," and subsequently released as a book, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*.

By THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

I WISH TO RECORD, as truthfully as I may, the beginnings of a momentous experiment, which, by proving the aptitude of the freed slaves for military drill and discipline, their ardent loyalty, their courage under fire, and their self-control in success, contributed somewhat towards solving the problem of the war, and towards remoulding the destinies of two races on this continent.

During a civil war events succeed each other so rapidly that these earlier incidents are long since overshadowed. The colored soldiery are now numbered no longer by hundreds, but by tens of thousands. Yet there was a period when the whole enterprise seemed the most daring of innovations, and during those months the demeanor of this particular regiment, the First South Carolina, was watched with microscopic scrutiny by friends and foes. Its officers had reason to know this, since the slightest camp-incidents sometimes came back to them, magnified and distorted, in anxious letters of inquiry from remote parts of the Union. It was no pleasant thing to live in this glare of criticism; but it guarantied the honesty of any success, while fearfully multiplying the penalties, had there been a failure. A single mutiny, a single rout, a stampede of desertions,—and there perhaps might not have been, within this century, another systematic effort to arm the negro.

It is possible, therefore, that some extracts from a diary kept during that period may still have an interest; for there is nothing in human history so momentous as the transit of a race from chattel-slavery to armed freedom; nor can this change be photographed save by the actual contemporaneous words of those who saw it in the process ...

NOVEMBER 27, 1862

Already I am growing used to the experience, at first so novel, of living among five hundred men, and scarce a white face to be seen,—of seeing them go through all their daily processes, eating, frolicking, talking, just as if they were white. Each day at dress-parade I stand with the customary folding of the arms before a regimental line of countenances so black that I can hardly tell whether the men stand steadily or not; black is every hand which moves in ready cadence as I vociferate, "Battalion! Shoulder arms!" nor is it till the line of white officers moves forward, as parade is dismissed, that I am reminded that my own face is not the color of coal ...

It needs but a few days to show up the absurdity of distrusting the military availability of these people. They have quite as much average comprehension as whites of the need of the thing, as much courage, (I doubt not,) as much previous knowledge

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An unidentified black soldier wearing a Union uniform

of the gun, and above all, a readiness of ear and of imitation, which, for purposes of drill, counterbalances any defect of mental training ...

In noticing the squad-drills, I perceive that the men learn less laboriously than whites that "double, double, toil and trouble," which is the elementary vexation of the drill-master,—that they more rarely mistake their left for their right,—and are more grave and sedate while under instruction ...

DECEMBER 1, 1862

How absurd is the impression bequeathed by Slavery in regard to these Southern blacks, that they are sluggish and inefficient in labor! Last night, after a hard day's work, (our guns and the remainder of our tents being just issued,) an order came from Beaufort that we should be ready in the evening to unload a steamboat's cargo of boards, being some of those captured by them a few weeks since, and now assigned for their use. I wondered if the men would grumble at the night-work; but the steamboat arrived by seven, and it was bright moonlight when they went at it. Never have I beheld such a jolly scene of labor. Tugging these wet and heavy boards over a bridge of boats ashore, then across the slimy beach at low tide, then up a steep bank, and all in one great uproar of merriment for two hours. Running most of the time, chattering all the time, snatching the boards from each other's backs as if they were some coveted treasure, getting up eager rivalries between different companies, pouring great choruses of ridicule on the heads of all shirkers, they made the whole scene so enlivening that I gladly stayed out in the moonlight for the whole time to watch it. And all this without any urging or any promised reward, but simply as the most natural way of doing the thing. The steamboat-captain declared that they unloaded the ten thousand feet of boards quicker than any white gang could have done it ...

Our soldiers are constantly twitted by their families and friends with their prospect of risking their lives and being paid nothing; and it is in vain that we read them the instructions of the Secretary of War, promising them the full pay of soldiers.

DECEMBER 2, 1862

I believe I have not yet enumerated the probable drawbacks to the success of this regiment, if any ...

Our soldiers are constantly twitted by their families and friends with their prospect of risking their lives in the service, and being paid nothing; and it is in vain that we read them the instructions of the Secretary of War to General Saxton, promising them the full pay of soldiers. They only half believe it.

Another drawback is that some of the white soldiers delight in frightening the women on the plantations with doleful tales of plans for putting us in the front rank in all battles, and such silly talk,—the object being, perhaps, to prevent our being employed on active service at all ...

DECEMBER 14

Just now one of the soldiers came to me to say that he was about to be married to a girl in Beaufort, and would I lend him a dollar and seventy-five cents to buy the wedding outfit? It seemed as if matrimony on such moderate terms ought to be encouraged, in these days; and so I responded to the appeal ...

JANUARY 1, 1863 (EVENING)

A happy New-Year to civilized people,—mere white folks. Our festival has come and gone, with perfect success ...

About ten o'clock [this morning] the people began to collect by land, and also by water,—in steamers sent by General Saxton for the purpose; and from that time all the avenues of approach were thronged. The multitude were chiefly colored women, with gay handkerchiefs on their heads, and a sprinkling of men, with that peculiarly respectable look which these people always have on Sundays and holidays. There were many white visitors also,—ladies on horseback and in carriages, superintendents and teachers, officers and cavalry-men. Our companies were marched to the neighborhood of the platform, and allowed to sit or stand, as at the Sunday services; the platform was occupied by ladies and dignitaries, and by the band of the Eight Maine, which kindly volunteered for the occasion; the colored people filled up all the vacant openings in the beautiful grove around, and there was a cordon of mounted visitors beyond. Above, the great live-oak branches and their trailing moss; beyond the people, a glimpse of the blue river.

The services began at half-past eleven o'clock, with prayer by our chaplain, Mr. Fowler, who is always, on such occasions, simple, reverential, and impressive. Then the President's Proclamation was read by Dr. W. H. Brisbane, a thing infinitely appropriate, a South-Carolinian addressing South-Carolinians; for he was reared among these very islands, and here long since emancipated his own slaves. Then the colors were presented to us by the Rev. Mr. French, a chaplain who brought them from the donors in New York. All this was according to the programme. Then followed an incident so simple, so touching, so utterly unexpected and startling, that I can scarcely believe it on recalling, though it gave the key-note to the whole day. The very moment the speaker had ceased, and just as I took and waved the flag, which now for the first time meant anything to these poor people, there suddenly arose, close beside the platform, a strong male voice, (but rather cracked and elderly,) into which two women's voices instantly blended, singing, as if by an impulse that could no more be repressed than the morning note of the song-sparrow,—

Black troops fighting for the Union in November 1864 in Dutch Gap, Virginia

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

"My Country, 't is of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing!"

People looked at each other, and then at us on the platform, to see whence came this interruption, not set down in the bills. Firmly and irrepressibly the quavering voices sang on, verse after verse; others of the colored people joined in; some whites on the platform began, but I motioned them to silence. I never saw anything so electric; it made all other words cheap; it seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed. Nothing could be more wonderfully unconscious; art could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of jubilee that should be so affecting; history will not believe it; and when I came to speak of it, after it was ended, tears were everywhere. A

Life on the Sea Islands

BACKGROUND

AT THE OUTSET of the war, one of the North's early successes was the conquest of the Sea Islands, off the coast of South Carolina. The region's white slaveholders fled, leaving behind their plantations and thousands of slaves. The islands quickly became a magnet for Northern reformers, who traveled there to help the slaves become self-sufficient on the abandoned land.

Charlotte Forten, an educated young African American woman from a prosperous Philadelphia family, joined the project in 1862, moving to the island of St. Helena, where she served for two years as a teacher of former slaves. While there, she kept a detailed account of her experiences, which she sent to her friend, the activist and poet John Greenleaf Whittier. Deeming her observations worthy of wider attention, he passed them along to *The Atlantic*'s editor, James T. Fields, who published them in two installments in 1864.

■ *By* CHARLOTTE FORTEN

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ATLANTIC MONTHLY."—The following graceful and picturesque description of the new condition of things on the Sea Islands of South Carolina, originally written for private perusal, seems to me worthy of a place in the "Atlantic." Its young author—herself akin to the long-suffering race whose Exodus she so pleasantly describes—is still engaged in her labor of love on St. Helena Island.

—John Greenleaf Whittier

IT WAS ON the afternoon of a warm, murky day late in October that our steamer, the United States, touched the landing at Hilton Head. A motley assemblage had collected on the wharf,—officers, soldiers, and "contrabands" of every size and hue: black was, however, the prevailing color. The first view of Hilton Head is desolate enough,—a long, low, sandy point, stretching out into the sea, with no visible dwellings upon it, except the rows of small white-roofed houses which have lately been built for the freed people.

After signing a paper wherein we declared ourselves loyal to the Government, and wherein, also, were set forth fearful penalties, should we ever be found guilty of treason, we were allowed to land, and immediately took General Saxton's boat, the Flora, for Beaufort. The General was on board, and we were presented to him. He is handsome, courteous, and affable, and looks—as he is—the gentleman and the soldier.

From Hilton Head to Beaufort the same long, low line of sandy coast, bordered by trees; formidable gunboats in the distance, and the gray ruins of an old fort, said to have been built by the Huguenots more than two hundred years ago. Arrived at Beaufort, we found that we had not yet reached our journey's end. While waiting for the boat which was to take us to our island of St. Helena, we had a little time to observe the ancient town. The houses in the main street, which fronts the "Bay," are large and handsome, built of wood, in the usual Southern style, with spacious piazzas, and surrounded by fine trees. We noticed in one yard a magnolia, as high as some of our largest shade-maples, with rich, dark, shining foliage. A large building which was once the Public Library is now a shelter for freed people from Fernandina. Did the Rebels know it, they would doubtless upturn their aristocratic noses, and exclaim in disgust, "To what base uses," etc. We confess that it was highly satisfactory to us to see how the tables are turned, now that "the whirligig of time has brought about its revenges" … There were indications that already Northern improvements had reached this Southern town. Among them was a wharf, a convenience that one wonders how the Southerners

could so long have existed without. The more we know of their mode of life, the more are we inclined to marvel at its utter shiftlessness.

Little colored children of every hue were playing about the streets, looking as merry and happy as children ought to look,—now that the evil shadow of Slavery no longer hangs over them. Some of the officers we met did not impress us favorably. They talked flippantly, and sneeringly of the negroes, whom they found we had come down to teach, using an epithet more offensive than gentlemanly. They assured us that there was great danger of Rebel attacks, that the yellow fever prevailed to an alarming extent, and that, indeed, the manufacture of coffins was the only business that was at all flourishing at present. Although by no means daunted by these alarming stories, we were glad when the announcement of our boat relieved us from their edifying conversation.

We rowed across to Ladies Island, which adjoins St. Helena, through the splendors of a grand Southern sunset. The gorgeous clouds of crimson and gold were reflected as in a mirror in the smooth, clear waters below. As we glided along, the rich tones of the negro boatmen broke upon the evening stillness,—sweet, strange, and solemn:—

"Jesus make de blind to see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hender me."

It was nearly dark when we reached the island, and then we had a three-miles' drive through the lonely roads to the house of the superintendent. We thought how easy it would be for a band of guerrillas, had they chanced that way, to seize and hang us; but we were in that excited, jubilant state of mind which makes fear impossible, and sang "John Brown" with a will, as we drove through the pines and palmettos. Oh, it was good to sing that song in the very heart of Rebeldom! ...

The next morning L. and I were awakened by the cheerful voices of men and women, children and chickens, in the yard below. We ran to the window, and looked out. Women in bright-colored handkerchiefs, some carrying pails on their heads, were crossing the yard, busy with their morning work; children were playing and tumbling around them. On every face there was a look of serenity and cheerfulness. My heart gave a great throb of happiness as I looked at them, and thought, "They are free! so long down-trodden, so long crushed to the earth, but now in their old homes, forever free!" And I thanked God that I had lived to see this day.

After breakfast Miss T. drove us to Oaklands, our future home. The road leading to the house was nearly choked with weeds. The house itself was in a dilapidated condition, and the yard and garden had a sadly neglected look. But there were roses in bloom; we plucked handfuls of feathery, fragrant acacia-blossoms; ivy crept along the ground and under the house. The freed people on the place seemed glad to see us. After talking with them, and giving some directions for cleaning the house, we drove to the school, in which I was to teach. It is kept in the Baptist Church,—a brick building, beautifully situated in a grove of live-oaks ... The school was opened in September. Many of the children had, however, received instruction during the summer. It was evident that they had made very rapid improvement, and we noticed with pleasure how bright and eager to learn many of them seemed ...

The first day at school was rather trying. Most of my children were very small, and consequently restless. Some were too young to learn the alphabet. These little ones were brought to school because the older children—in whose care their parents leave them while at work—could not come without them. We were therefore willing to have them come, although they seemed to have discovered the secret of perpetual motion, and tried one's patience sadly. But after some days of positive, though not severe treatment, order was brought out of chaos, and I found but little difficulty in managing and quieting the tiniest and most restless spirits. I never before saw children so eager to learn, although I had had several years' experience in New-England schools. Coming to school is a constant delight and recreation to them. They come here as other children go to play. The older ones, during the summer, work in the fields from early morning until eleven or twelve o'clock, and then come into school, after their hard toil in the hot sun, as bright and anxious to learn as ever.

My heart gave a great throb of happiness as I looked at them, and thought, "They are free! so long down-trodden, so long crushed to the earth, but now in their old homes, forever free!"

Of course there are some stupid ones, but these are the minority. The majority learn with wonderful rapidity. Many of the grown people are desirous of learning to read. It is wonderful how a people who have been so long crushed to the earth, so imbruted as these have been,—and they are said to be among the most degraded negroes of the South,—can have so great a desire for knowledge, and such a capability for attaining it. One cannot believe that the haughty Anglo-Saxon race, after centuries of such an experience as these people have had, would be very much superior to them. And one's indignation increases against those who, North as well as South, taunt the colored race with inferiority while they themselves use every means in their power to crush and degrade them, denying them every right and privilege, closing against them every avenue of elevation and improvement. Were they, under such circumstances, intellectual and refined, they would certainly be vastly superior to any other race that ever existed. A

The Brothers

BACKGROUND

WHEN THE CIVIL WAR erupted, Louisa May Alcott was nearing 30 and living at home with her parents in Concord, Massachusetts. In December 1862, feeling restless, she journeyed to Washington and reported for duty at the makeshift Union Hotel Hospital in Georgetown, where she was soon assisting with amputations, washing and comforting the wounded, and managing bed assignments. As she wrote in January 1863, she led "a life of constant excitement in this great house surrounded by 3 or 4 hundred men in all stages of suffering, disease, & death."

A few years earlier, *The Atlantic*'s editor, James Russell Lowell, had published a couple of Alcott's short stories. But James T. Fields, who assumed the editorship in 1861, rejected her work, admonishing her, "Stick to your teaching; you can't write." Alcott was undeterred, pledging, "I won't teach. I can write, and I'll prove it."

Upon Alcott's return from Washington, Fields evidently changed his mind, publishing her poetry and stories, including "The Brothers" (excerpted here). Five years later, the runaway success of *Little Women* would lay to rest any lingering doubts about Alcott's true calling.

By LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

DOCTOR FRANCK CAME IN as I sat sewing up the rents in an old shirt ...

"Miss Dane, I'm in a quandary," began the Doctor, with that expression of countenance which says as plainly as words, "I want to ask a favor, but I wish you'd save me the trouble."

"Can I help you out of it?"

"Faith! I don't like to propose it, but you certainly can, if you please."

"Then give it a name, I beg."

"You see a Reb has just been brought in crazy with typhoid; a bad case every way; a drunken, rascally little captain somebody took the trouble to capture, but whom nobody wants to take the trouble to cure. The wards are full, the ladies worked to death, and willing to be for our own boys, but rather slow to risk their lives for a Reb. Now you've had the fever, you like queer patients, your mate will see to your ward for a while, and I will find you a good attendant. The fellow won't last long, I fancy; but he can't die without some sort of care, you know. I've put him in the fourth story of the west wing, away from the rest. It is airy, quiet, and comfortable there. I'm on that ward, and will do my best for you in every way. Now, then, will you go?"

"Of course I will, out of perversity, if not common charity; for some of these people think that because I'm an abolitionist I am also a heathen, and I should rather like to show them, that, though I cannot quite love my enemies, I am willing to take care of them."

"Very good; I thought you'd go; and speaking of abolition reminds me that you can have a contraband for servant, if you like. It is that fine mulatto fellow who was found burying his Rebel master after the fight, and, being badly cut over the head, our boys brought him along. Will you have him?"

"By all means" ...

"I think you'll like him. He must have been a handsome fellow before he got his face slashed; not much darker than myself; his master's son, I dare say, and the white blood makes him rather high and haughty about some things" ...

In an hour I took possession of my new charge, finding a dissipated-looking boy of nineteen or twenty raving in the solitary little room, with no one near him but the contraband in the room adjoining. Feeling decidedly more interest in the black man than in the white, yet remembering the Doctor's hint of his being "high and haughty," I glanced furtively at him as I scattered chloride of lime about the room to purify the air, and settled matters to suit myself. I had seen many contrabands, but never one so attractive as this.

Louisa May Alcott (pictured here) belonged to a family of passionate abolitionists who occasionally sheltered fugitive slaves. In 1860, they hosted a reception for John Brown's widow.

GEORGE KENDELL WARREN STUDIO/ NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

All colored men are called "boys," even if their heads are white; this boy was five-and-twenty at least, strong-limbed and manly, and had the look of one who never had been cowed by abuse or worn with oppressive labor ... He was more quadroon than mulatto, with Saxon features, Spanish complexion darkened by exposure, color in lips and cheek, waving hair, and an eye full of the passionate melancholy which in such men always seems to utter a mute protest against the broken law that doomed them at their birth ... I wanted to know and comfort him; and, following the impulse of the moment, I went in and touched him on the shoulder.

In an instant the man vanished and the slave appeared. Freedom was too new a boon to have wrought its blessed changes yet, and as he started up, with his hand at his temple and an

obsequious "Yes, Ma'am," any romance that had gathered round him fled away, leaving the saddest of all sad facts in living guise before me. Not only did the manhood seem to die out of him, but the comeliness that first attracted me; for, as he turned, I saw the ghastly wound that had laid open cheek and forehead ... By one of those inexplicable processes that often teach us how little we understand ourselves, my purpose was suddenly changed, and though I went in to offer comfort as a friend, I merely gave an order as a mistress.

"Will you open these windows? this man needs more air."

He obeyed at once, and, as he slowly urged up the unruly sash, the handsome profile was again turned toward me, and again I was possessed by my first impression so strongly that I involuntarily said,—

"Thank you, Sir."

Perhaps it was fancy, but I thought that in the look of mingled surprise and something like reproach which he gave me there was also a trace of grateful pleasure. But he said, in that tone of spiritless humility these poor souls learn so soon,—

"I a'n't a white man, Ma'am, I'm a contraband."

"Yes, I know it; but a contraband is a free man, and I heartily congratulate you."

He liked that; his face shone, he squared his shoulders, lifted his head, and looked me full in the eye with a brisk—

"Thank ye, Ma'am; anything more to do fer yer?" ...

"By what name shall I call you?"

"Bob, Ma'am."

Every woman has her pet whim; one of mine was to teach the men self-respect by treating them respectfully ... To address men often old enough to be my father in that style did not suit my old-fashioned ideas of propriety ...

"What is your other name?" I asked. "I like to call my attendants by their last names rather than by their first."

"I've got no other, Ma'am; we have our masters' names, or do without. Mine's dead, and I won't have anything of his about me."

"Well, I'll call you Robert, then, and you may fill this pitcher for me, if you will be so kind" ...

We spent a curious week together. Robert seldom left his room, except upon my errands; and I was a prisoner all day, often all night, by the bedside of the Rebel ...

On the seventh night, Dr. Franck suggested that it would be well for some one, besides the general watchman of the ward, to be with the captain, as it might be his last. Although the greater part of the two preceding nights had been spent there, of course I offered to remain ...

Away went the Doctor; and, devouring a whole mouthful of g[r]apes, I lowered the lamp, wet the captain's head, and sat down on a hard stool to begin my watch. The captain lay with his hot, haggard face turned toward me, filling the air with his poisonous breath, and feebly muttering, with lips and tongue so parched that the sanest speech would have been difficult to understand. Robert was stretched on his bed in the inner room, the door of which stood ajar, that a fresh draught from his open window might carry the fever-fumes away through mine ...

"Lucy!"

It was the captain, and some new terror seemed to have gifted him with momentary strength.

"Yes, here's Lucy," I answered, hoping that by following the fancy I might quiet him ...

"That's a lie! she's dead,—and so's Bob, damn him! ... I swore I'd whip the Devil out of her, and I did; but you know before she cut her throat she said she'd haunt me, and there she is!"

He pointed behind me with an aspect of such pale dismay, that I involuntarily glanced over my shoulder and started as if I had seen a veritable ghost; for, peering from the gloom of that inner room, I saw a shadowy face, with dark hair all about it, and a glimpse of scarlet at the throat. An instant showed me that it was only Robert leaning from his bed's-foot, wrapped in a gray army-blanket, with his red shirt just visible above it, and his long hair disordered by sleep. But what a strange expression was on his face! ...

"Do you know him, Robert? Does he mean you?"

"Lord, no, Ma'am; they all own half a dozen Bobs: but hearin' my name woke me; that's all."

He spoke quite naturally, and lay down again, while I returned to my charge ...

I dropped my heavy head on my arms, and, drowsily resolving to look up again in fifteen minutes, fell fast asleep.

The striking of a deep-voiced clock woke me with a start. "That is one," thought I, but, to my dismay, two more strokes followed; and in remorseful haste I sprang up to see what harm my long oblivion had done. A strong hand put me back into my seat, and held me there. It was Robert. The instant my eye met his my heart began to beat, and all along my nerves tingled that electric flash which foretells a danger that we cannot see ...

Holding me with one hand, with the other he took up the glass in which I had left the draught, and showed me it was empty.

"Has he taken it?" I asked, more and more bewildered.

"I flung it out o' winder, Ma'am; he'll have to do without."

"But why, Robert? why did you do it?"

"Because I hate him! ... Don't yer be frightened, Ma'am; don't try to run away, fer the door's locked an' the key in my pocket; don't yer cry out, fer yer'd have to scream a long while, with my hand on yer mouth, before yer was heard. Be still, an' I'll tell yer what I'm goin' to do" ...

The captain moved, and feebly muttered, "Water!" Instinctively I rose to give it to him, but the heavy hand came down upon my shoulder, and in the same decided tone Robert said,—

"The water went with the physic; let him call."

"Do let me go to him! he'll die without care!"

"I mean he shall;—don't yer interfere, if yer please, Ma'am."

In spite of his quiet tone and respectful manner, I saw murder in his eyes, and turned faint with fear; yet the fear excited me, and, hardly knowing what I did, I seized the hands that had seized me, crying,—

"No, no, you shall not kill him! it is base to hurt a helpless man. Why do you hate him? He is not your master?"

"He's my brother" ...

"Robert, tell me what it means? Do not commit a crime and make me accessory to it. There is a better way of righting wrong than by violence;—let me help you find it" ...

"I *will* tell you, Ma'am; but mind, this makes no difference; the boy is mine. I'll give the Lord a chance to take him fust; if He don't, I shall."

"Oh, no! remember, he is your brother" ...

"I'm not like to forget that, Ma'am, when I've been thinkin' of it all this week. I knew him when they fetched him in, an' would 'a' done it long 'fore this, but I wanted to ask where Lucy was; he knows,—he told to-night,—an' now he's done for."

"Who is Lucy?" I asked hurriedly, intent on keeping his mind busy with any thought but murder ...

"My wife,—he took her"—

In that instant every thought of fear was swallowed up in burning indignation for the wrong, and a perfect passion of pity for the desperate man so tempted to avenge an injury for which there seemed no redress but this ... Words seemed so powerless I offered none, only put my hand on his poor head, wounded, homeless, bowed down with grief for which I had no cure, and softly smoothed the long neglected hair, pitifully wondering the while where was the wife who must have loved this tender-hearted man so well ...

"Yer see, Ma'am, his father,—I might say ours, if I warn't ashamed of both of 'em,—his father died two years ago, an' left us all to Marster Ned,—that's him here, eighteen then. He always hated me, I looked so like old Marster: he don't,—only the light skin an' hair. Old Marster was kind to all of us, me 'specially, an' bought Lucy off the next plantation down there in South Car'lina, when he found I liked her. I married her, all I could, Ma'am; it warn't much, but we was true to one another till Marster Ned come home a year after an' made hell fer both of us. He sent my old mother to be used up in his rice-swamp in Georgy; he found me with my pretty Lucy, an' though young Miss cried, an' I prayed to him on my knees, an' Lucy run away, he would n't have no mercy; he brought her back, an'—took her, Ma'am."

"Oh! what did you do?" I cried, hot with helpless pain and passion ...

"I half murdered him, an' to-night I'll finish."

"Yes, yes,—but go on now; what came next?" ...

"They whipped me till I could n't stand, an' then they sold me further South. Yer thought I was a white man once;—look here!"

With a sudden wrench he tore the shirt from neck to waist, and on his strong brown shoulders showed me furrows deeply ploughed, wounds which, though healed, were ghastlier to me than any in that house ...

"That's all, Ma'am. I've never seen her since, an' now I never shall in this world,—maybe not in t' other."

"But, Robert, why think her dead? The captain was wandering when he said those sad things; perhaps he will retract them when he is sane. Don't despair; don't give up yet."

"No, Ma'am, I guess he's right; she was too proud to bear that long" ...

He put his hand upon his brother's throat, and, watching the white face before him, muttered low between his teeth,—

"I'm lettin' him go too easy; there's no pain in this; we a'n't even yet. I wish he knew me. Marster Ned! it's Bob; where's Lucy?" ...

In the whirl of thoughts that went on in my brain, only one was clear enough to act upon. I must prevent murder, if I could,—but how? What could I do up there alone, locked in with a dying man and a lunatic? ... Strength I had not, nor much courage ... But one weapon I possessed,—a tongue,—often a woman's best defense; and sympathy, stronger than fear, gave me power to use it. What I said Heaven only knows, but surely Heaven helped me; words burned on my lips, tears streamed from my eyes, and some good angel prompted me to use the one name that had power to arrest my hearer's hand and touch his heart. For at that moment I heartily believed that Lucy lived, and this earnest faith roused in him a like belief ...

He put his hand upon his brother's throat, and, watching the white face before him, muttered low between his teeth,—"I'm lettin' him go too easy; there's no pain in this; we a'n't even yet."

When I paused, breathless, Robert turned to me, asking, as if human assurances could strengthen his faith in Divine Omnipotence,—

"Do you believe, if I let Marster Ned live, the Lord will give me back my Lucy?"

"As surely as there is a Lord, you will find her here or in the beautiful hereafter, where there is no black or white, no master and no slave ... I have listened to you, Robert; now hear me, and heed what I say, because my heart is full of pity for you, full of hope for your future, and a desire to help you now. I want you to go away from here, from the temptation of this place, and the sad thoughts that haunt it. You have conquered yourself once, and I honor you for it, because, the harder the battle, the more glorious the victory; but it is safer to put a greater distance between you and this man. I will write you letters, give you money, and send you to good old Massachusetts to begin your new life a freeman,—yes, and a happy man; for when the captain is himself again, I will learn where Lucy is, and move heaven and earth to find and give her back to you. Will you do this, Robert?"

Slowly, very slowly, the answer came; for the purpose of a week, perhaps a year, was hard to relinquish in an hour.

"Yes, Ma'am, I will" ...

I slipped the bolt across his door, and unlocked my own, flung up the window, steadied myself with a breath of air, then rushed to Doctor Franck. He came; and till dawn we worked together, saving one brother's life, and taking earnest thought how best to secure the other's liberty.

The Words That Remade America

BACKGROUND

IN THE SUMMER of 1863, General Robert E. Lee pushed northward into Pennsylvania. The Union army met him at Gettysburg, and from July 1 to July 3, the bloodiest battle of the war ensued. By the time it was over, the Confederates were in retreat, and the battlefield was strewn with more than 50,000 dead and wounded.

Four months later, thousands gathered at Gettysburg to witness the dedication of a new cemetery. On the program was the standard assortment of music, remarks, and prayers. But what transpired that day was more extraordinary than anyone could have anticipated. In "The Words That Remade America," the historian and journalist Garry Wills reconstructed the events leading up to the occasion, debunking the myth that President Lincoln wrote his remarks at the last minute, and carefully unpacking Lincoln's language to show how—in just 272 words—he subtly cast the nation's understanding of the Constitution in new, egalitarian terms. Wills's book *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, from which the essay was adapted, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1993.

By GARRY WILLS

IN THE AFTERMATH of the Battle of Gettysburg, both sides, leaving fifty thousand dead or wounded or missing behind them, had reason to maintain a large pattern of pretense—Lee pretending that he was not taking back to the South a broken cause, Meade that he would not let the broken pieces fall through his fingers. It would have been hard to predict that Gettysburg, out of all this muddle, these missed chances, all the senseless deaths, would become a symbol of national purpose, pride, and ideals. Abraham Lincoln transformed the ugly reality into something rich and strange—and he did it with 272 words. The power of words has rarely been given a more compelling demonstration.

The residents of Gettysburg had little reason to be satisfied with the war machine that had churned up their lives. General George Gordon Meade may have pursued General Robert E. Lee in slow motion, but he wired headquarters that "I cannot delay to pick up the debris of the battlefield." That debris was mainly a matter of rotting horseflesh and manflesh—thousands of fermenting bodies, with gas-distended bellies, deliquescing in the July heat. For hygienic reasons, the five thousand horses and mules had to be consumed by fire, trading the smell of decaying flesh for that of burning flesh. Human bodies were scattered over, or (barely) under, the ground. Suffocating teams of Union soldiers, Confederate prisoners, and dragooned civilians slid the bodies beneath a minimal covering as fast as possible—crudely posting the names of the Union dead with sketchy information on boards, not stopping to figure out what units the Confederate bodies had belonged to. It was work to be done hugger-mugger or not at all, fighting clustered bluebottle flies black on the earth, shoveling and retching by turns.

The whole area of Gettysburg—a town of only twenty-five hundred inhabitants—was one makeshift burial ground, fetid and steaming. Andrew Curtin, the Republican governor of Pennsylvania, was facing a difficult reelection campaign. He must placate local feeling, deal with other states diplomatically, and raise the funds to cope with corpses that could go on killing by means of fouled streams or contaminating exhumations.

Curtin made the thirty-two-year-old David Wills, a Gettysburg lawyer, his agent on the scene. Wills (who is no relation to the author) ... meant to dedicate the ground that would hold the corpses even before they were moved. He felt the need for artful words to sweeten the poisoned air of Gettysburg. He asked the principal wordsmiths

OPPOSITE: In a rare image of President Lincoln at Gettysburg, he is shown hatless at the center of a crowd on the orators' platform.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

of his time to join this effort—Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant. All three poets, each for his own reason, found their muse unbiddable. But Wills was not terribly disappointed. The normal purgative for such occasions was a large-scale, solemn act of oratory, a kind of performance art that had great power over audiences in the middle of the nineteenth century. Some later accounts would emphasize the length of the main speech at the Gettysburg dedication, as if that were an ordeal or an imposition on the audience. But a talk of several hours was customary and expected then—much like the length and pacing of a modern rock concert. The crowds that heard Lincoln debate Stephen Douglas in 1858, through three-hour engagements, were delighted to hear Daniel Webster and other orators of the day recite carefully composed paragraphs for two hours at the least.

The champion at such declamatory occasions, after the death of Daniel Webster, was Webster's friend Edward Everett. Everett was that rare thing, a scholar and an Ivy League diplomat who could hold mass audiences in thrall. His voice, diction, and gestures were successfully dramatic, and he habitually performed his well-crafted text, no matter how long, from memory. Everett was the inevitable choice for Wills, the indispensable component in the scheme for the cemetery's consecration. Battlefields were something of a specialty with Everett—he had augmented the fame of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill by his oratory at those Revolutionary sites. Simply to have him speak at Gettysburg would add this field to the sacred roll of names from the Founders' battles.

Lincoln overrode staff scheduling for the trip to Gettysburg. If he had not changed his schedule, he would very likely not have given his talk.

Everett was invited, on September 23, to appear October 23. That would leave all of November for filling the graves. But a month was not sufficient time for Everett to make his customary preparation for a major speech. He did careful research on the battles he was commemorating—a task made difficult in this case by the fact that official accounts of the engagement were just appearing. Everett would have to make his own inquiries. He could not be ready before November 19. Wills seized on that earliest moment, though it broke with the reburial schedule that had been laid out to follow on the October dedication. He decided to move up the reburial, beginning it in October and hoping to finish by November 19.

The careful negotiations with Everett form a contrast, more surprising to us than to contemporaries, with the casual invitation to President Lincoln, issued some time later as part of a general call for the federal Cabinet and other celebrities to join in what was essentially a ceremony of the participating states.

No insult was intended. Federal responsibility for or participation in state activities was not assumed then. And Lincoln took no offense. Though specifically invited to deliver only "a few appropriate remarks" to open the cemetery, he meant to use this opportunity. The partly mythical victory of Gettysburg was an element of his Administration's war propaganda. (There were, even then, few enough victories to boast of.) Beyond that, he was working to unite the rival Republican factions of Governor Curtin and Simon Cameron, Edwin Stanton's predecessor as Secretary of War. He knew that most of the state governors would be attending or sending important aides—his own bodyguard, Ward Lamon, who was acting as chief marshal organizing the affair, would have alerted him to the scale the event had assumed, with a tremendous crowd expected. This was a classic situation for political fence-mending and intelligence-gathering. Lincoln would take with him aides who would circulate and bring back their findings. Lamon himself had a cluster of friends in Pennsylvania politics, including some close to Curtin, who had been infuriated when Lincoln overrode his opposition to Cameron's Cabinet appointment.

Lincoln also knew the power of his rhetoric to define war aims. He was seeking occasions to use his words outside the normal round of proclamations and reports to Congress. His determination not only to be present but to speak is seen in the way he overrode staff scheduling for the trip to Gettysburg. Stanton had arranged for a 6:00 A.M. train to take him the hundred and twenty rail miles to the noontime affair. But Lincoln was familiar enough by now with military movement to appreciate what Clausewitz called "friction" in the disposal of forces—the margin for error that must always be built into planning. Lamon would have informed Lincoln about the potential for muddle on the nineteenth. State delegations, civic organizations, military bands and units, were planning to come by train and road, bringing at least ten thousand people to a town with poor resources for feeding and sheltering crowds (especially if the weather turned bad). So Lincoln countermanded Stanton's plan:

> I do not like this arrangement. I do not wish to so go that by the slightest accident we fail entirely, and, at the best, the whole to be a mere breathless running of the gauntlet ...

If Lincoln had not changed the schedule, he would very likely not have given his talk. Even on the day before, his trip to Gettysburg took six hours, with transfers in Baltimore and at Hanover Junction ... [He] kept his resolution to leave a day early even when he realized that his wife was hysterical over one son's illness soon after the death of another son. The President had important business in Gettysburg.

WHEN LIGHTNING STRUCK

For a man so determined to get there, Lincoln seems—in familiar accounts—to have been rather cavalier about preparing what he would say in Gettysburg. The silly but persistent myth is that he jotted his brief remarks on the back of an

envelope. (Many details of the day are in fact still disputed, and no definitive account exists.) Better-attested reports have him considering them on the way to a photographer's shop in Washington, writing them on a piece of cardboard as the train took him on the hundred-and-twenty-mile trip, penciling them in David Wills's house on the night before the dedication, writing them in that house on the morning of the day he had to deliver them, and even composing them in his head as Everett spoke, before Lincoln rose to follow him.

These recollections, recorded at various times after the speech had been given and won fame, reflect two concerns on the part of those speaking them. They reveal an understandable pride in participation at the historic occasion. It was not enough for those who treasured their day at Gettysburg to have heard Lincoln speak—a privilege they shared with ten to twenty thousand other people, and an experience that lasted no more than three minutes. They wanted to be intimate with the gestation of that extraordinary speech, watching the pen or pencil move under the inspiration of the moment.

That is the other emphasis in these accounts—that it *was* a product of the moment, struck off as Lincoln moved under destiny's guidance. Inspiration was shed on him in the presence of others. The contrast with Everett's long labors of preparation is always implied. Research, learning, the student's lamp—none of these were needed by Lincoln, whose unsummoned muse was prompting him, a democratic muse unacquainted with the library. Lightning struck, and each of our informants (or their sources) was there when it struck ...

When Lincoln rose, it was with a sheet or two, from which he read for three minutes. Myth tells of a poor photographer making leisurely arrangements to take Lincoln's picture, expecting him to be standing for some time.

These mythical accounts are badly out of character for Lincoln, who composed his speeches thoughtfully. His law partner, William Herndon, having observed Lincoln's careful preparation of cases, recorded that he was a slow writer, who liked to sort out his points and tighten his logic and his phrasing. That is the process vouched for in every other case of Lincoln's memorable public statements. It is impossible to imagine him leaving his Gettysburg speech to the last moment. He knew he would be busy on the train and at the site—important political guests were with him from his departure, and more joined him at Baltimore, full of talk about the war, elections, and policy ... He could not count on any time for the concentration he required when weighing his words ...

"REMARKS"

Lincoln's train arrived toward dusk in Gettysburg. There were still coffins stacked at the station for completing the reburials. Lamon, Wills, and Everett met Lincoln and escorted him the two blocks to the Wills home, where dinner was waiting, along with almost two dozen other distinguished guests. Lincoln's black servant, William Slade, took his luggage to the second-story room where he would stay that night, which looked out on the square.

Everett was already in residence at the Wills house, and Governor Curtin's late arrival led Wills to suggest that the two men share a bed. The governor thought he could find another house to receive him, though lodgings were so overcrowded that Everett said in his diary that "the fear of having the Executive of Pennsylvania tumbled in upon me kept me awake until one." Everett's daughter was sleeping with two other women, and the bed broke under their weight. William Saunders, the cemetery's designer, who would have an honored place on the platform the next day, could find no bed and had to sleep sitting up in a crowded parlor ...

Early in the morning Lincoln took a carriage ride to the battle sites. Later, Ward Lamon and his specially uniformed marshals assigned horses to the various dignitaries (carriages would have clogged the site too much). Although the march was less than a mile, Lamon had brought thirty horses into town, and Wills had supplied a hundred, to honor the officials present.

Lincoln sat his horse gracefully (to the surprise of some), and looked meditative during the long wait while marshals tried to coax into line important people more concerned about their dignity than the President was about his. Lincoln was wearing a mourning band on his hat for his dead son. He also wore white gauntlets, which made his large hands on the reins dramatic by contrast with his otherwise black attire.

Everett had gone out earlier, by carriage, to prepare himself in the special tent he had asked for near the platform. At sixty-nine, he had kidney trouble and needed to relieve himself just before and after the three-hour ceremony. (He had put his problem so delicately that his hosts did not realize that he meant to be left alone in the tent; but he finally coaxed them out.) Everett mounted the platform at the last moment, after most of the others had arrived.

Those on the raised platform were hemmed in close by standing crowds. When it had become clear that the numbers might approach twenty thousand, the platform had been set at some distance from the burial operations. Only a third of the expected bodies had been buried, and those under fresh mounds. Other graves had been readied for the bodies, which arrived in irregular order (some from this state, some from that), making it impossible to complete one section at a time. The whole burial site was incomplete. Marshals tried to keep the milling thousands out of the work in progress.

Everett, as usual, had neatly placed his thick text on a little table before him—and then ostentatiously refused to look at it. He was able to indicate with gestures the sites of the battle's progress, visible from where he stood. He excoriated the

rebels for their atrocities, implicitly justifying the fact that some Confederate skeletons were still unburied, lying in the clefts of Devil's Den under rocks and autumn leaves. Two days earlier Everett had been shown around the field, and places were pointed out where the bodies lay. His speech, for good or ill, would pick its way through the carnage.

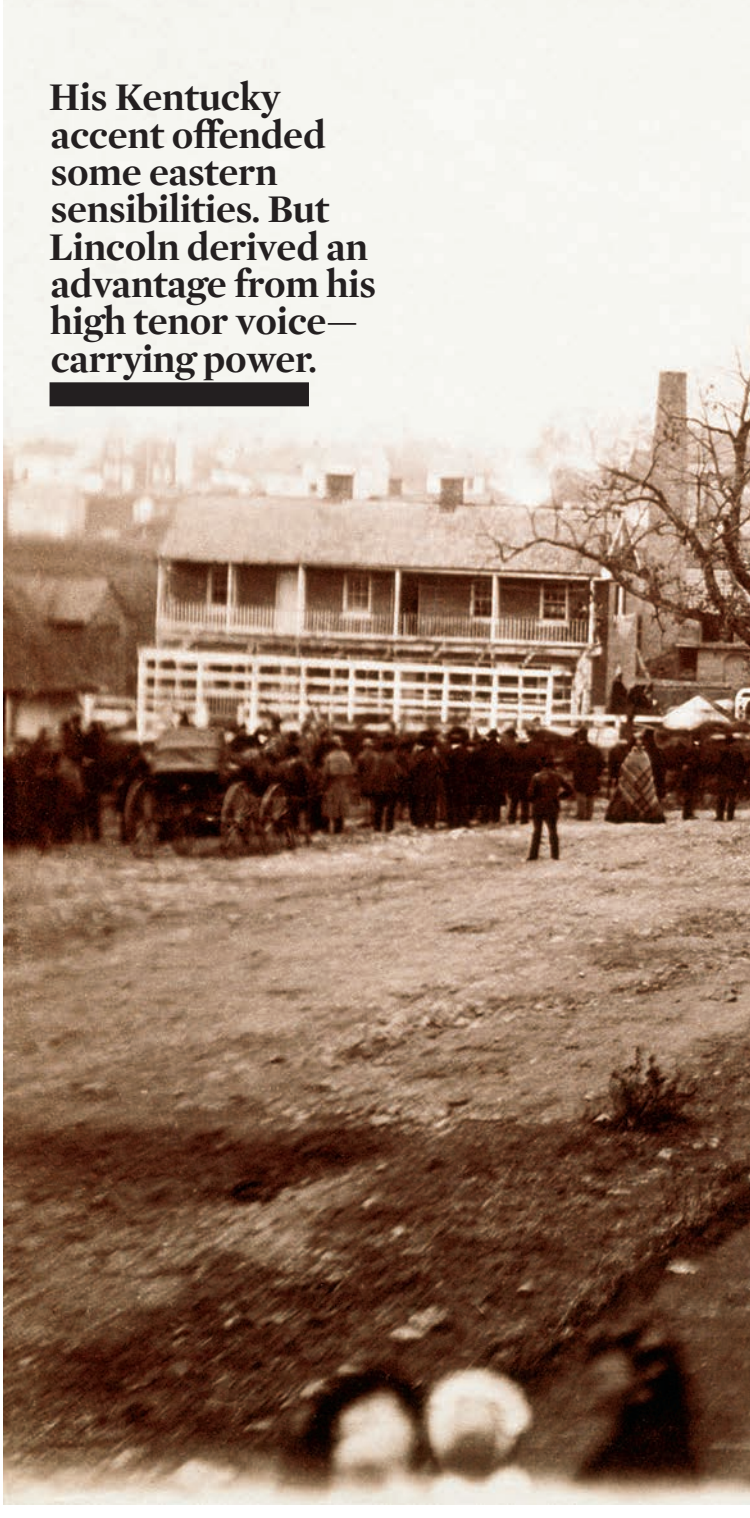
As a former Secretary of State, Everett had many sources, in and outside government, for the information he had gathered so diligently. Lincoln no doubt watched closely how the audience responded to passages that absolved Meade of blame for letting Lee escape. The setting of the battle in a larger logic of campaigns had an immediacy for those on the scene which we cannot recover. Everett's familiarity with the details was flattering to the local audience, which nonetheless had things to learn from this shapely presentation of the whole three days' action. This was like a modern "docudrama" on television, telling the story of recent events on the basis of investigative reporting. We badly misread the evidence if we think Everett failed to work his customary magic. The best witnesses on the scene—Lincoln's personal secretaries, John Hay and John Nicolay, with their professional interest in good prose and good theater—praised Everett at the time and ever after. He received more attention in their biography's chapter on Gettysburg than did their own boss.

When Lincoln rose, it was with a sheet or two, from which he read. Lincoln's three minutes would ever after be obsessively contrasted with Everett's two hours in accounts of this day. It is even claimed that Lincoln disconcerted the crowd with his abrupt performance, so that people did not know how to respond ("Was that *all*?"). Myth tells of a poor photographer making leisurely arrangements to take Lincoln's picture, expecting him to be standing for some time. But it is useful to look at the relevant part of the program:

Music. *by Birgfield's Band.*
Prayer. *by Rev. T.H. Stockton, D.D.*
Music. *by the Marine Band.*
ORATION. *by Hon. Edward Everett.*
Music. *Hymn composed by B. B. French.*
DEDICATORY REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.
Dirge. *sung by Choir selected for the occasion.*
Benediction. *by Rev. H.L. Baugher, D.D.*

There was only one "oration" announced or desired here. Though we call Lincoln's text *the* Gettysburg Address, that title clearly belongs to Everett. Lincoln's contribution, labeled "remarks," was intended to make the dedication formal (somewhat like ribbon-cutting at modern openings). Lincoln was not expected to speak at length, any more than Rev. T. H. Stockton was (though Stockton's prayer *is* four times the length of the President's remarks). A contrast of length with Everett's talk raises a false issue. Lincoln's text *is* startlingly brief for what it accomplished, but that would be equally true if Everett had spoken for a shorter time or had not spoken at all.

His Kentucky accent offended some eastern sensibilities. But Lincoln derived an advantage from his high tenor voice—carrying power.



MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION/CORBIS

Nonetheless, the contrast was strong. Everett's voice was sweet and expertly modulated; Lincoln's was high to the point of shrillness, and his Kentucky accent offended some eastern sensibilities. But Lincoln derived an advantage from his high tenor voice—carrying power. If there is agreement on any one aspect of Lincoln's delivery, at Gettysburg or elsewhere, it is on his audibility. Modern impersonators of

Soldiers and other officials form a parade on November 19, 1863, at the dedication ceremony for the Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Lincoln, such as Walter Huston, Raymond Massey, Henry Fonda, and the various actors who give voice to Disneyland animations of the President, bring him before us as a baritone, which is considered a more manly or heroic voice—though both the Roosevelt Presidents of our century were tenors. What should not be forgotten is that Lincoln was himself an actor, an expert raconteur and mimic, and one who spent hours reading speeches out of Shakespeare to any willing (or sometimes unwilling) audience. He knew a good deal about rhythmic delivery and meaningful inflection. John Hay, who had submitted to many of those Shakespeare readings, gave high marks to his boss's performance at Gettysburg. He put in his diary at the time that "the President, in a fine, free way, with more grace than is his wont, said his half dozen words

of consecration." Lincoln's text was polished, his delivery emphatic; he was interrupted by applause five times. Read in a slow, clear way to the farthest listeners, the speech would take about three minutes. It is quite true the audience did not take in all that happened in that short time—we are still trying to weigh the consequences of Lincoln's amazing performance. But the myth that Lincoln was disappointed in the result—that he told the unreliable Lamon that his speech, like a bad plow, "won't scour"—has no basis. He had done what he wanted to do, and Hay shared the pride his superior took in an important occasion put to good use.

A GIANT, IF BENIGN, SWINDLE

At the least, Lincoln had far surpassed David Wills's hope for words to disinfect the air of Gettysburg. His speech hovers far above the carnage. He lifts the battle to a level of abstraction that purges it of grosser matter—even "earth" is mentioned only as the thing from which the tested form of government shall not perish. The nightmare realities have been etherealized in the crucible of his language.

Lincoln was here to clear the infected atmosphere of American history itself, tainted with official sins and inherited guilt. He would cleanse the Constitution—not as William Lloyd Garrison had, by burning an instrument that countenanced slavery. He altered the document from within, by appeal from its letter to the spirit, subtly changing the recalcitrant stuff of that legal compromise, bringing it to its own indictment. By implicitly doing this, he performed one of the most daring acts of open-air sleight of hand ever witnessed by the unsuspecting. Everyone in that vast throng of thousands was having his or her intellectual pocket picked. The crowd departed with a new thing in its ideological luggage, the new Constitution Lincoln had substituted for the one they had brought there with them. They walked off from those curving graves on the hillside, under a changed sky, into a different America. Lincoln had revolutionized the Revolution, giving people a new past to live with that would change their future indefinitely ...

PLAIN SPEECH

Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg worked several revolutions, beginning with one in literary style. Everett's talk was given at the last point in history when such a performance could be appreciated without reservation. It was made obsolete within a half hour of the time when it was spoken. Lincoln's remarks anticipated the shift to vernacular rhythms which Mark Twain would complete twenty years later. Hemingway claimed that all modern American novels are the offspring of *Huckleberry Finn*. It is no greater exaggeration to say that all modern political prose descends from the Gettysburg Address ...

The spare quality of Lincoln's prose did not come naturally but was worked at. Lincoln not only read aloud, to think his way into sounds, but also wrote as a way of ordering his thought ... He loved the study of grammar, which some think the most arid of subjects. Some claimed to remember his gift for spelling, a view that our manuscripts disprove. Spelling as he had to learn it (separate from etymology) is more arbitrary than logical. It was the logical side of language—the principles of order as these reflect patterns of thought or the external world—that appealed to him.

He was also, Herndon tells us, laboriously precise in his choice of words. He would have agreed with Mark Twain that the difference between the right word and the nearly right one is that between lightning and a lightning bug. He said, debating Douglas, that his foe confused a similarity of words with a similarity of things—as one might equate a horse chestnut with a chestnut horse.

As a speaker, Lincoln grasped Twain's later insight: "Few sinners are saved after the first twenty minutes of a sermon." The trick, of course, was not simply to be brief but to say a great deal in the fewest words. Lincoln justly boasted of his Second Inaugural's seven hundred words, "Lots of wisdom in that document, I suspect." The same is even truer of the Gettysburg Address, which uses fewer than half that number of words.

The unwillingness to waste words shows up in the address's telegraphic quality—the omission of coupling words, a technique rhetoricians call asyndeton. Triple phrases sound as to a drumbeat, with no "and" or "but" to slow their insistency:

we are engaged ...
We are met ...
We have come ...

we can not dedicate ...
we can not consecrate ...
we can not hallow ...

that from these honored dead ...
that we here highly resolve ...
that this nation, under God ...

government of the people,
by the people,
for the people ...

Despite the suggestive images of birth, testing, and rebirth, the speech is surprisingly bare of ornament. The language itself is made strenuous, its musculature easily traced, so that even the grammar becomes a form of rhetoric. By repeating the antecedent as often as possible, instead of referring to it indirectly by pronouns like "it" and "they," or by backward referential words like "former" and "latter," Lincoln interlocks his sentences, making of them a constantly self-referential system. This linking up by explicit repetition amounts to a kind of hook-and-eye method for joining the parts of his address. The rhetorical devices are almost invisible, since they use no figurative language. (I highlight them typographically here.)

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, *a new nation, conceived* in Liberty, *and dedicated* to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in A GREAT CIVIL WAR, testing whether *that nation*, or any nation *so conceived and so dedicated*, can long endure.

We are met on a great *BATTLE-FIELD* of THAT WAR.

We have come to *dedicate* a portion of *THAT FIELD*, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that *that nation* might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not *dedicate*—we can not *consecrate*—we can not hallow—this ground.

The brave men, living and dead, **who struggled here**, have *consecrated* it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us the living, rather, to be *dedicated* here to the unfinished work which they **who fought here** have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here *dedicated* to the great task remaining before us—that from THESE HONORED DEAD we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—

that we here highly resolve that THESE DEAD shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Hemingway claimed that all modern American novels are the offspring of *Huckleberry Finn.* It is no greater exaggeration to say that all modern political prose descends from the Gettysburg Address.

Each of the paragraphs printed separately here is bound to the preceding and the following by some resumptive element. Only the first and last paragraphs do not (because they cannot) have this two-way connection to their setting. Not all of the "pointer" phrases replace grammatical antecedents in the technical sense. But Lincoln makes them perform analogous work. The nation is declared to be "dedicated" before the term is given further uses for individuals present at the ceremony, who repeat (as it were) the national consecration. The compactness of the themes is emphasized by this reliance on a few words in different contexts.

A similar linking process is performed, almost subliminally, by the repeated pinning of statements to *this* field, *these* dead, who died *here*, for *that* kind of nation. The reverential touching, over and over, of the charged moment and place leads Lincoln to use "here" eight times in the short text, the adjectival "that" five times, and "this" four times. The spare vocabulary is not impoverishing, because of the subtly interfused constructions, in which the classicist Charles Smiley identified "two antitheses, five cases of anaphora, eight instances of balanced phrases and clauses, thirteen alliterations." "Plain speech" was never less artless. Lincoln forged a new lean language to humanize and redeem the first modern war.

This was the perfect medium for changing the way most Americans thought about the nation's founding. Lincoln did not argue law or history, as Daniel Webster had. He *made* history. He came not to present a theory but to impose a symbol, one tested in experience and appealing to national values, expressing emotional urgency in calm abstractions. He came to change the world, to effect an intellectual revolution. No other words could have done it. The miracle is that these words did. In his brief time before the crowd at Gettysburg he wove a spell that has not yet been broken—he called up a new nation out of the blood and trauma.

MAKING UNION A REALITY

[Lincoln] not only presented the Declaration of Independence in a new light, as a matter of founding law, but put its central proposition, equality, in a newly favored position as a principle of the Constitution ... What had been mere theory in the writings of James Wilson, Joseph Story, and Daniel Webster—that the nation preceded the states, in time and importance—now became a lived reality of the American tradition. The results of this were seen almost at once. Up to the Civil War "the United States" was invariably a plural noun: "The United States are a free country." After Gettysburg it became a singular: "The United States is a free country." This was a result of the whole mode of thinking that Lincoln expressed in his acts as well as his words, making union not a mystical hope but a constitutional reality. When, at the end of the address, he referred to government "of the people, by the people, for the people," he was not, like Theodore Parker, just praising popular government as a Transcendentalist's ideal. Rather, like Webster, he was saying that America was *a* people accepting as its great assignment what was addressed in the Declaration. This people was "conceived" in 1776, was "brought forth" as an entity whose birth was datable ("four score and seven years" before) and placeable ("on this continent"), and was capable of receiving a "new birth of freedom."

Thus Abraham Lincoln changed the way people thought about the Constitution ...

The Gettysburg Address has become an authoritative expression of the American spirit—as authoritative as the Declaration itself, and perhaps even more influential, since it determines how we read the Declaration. For most people now, the Declaration means what Lincoln told us it means, as he did to correct the Constitution without overthrowing it ... By accepting the Gettysburg Address, and its concept of a single people dedicated to a proposition, we have been changed. Because of it, we live in a different America. A

A Rebel's Recollections

BACKGROUND

THROUGHOUT THE WAR, *The Atlantic*'s coverage reflected an almost exclusively Northern point of view. But nearly a decade after the war ended, the magazine offered a Southerner's perspective, via a seven-part series by George Cary Eggleston, whose family had owned a Virginia plantation and who had fought for the South under J. E. B. Stuart.

When word first got out that *The Atlantic* would serve as a platform for a Confederate soldier, "there was," Eggleston would later recall, "a good deal of not very friendly surprise." But Eggleston's exposition of the Southern perspective was so sensitively handled that when the second installment appeared, *The Atlantic*'s editor, William Dean Howells, informed him that former naysayers "had begun to sing psalms in his ears." Franklin Sanborn, one of John Brown's funders (and the author of "John Brown and His Friends," page 28), even invited Eggleston to a dinner at which, Eggleston later recalled, "there should be nobody present but 'original abolitionists' and my rebel self."

By GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON

THE READER MUST make of himself, for the time at least, a Confederate. He must put himself in the place of the Southerners and look at some things through their eyes ...

I shall make no attempt whatever to prove my postulates, but any one interested in these pages will find it to his advantage to accept them, one and all, as proved, pending the reading of what is to follow. After that he may relapse as speedily as he pleases into his own opinions. Here are the postulates:—

1. The Southerners honestly believed in the right of secession, not merely as a revolutionary, but as a constitutional right. They not only held that whenever any people finds the government under which it is living oppressive and subversive of the ends for which it was instituted, it is both the right and the duty of that people to throw off the government and establish a new one in its stead; but they believed also that every State in the Union held the reserved right, under the constitution, to withdraw peaceably from the Union at pleasure.

2. They believed that every man's allegiance was due to his State only, and that it was only by virtue of the State's continuance in the Union that any allegiance was due to the general government at all; wherefore the withdrawal of a State from the Union would of itself absolve all the citizens of that State from whatever obligations they were under to maintain and respect the Federal constitution. In other words, patriotism, as the South understood it, meant devotion to one's State, and only a secondary and consequential devotion to the Union, existing as a result of the State's action in making itself a part of the Union, and terminable at any time by the State's withdrawal.

3. They were as truly and purely patriotic in their secession and in the fighting which followed, as were the people of the North in their adherence to the Union itself. The difference was one of opinion as to what the duties of a patriot were, and not at all a difference in the degree of patriotism existing in the two sections.

4. You, reader, who shouldered your musket and fought like the hero you are, for the Union and the old flag, if you had been bred at the South, and had understood your duty as the Southerners did theirs, would have fought quite as bravely for secession as you did against it; and you would have been quite as truly a hero in the one case as in the other, because in either you would have risked your life for the sake of that which you held to be the right. If the reader will bear all this in mind we shall get on much better than we otherwise could, in our effort to catch a glimpse of the war from a Southern point of view ...

J. E. B. Stuart, the flamboyant Confederate commander of the cavalry in Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, in an 1863 portrait

GEORGE S. COOK/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

THE MEN WHO MADE THE ARMY

Every gentleman in Virginia, not wholly incapable of rendering service, enlisted at the beginning of the war, and the companies, unarmed, untrained, and hardly even organized, were sent at once to camps of instruction. Here they were in theory drilled and disciplined and made into soldiers, by the little handful of available West-Pointers and the lads from the Military Institute at Lexington. In point of fact, they were only organized and taught the rudiments of the drill before being sent to the front as full-fledged soldiers; and it was only after a year or more of active service in the field that they began to suspect what the real work and the real character of the modern soldier is ...

The men who volunteered went to war of their own accord, and were wholly unaccustomed to acting on any other than their own motion. They were hardy lovers of field sports, accustomed to out-door life, and in all physical respects excellent material of which to make an army. But they were not used to control of any sort, and were not disposed to obey anybody except for good and sufficient reason given ...

It was in this undisciplined state that the men who afterwards made up the army under Lee were sent to the field to meet the enemy at Bull Run and elsewhere, and the only wonder is that they were ever able to fight at all ... And yet they acquitted themselves reasonably well ... These men were the people of the South, and the war was their own; wherefore they fought to win it of their own accord, and not at all because their officers commanded them to do so. Their personal spirit and their intelligence were their sole elements of strength. Death has few terrors for such men, as compared with dishonor, and so they needed no officers at all, and no discipline, to insure their personal good conduct on the field of battle. The same elements of character, too, made them accept hardship with the utmost cheerfulness ...

They thought too, that, fighting on their own soil, in an essentially defensive struggle, they would have some advantage, as they certainly did ... These were the grounds of their hopes; but had there been no hope for them at all, I verily believe they would have fought all the same. Certainly they had small reason to hope for success after the campaign of 1863, but they fought on nevertheless, until they could fight no more. Let the reader remember that as the Southerners understood the case, they could not, without a complete sacrifice of honor, do anything else than fight on until utterly crushed ...

THE CONDUCT OF THE WOMEN

The women of the South could hardly have been more desperately in earnest than their husbands and brothers and sons were, in the prosecution of the war ...

The fact that all the men capable of bearing arms went into the army, and staid there, gave to every woman in the South a personal interest not only in the general result of each battle, but in the list of killed and wounded as well ... They believed it to be the duty of every able-bodied man to serve in the army, and they eagerly sent the men of their own homes to the field, frowning undisguisedly upon every laggard until there were no laggards left ...

In Richmond, when the hospitals were filled with wounded men brought in from the seven days' fighting with McClellan, and the surgeons found it impossible to dress half the wounds, a band was formed, consisting of nearly all the married women of the city, who took upon themselves the duty of going to the hospitals and dressing wounds from morning till night ...

Every Confederate remembers gratefully the reception given him when he went into any house where these women were. Whoever he might be, and whatever his plight, if he wore the gray he was received, not as a beggar or tramp, not even as a stranger, but as a son of the house, for whom it held nothing too good, and whose comfort was the one care of all its inmates, even though their own must be sacrificed in securing it ...

It is impossible to say precisely when the conviction became general in the South that we were to be beaten. I cannot even decide at what time I myself began to think the cause a hopeless one.

But if the cheerfulness of the women during the war was remarkable, what shall we say of the way in which they met its final failure and the poverty that came with it? The end of the war completed the ruin which its progress had wrought. Women who had always lived in luxury, and whose labors and sufferings during the war were lightened by the consciousness that in suffering and laboring they were doing their part toward the accomplishment of the end upon which all hearts were set, were now compelled to face not temporary but permanent poverty, and to endure, without a motive or a sustaining purpose, still sorer privations than any they had known in the past ... They kept their spirits up through it all, however, and improvised a new social system in which absolute poverty, cheerfully borne, was the badge of respectability. Everybody was poor except the speculators who had fattened upon the necessities of the women and children, and so poverty was essential to anything like good repute. The return of the soldiers made some sort of social festivity necessary, and "starvation parties" were given, at which it was understood that the givers were wholly unable to set out refreshments of any kind. In the matter of dress, too, the general poverty was recognized, and every one went clad in whatever he or she happened to have. The want of means became a jest, and nobody mourned over it; while all were laboring to repair their wasted fortunes as they best could ...

The modest Dunker Church, seen in this September 1862 stereograph of Antietam, created a poignant backdrop for one of the war's bloodiest battles.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

OF THE TIME WHEN MONEY WAS "EASY"

The financial system adopted by the Confederate government was singularly simple and free from technicalities. It consisted chiefly in the issue of treasury notes enough to meet all the expenses of the government ...

We knew only that money was astonishingly abundant. Provisions fell short sometimes, and the supply of clothing was not always as large as we should have liked, but nobody found it difficult to get money enough ...

We were never able to determine what was a fair price for anything. We fell into the habit of paying whatever was asked, knowing that to-morrow we should have to pay more ...

The feeling was universal that the speculators were fattening upon the necessities of the country and the sufferings of the people. Nearly all mercantile business was regarded at least with suspicion, and much of it fell into the hands of people with no reputations to lose ...

The financial condition got steadily worse to the end. I believe the highest price, relatively, I ever saw paid, was for a pair of boots. A cavalry officer, entering a little country store, found there one pair of boots which fitted him. He inquired the price. "Two hundred dollars," said the merchant. A five hundred dollar bill was offered, but the merchant, having no smaller bills, could not change it. "Never mind," said the cavalier, "I'll take the boots anyhow. Keep the change; I never let a little matter of three hundred dollars stand in the way of a trade."

That was on the day before Lee's surrender, but it would not have been an impossible occurrence at any time during the preceding year ...

It is impossible to say precisely when the conviction became general in the South that we were to be beaten. I cannot even decide at what time I myself began to think the cause a hopeless one, and I have never yet found one of my fellow-Confederates, though I have questioned many of them, who could tell me with any degree of certainty the history of his change from confidence to despondency ...

Up to the hour of the evacuation of Richmond, the newspapers were as confident as ever of victory. During the fall of 1864 they even believed, or professed to believe, that our triumph was already at hand. The Richmond Whig of October 5, 1864, said: "That the present condition of affairs, compared with that of any previous year at the same season, at least since 1861, is greatly in our favor, we think can hardly be denied" ...

And yet I think we must have known from the beginning of the campaign of 1864 that the end was approaching ...

If General Grant had failed to break our power of resistance by his sledge-hammer blows, it speedily became evident that he would be more successful in wearing it away by the constant friction of a siege ... During the first two months of the siege my own company, which numbered about a hundred and fifty men, lost sixty, in killed and wounded, an average of a man a day ...

There was no longer any room for hope except in a superstitious belief that Providence would in some way interfere in our behalf, and to that very many betook themselves for comfort ... I think hardly any man in that army entertained a thought of coming out of the struggle alive ...

Prayer-meetings were held in every tent. Testaments were in every hand, and a sort of religious ecstasy took possession of the army ... Men in this mood make the best of soldiers, and at no time were the fighting qualities of the Southern army better than during the siege ...

When at last the beginning of the end came, in the evacuation of Richmond and the effort to retreat, everything seemed to go to pieces at once. The best disciplinarians in the army relaxed ... their reins. The best troops became disorganized, and hardly any command marched in a body. Companies were mixed together, parts of each being separated by detachments of others ... The battery to which I was attached was captured near Amelia Court House, and within a mile or two of my home. A

Lee in Battle

BACKGROUND

WHEN WAR ERUPTED in April 1861, the Union offered command of its forces to Robert E. Lee, a top West Point graduate with a distinguished 32-year military record. But Lee, a Virginia native, reluctantly declined and instead offered his services to the Confederate army. He would lead his men to a string of victories and be widely hailed in the South as a brilliant tactician and a hero before ultimately surrendering to the Union army, which dramatically outnumbered his own.

In the years after the war, Lee would be lionized by the defeated Confederates as the embodiment of all they had fought for and lost. Even a Northerner like Gamaliel Bradford Jr.—a prolific Massachusetts-born writer sometimes called "the dean of American biographers"—took up the tradition, venerating Lee for his chivalry and gentility in the popular 1912 biography *Lee the American*. In a preview published in the August 1911 *Atlantic*, Bradford paid tribute to Lee's humility and heroism and to his graceful acceptance of defeat.

By GAMALIEL BRADFORD JR.

WE LIKE TO imagine the master mind in a great conflict controlling everything, down to the minutest detail. But with vast modern armies this is far from being the case, even with the elaborate electrical facilities of to-day; and in Lee's time those facilities were much less complete. Lee himself indicated this humorously when he was remonstrated with for running unnecessary risks, and answered: "I wish some one would tell me my proper place in battle. I am always told I should not be where I am" ...

I ask myself how much of that born soldier's lust for battle, keen enjoyment of danger and struggle and combat, Lee really had. Certainly there is little record of his speaking of any such feeling. At various times he expressed a deep sense of all the horrors of war. "You have no idea of what a horrible sight a battlefield is." And again, "What a cruel thing is war; to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world" ... One vivid sentence, spoken in the midst of the slaughter of F[r]edericksburg, lights the man's true instincts, like a flash: "It is well that war is so terrible, or else we might grow too fond of it" ...

When matters became really critical, Lee completely threw aside all caution. In the terrific battles of the Wilderness, where at times it seemed as if Grant would succeed in breaking through, the Confederate general repeatedly (on three separate occasions, as it appears) rushed to the front to rally his men and charge, like Ney or Murat, at the head of them. "Go back, General Lee, go back!" shouted the soldiers. But he would not go back till they had promised to do as much for him as they could have done with him. And they did as much. No men could have done more ...

Once in a fight, he hated to give it up, and perhaps occasionally allowed his ardor to overcome his discretion ...

The most heroic picture that is left us of Lee high-wrought by the excitement of battle and determined to fight to the end, is the account, received by Henderson from a reliable eye-witness, of the chief's decision to remain north of the Potomac after Antietam. General after general rode up to the commander's headquarters, all with the same tale of discouragement and counsel of retreat ... Even Jackson did not venture to suggest anything but withdrawal. There were a few moments of oppressive silence. Then Lee rose in his stirrups and said, "Gentlemen, we will not cross the Potomac to-night. You will go to your respective commands, strengthen your lines,

General Robert E. Lee, astride his beloved horse, Traveller. An officer serving under Lee once noted that the horse "always stepped as if conscious that he bore a king on his back."

CORBIS

send two officers from each brigade towards the ford to collect your stragglers and bring them up. Many have come in. I have had the proper steps taken to collect all the men who are in the rear. If McClellan wants to fight in the morning, I will give him battle. *Go!*" They went, and in this case, at least, Lee's glorious audacity was justified; for he proved to all the world that McClellan did not dare attack him again ...

But there came a day of defeat, when the Army of Northern Virginia, after four years of fighting and triumphing and suffering, shrunk almost to nothing, saw their great commander ride away to make his submission to a generous conqueror ...

Under the noble serenity maintained by habitual effort, good observers detected signs of the struggle that must be taking place. "His face was still calm, but his carriage was no longer erect, as his soldiers had been used to see it. The trouble of those last days had already ploughed great furrows in his forehead. His eyes were red as if with weeping; his cheeks sunken and haggard; his face colorless. No one who looked upon him then, as he stood there in full view of the disastrous end, can ever forget the intense agony written upon his features" ...

His officers protested passionately. "O General, what will history say of the surrender of the army in the field?" ...

The scene that ensued has been described often: the plain farmhouse room, the officers, curious, yet sympathetic, the formal conversation, as always painfully unequal to the huge event it covered, the short, ungainly, ill-dressed man, as dignified in his awkwardness almost as the royal, perfectly appointed figure that conferred with him. Lee bore himself nobly, say his admirers; nobly, but a little coldly, say his opponents. And who shall blame him? Then it was over. One moment he paused at the door, as he went out, waiting for his horse, and as he paused, looking far into the tragic future, or the tragic past, he struck his gauntleted hands together in a gesture of immense despair, profoundly significant for so self-contained a man. Then he rode away, back to his children, back to the Army of Northern Virginia, who had seen him daily for three years and now would never see him any more. A

Toward Appomattox

BACKGROUND

IN 1988, *Atlantic* senior editor Jack Beatty—now a commentator for NPR's *On Point* and a Guggenheim Fellowship and American Book Award recipient—traveled to Virginia to retrace the final movements of the Union and Confederate armies. From Grant's personal breakdown during the Battle of the Wilderness to the grueling night marches by Lee's half-starved troops toward North Carolina, from the Union soldiers' morbid practice of pinning "Here lies the body of ..." notes on their clothing in case of death to the famous meeting in the city of Petersburg between Grant and Lincoln (during which word arrived that Richmond had fallen), Beatty reconstructed the harrowing details of what he called "the last great campaign ever fought in the United States."

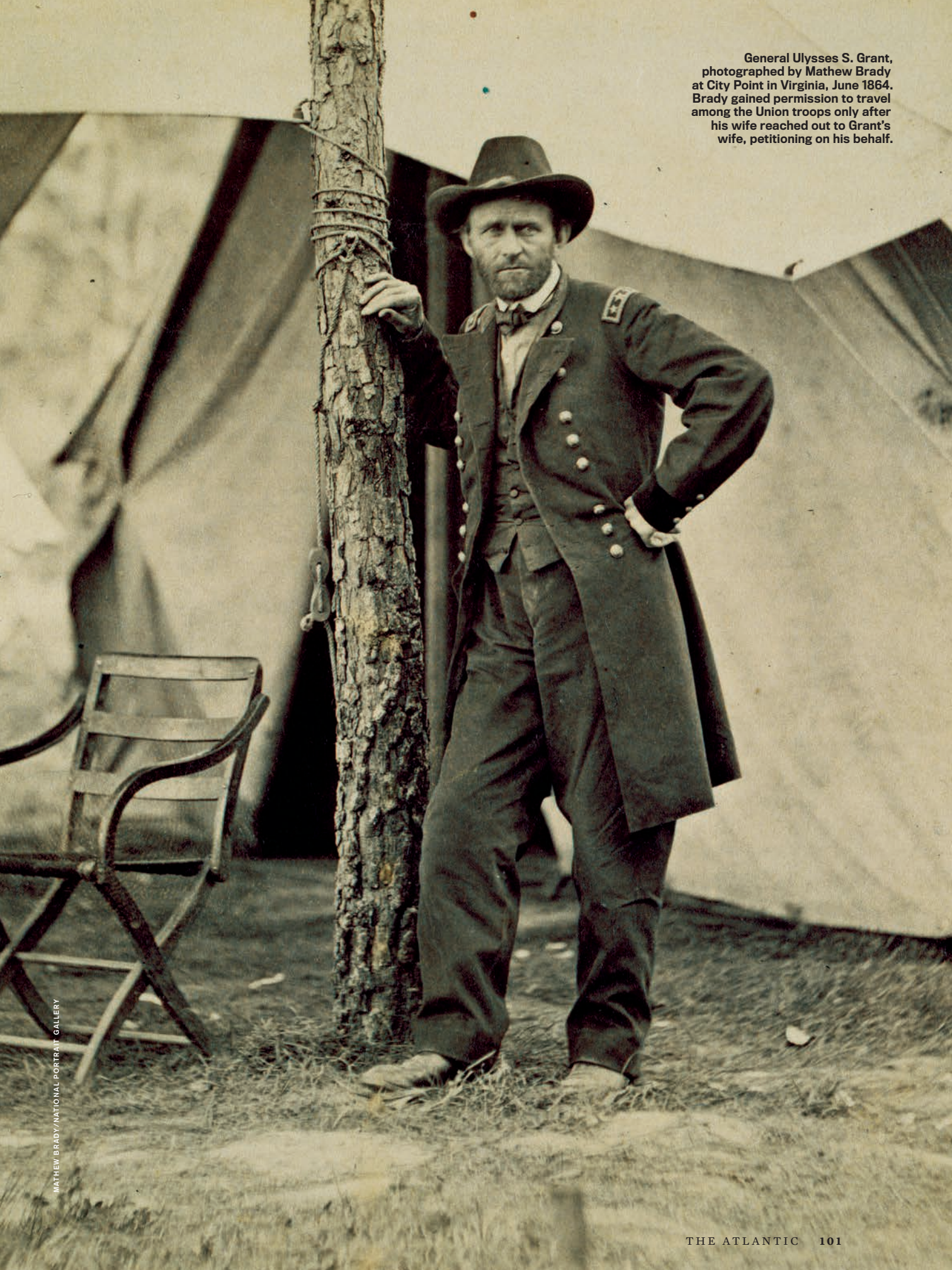
By JACK BEATTY

IN MAY OF 1864, [the final campaign of the Civil War opened] when Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan River, twenty miles west of Fredericksburg, to seek out Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia; it closed with Lee's surrender at Appomattox, a hundred and fifty miles to the southwest, one month short of a year later ...

Grant was small and slight and famously unprepossessing. At forty-one he was a taciturn yet passionate man, who, just a few years before the war began, had been reduced to selling wood on a St. Louis street corner. The war was his big chance; an ordinary man rising to the occasion of his life, he made the most of it, becoming on the strength of his victories at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg the general-in-chief of all the Union armies. Lee, in Grant's own words, was "six feet high and of faultless form," aristocratic where Grant was plebeian, successful where Grant, in everything but war, had been a failure. At fifty-seven Lee was already suffering from the heart condition that would kill him six years later (his last words would be "Strike the tent"). Grant would live twenty-one more years, dying in agony from cancer of the throat, but not before he had secured his family's future by finishing *his* last campaign, the writing of his two-volume *Memoirs*. Grant and Lee met three times: once in 1847, during the war against Mexico, once at Appomattox, and once at the White House, when Grant was President.

Grant was new to the Virginia theater of the war in 1864, and he brought with him a new idea of how to fight there. The Union commanders before him—McDowell, McClellan, Pope, Burnside, Hooker, Meade—had tried to capture Richmond; he would try to destroy Lee's army. Lee, outnumbered (61,953 men to Grant's 122,146), sought not to destroy Grant's army but to punish it so badly that the northern public, three years into our most horrific war, would vote President Abraham Lincoln out of office in November in favor of a Peace Democrat, who would call a halt to Grant's offensive (and Sherman's matching drive in Georgia) if Lee had not already stopped it himself.

The first battle of the campaign came just a few miles southeast of the Germanna Ford of the Rapidan, in a thickly wooded district called the Wilderness. Ending the winter's long "mud truce" between the armies, Grant crossed the Rapidan on May 4; Lee attacked on the fifth. The ensuing battle lasted two days. It was fought in dense woods, for the most part, and was, in the words of one veteran, "simply bushwhacking on a grand scale." The gunfire ignited the trees, and wounded men caught between the lines were burned to death, their shrieks carrying back to unnerve their comrades. Grant went to pieces at one point—retired to his tent to have



General Ulysses S. Grant, photographed by Mathew Brady at City Point in Virginia, June 1864. Brady gained permission to travel among the Union troops only after his wife reached out to Grant's wife, petitioning on his behalf.

MATHEW BRADY/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

a good cry—and Lee's ablest general, James Longstreet, was seriously wounded by his own men. Lee himself barely escaped a bullet when he tried to lead a charge. "Lee to the rear! Go back, General Lee, go back!" a company of Texans pleaded with him. He agreed to retire if they would make a seemingly impossible attack. They did, and it worked. His men loved Robert E. Lee, and he regularly put their love to the test by asking them to die for him ...

The battle ended in a stalemate, with neither side able to break the other's entrenched line. Yet for all its futility, the Wilderness decided something. The veteran soldiers of the Army of the Potomac expected that Grant would do what all their generals had done after tangling with Lee—scoot back over the nearest river. But retreat was not in Grant's nature. South, deeper into Rebel territory, was where he aimed to go. When the first columns of troops reached a crossroads in the middle of the Wilderness and their officers ordered them to march south, the men cheered. Grant had given them back their self-respect. It was a turning point in the Civil War.

Grant went to pieces at one point—retired to his tent to have a good cry—and Lee's ablest general, James Longstreet, was seriously wounded by his own men. Lee himself barely escaped a bullet when he tried to lead a charge.

Lee, moving on longer lines, turned south too; and when Grant neared the crossroads town of Spotsylvania Court House, twelve miles beyond the Wilderness, Lee was there, blocking his path. From May 8 to 20 Grant assaulted Lee's trenches in attack after attack. The result was inhuman slaughter. Battered, bled, Grant finally gave it up, moving off to his left, always heading south ...

Grant and Lee, at the close of Spotsylvania, were about halfway through "the forty days"—the period when their armies were engaged some part of every day, Grant losing an average of 2,000 men a day and Lee, who could spare them less, losing fewer. Grant sidling to the left, Lee following ...

The next full-scale battle came at Cold Harbor, a crossroads northeast of Richmond, which was named after a colonial inn that had provided its guests with a cold hospitality—room but no board. In front of Cold Harbor, on June 3, 1864, Grant attacked Lee's entrenchments straight on, across a seven-mile front. It was one of the greatest infantry charges of the war. It lasted less than a half hour and took more than 7,000 lives. The night before the attack an aide to Grant noticed Federal soldiers pinning notes on the backs of their coats—notes that said, "here lies the body of ..." They knew what to expect ...

Facing another stalemate, Grant shifted his troops out of the trenches at Cold Harbor and, for all that the baffled Confederates knew, into thin air. Lee was in the dark for several vital days as the Army of the Potomac moved not against Richmond but against Petersburg, below Richmond. If Petersburg fell, the supply line to Richmond would be cut. Starved of supplies, Lee would have no choice but to quit his entrenchments and fight it out with Grant in the open.

In the event, Grant managed to get his whole army across the James River (by a 2,100-foot pontoon bridge) and to the gates of Petersburg before Lee knew where he was. But dithering by the Union generals charged with making the initial assault on the lightly held Petersburg trenches cost irreplaceable time. Taking advantage of it, Lee was just able to get enough men into Petersburg to cheat Grant of his victory and prolong the war by ten months.

The siege of Petersburg and Richmond that now commenced was a vast undertaking, with the opposing trenches covering nearly thirty-five miles. Grant's strategy was to exploit his advantage in numbers by slowly extending his lines to the southwest of Petersburg. Lee would be forced to follow suit, and eventually his lines would thin out to the breaking point. To fill those stretched lines, Lee would in time contemplate the desperate step of drafting Negroes to fight in the cause of slavery ...

Many houses [in Petersburg from that time] are

Union soldiers gathered at the end of the war in the town of Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

TIMOTHY H. O'SULLIVAN/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

General Lee (seated left) surrenders to General Grant (seated center) on April 9, 1865, in the parlor of the McLean House in Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

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still standing, among them the house where Grant and Lincoln met on April 3, 1865, just after Lee had pulled out of Petersburg. The owner invited the men into the parlor, but Grant said, "Thank you sir, but I am smoking," and he and Lincoln stayed on the porch. While they were sitting there, a courier rode up and Grant was handed a telegram announcing that Richmond had fallen.

The house where this historic event took place is today deserted, run down; it borders a tobacco factory, also deserted. Yet it was here that Abraham Lincoln knew what might have been the greatest happiness of his life. Think of it; picture it. Grant opens the envelope and says, "Mr. President, Richmond is ours ..." and Lincoln, delivered from his years-long nightmare—how would he react to such news? He had only days to live; this was his blessed moment ...

When Grant's sidling to the southwest of Petersburg finally menaced the railroad connecting the city to the remaining Rebel supply depots in western Virginia and North Carolina, Lee had no choice but to abandon Petersburg and Richmond. On forced night marches that left the roads littered with his exhausted men—scarecrows by now—he drove his dwindling army southwestward, hoping to link up with Joe Johnston in North Carolina, and then to turn on Sherman, coming up from the south, before dealing with Grant, coming down from the north. As everybody knows, he didn't make it. Surrounded at the village of Appomattox Court House, he surrendered the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia to the Army of the Potomac on April 9, 1865 ...

Five days after the surrender, on Good Friday, several hundred miles to the south of Appomattox, a ceremony was held at Fort Sumter to mark the fourth anniversary of its surrender by Union forces under Major Robert Anderson. Lincoln was invited, but he chose to stay in Washington instead—he and Mrs. Lincoln planned to go to the theater. Several thousand people, including many notables, did come to Charleston Harbor for the ceremony, and at the strike of noon they gasped as a sergeant handed Anderson, looking much older than his sixty years, the shot-ripped flag that had flown over Sumter throughout the bombardment that had set off the great war. A young woman from Philadelphia left this picture of the scene as Anderson prepared to run the old flag up over Sumter:

> General Anderson stood up, bare-headed, took the halyards in his hands, and began to speak. At first I could not hear him, for his voice came thickly, but in a moment he said clearly, "I thank God I have lived to see this day," and after a few more words he began to hoist the flag. It went up slowly and hung limp against the staff, a weather-beaten, frayed, and shell-torn old flag, not fit for much more work, but when it had crept clear of the shelter of the walls a sudden breath of wind caught it, and it shook its folds and flew straight out above us, while every soldier and sailor instinctively saluted. *A*

Late Scenes in Richmond

BACKGROUND

EARLY IN THE WAR, the North set its sights on capturing Richmond, the Confederate capital, believing that doing so would mean victory. But over time, it became clear that the war was about far more than any particular city, and that winning would in fact require conquering an entire army and a way of life.

In "Late Scenes in Richmond," the war reporter Charles Carleton Coffin explained how the Union had come to shift its aims, especially after General Grant took command. Coffin, who has been called the Ernie Pyle of the Civil War, witnessed and wrote about many of the war's key battles and was close friends with Grant. In this excerpt, he recounted a late-night conversation he'd had with Grant about the general's endgame, and chronicled not only the Confederates' chaotic flight from Richmond on April 2, but also President Lincoln's triumphant visit two days later.

By CHARLES CARLETON COFFIN

"ON TO RICHMOND!"

It was a natural cry, that slogan of the North in the early months of the war; for, in ordinary warfare, to capture an enemy's capital is equivalent to conquering a peace. It was thought that the taking of Richmond would be the end of the Rebellion. Time has disabused us of this idea. To have taken Richmond in 1861 would only have been the repacking of the Department trunks for Montgomery or some other convenient Southern city. The vitality of the Rebellion existed not in cities, towns, or capitals, but in that which could die only by annihilation,—Human Slavery ...

The nation was long in awaking to the consciousness that driving Lee out of Richmond would not end the Rebellion ...

After the disaster at Chancellorsville, there came a season of sober reflection, and men began to understand that this is God's war. Then there came a commander who believed that the power of the Rebellion lay not in Richmond, but in the Rebel army, and that the taking of Richmond was altogether a secondary consideration,—that the only way of subduing the Rebellion was to fight it down. He was ready to employ soldiers of every hue ...

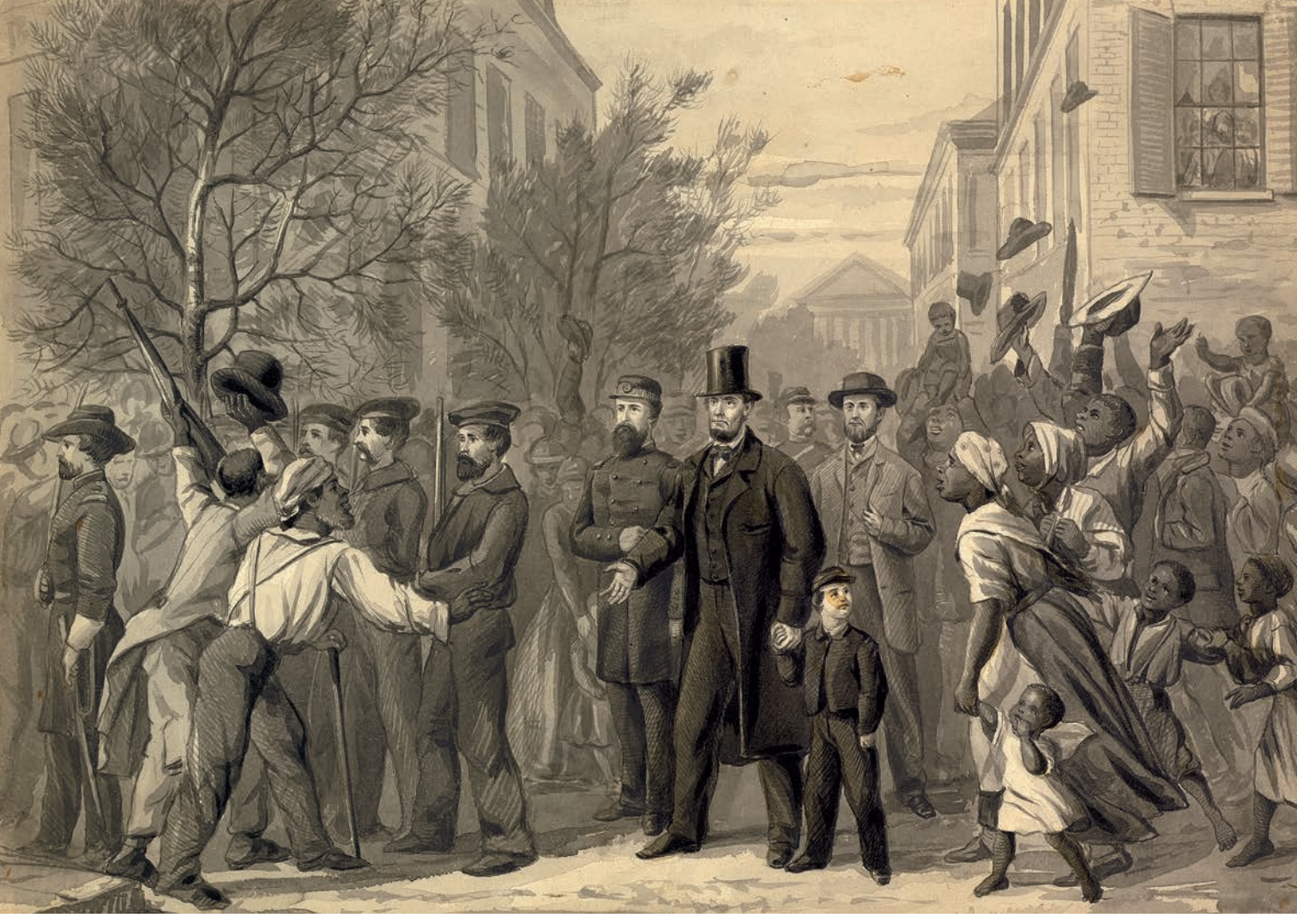
HOW RICHMOND WAS TAKEN

General Grant, fresh from his great success at Vicksburg and Chattanooga, having shown that he had military genius of a high order, was created Lieutenant-General, and appointed to the command of all the armies of the Union in the field. It was the beginning of a new *régime*. Up to that time there had been little concert of action between commanders ... But when the President appointed General Grant to the command, he gave up his own plans ... There was not merely concert of action, but unity of action, under the controlling force of an imperial will ...

The appointment of General Grant to the command of all the armies was not only the beginning of a new *régime*, but the adoption of a new idea,—that Lee's army was the objective point, rather than the city of Richmond.

"The power of the Rebellion lies in the Rebel army," said General Grant to the writer

OPPOSITE: Just after the Confederate government fled Richmond, President Lincoln made a surprise visit. The artist Lambert Hollis, who was on the scene, depicted crowds rushing to the president's side in numbers that alarmed his bodyguards. Here Lincoln is holding the hand of his son Tad, who was celebrating his 12th birthday.



LAMBERT HOLLIS/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

one evening in June last. We had been conversing upon Fort Donelson and Pittsburg Landing. One by one his staff officers dropped off to their own tents, and we were alone. It was a quiet, starlit night. The Lieutenant-General was enjoying his fragrant Havana cigar, and was in a mood for conversation, not upon what he was going to do, but upon what had been done. He is always wisely reticent upon the present and future, but agreeably communicative upon what has passed into history.

"I have lost a good many men since the army left the Rapidan, but there was no help for it. The Rebel army must be destroyed before we can put down the Rebellion," he continued.

[AUTHOR'S NOTE] I write from memory, not pretending to give the exact words uttered during the conversation.

There was a disposition at that time on the part of the disloyal press of the North to bring General Grant into bad odor. He was called "The Butcher." Even some Republican Congressmen were ready to demand his removal. General Grant alluded to it and said,—

"God knows I don't want to see men slaughtered; but we have appealed to arms, and we have got to fight it out" ...

Surprise is expressed that the Rebellion went down so suddenly, in a night, at one blow, toppling over like a child's house of cards ... but the calculations of General Grant were to give a finishing stroke ...

Came the order from Grant, "Attack vigorously all along the line." How splendidly it was executed! The Ninth, the Sixth, the Second, the Twenty-Fourth Corps, all went tumbling in upon the enemy's works, like breakers upon the beach, tearing away *chevaux-de-frise*, rushing into the ditches, sweeping over the embankments, and dashing through the embrasures of the forts. In an hour the C.S.A.,—the Confederate Slave Argosy,— ... was thrown a helpless wreck upon the shores of Time! ...

SCENES IN RICHMOND

"My line is broken in three places, and Richmond must be evacuated," was Lee's dispatch to Davis, received by the arch-traitor at eleven and a half o'clock in St. Paul's Church. He read it with blanched cheeks, and left the church in haste.

Davis had robbed the banks of Virginia a few days before, seizing the bullion in the name of the Confederacy; and his first thought was how to secure the treasure.

He hurried to the executive mansion, passed up the winding stairway to his business apartment, seated himself at a small table, wrote an order for the removal of the coin to Danville, and for the evacuation of the city.

There was no evening service in the churches on that Sunday. Ministers and congregations were otherwise employed ... The whole Rebel Government was on the move, and all Richmond desired to be. No thoughts of taking Washington now,

or of the flag of the Confederacy flaunting in the breeze over the old Capitol! Hundreds of officials were at the depot, to get away from the doomed city. Public documents, the archives of the Confederacy, were hastily gathered up, tumbled into boxes and barrels, and taken to the trains, or carried into the streets and set on fire. Coaches, carriages, wagons, carts, wheelbarrows, everything in the shape of a vehicle was brought into use. There was a jumble of boxes, chests, trunks, valises, carpet-bags,—a crowd of excited men sweating as they never sweat before,—women with dishevelled hair, unmindful of their wardrobes, wringing their hands,—children crying in the crowd,—sentinels guarding each entrance to the train, pushing back at the point of the bayonet the panic-stricken multitude, giving precedence to Davis and the high officials, and informing Mr. Lumpkin that his niggers could not be taken ...

In the Sabbath evening twilight, the trains, with the fugitive Government, its stolen bullion, and its Doctors of Divinity on board, moved out from the city.

At the same hour, the Governor of Virginia, William Smith, and the Assembly, were embarked in a canal-boat, on the James River and Kanawha Canal, moving for Lynchburg. On all the roads were men, women, and children, in carriages of every description, with multitudes on horseback and on foot, fleeing from the Rebel capital. Men who could not get away were secretly at work, during those night-hours, burying plate and money in gardens; ladies secreted their jewels, barred and bolted their doors, and passed a sleepless night, fearful of the morrow, which would bring the hated, despised, Vandal horde of Yankee ruffians: for such were the epithets which they had persistently applied to the soldiers of the Union throughout the war ...

"My line is broken in three places, and Richmond must be evacuated," was Lee's dispatch to Davis.

To prevent the United States from obtaining possession of a few thousand hogsheads of tobacco, a thousand houses were destroyed by fire, the heart of the city was eaten out,—all of the business portions, all the banks and insurance-offices, half of the newspapers, mills, depots, bridges, foundries, workshops, dwellings, churches, thirty squares in all, swept clean by the devouring flames. It was the work of the Confederate Government ...

Strange, weird, the scenes of that Monday night,—the glimmering flames, the clouds of smoke hanging like a funeral pall above the ruins ...

VISIT OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

Among the memorable events of the week was the visit of President Lincoln to the city of Richmond. He had been tarrying at City Point, holding daily consultations with General Grant, visiting the army and the iron-clads at Aiken's Landing,—thus avoiding the swarm of place-hunters that darkened the doors of the executive mansion.

On Tuesday noon a tug-boat belonging to the navy was seen steaming up the James, regardless of torpedoes and obstructions. A mile below the city, where the water becomes shoal, President Lincoln, accompanied by Admiral Porter, Captain Adams of the navy, Captain Penrose of the army, and Lieutenant Clemmens of the Signal Corps, put off from the tug in a launch manned by twelve sailors, whose long, steady oar-strokes quickly carried the party to the landing-place,—a square above Libby Prison.

There was no committee of reception, no guard of honor, no grand display of troops, no assembling of an eager multitude to welcome him.

He entered the city unheralded; six sailors, armed with carbines, stepped upon the shore, followed by the President, who held his little son by the hand, and Admiral Porter; the officers followed, and six more sailors brought up the rear. The writer of this article was there upon the spot, and, joining the party, became an observer of the memorable event.

There were forty or fifty freedmen, who had been sole possessors of themselves for twenty-four hours, at work on the bank of the canal, securing some floating timber, under the direction of a Lieutenant. Somehow they obtained the information that the man who was head and shoulders taller than all others around him, with features large and irregular, with a mild eye and pleasant countenance, was President Lincoln.

"God bless you, Sah !" said one, taking off his cap and bowing very low.

"Hurrah! hurrah! President Linkum hab come!" was the shout which rang through the street.

The Lieutenant found himself without a command. What cared those freedmen, fresh from the house of bondage, for floating timber or military commands? Their deliverer had come,—he who, next to the Lord Jesus, was their best friend! It was not an hurrah that they gave, but a wild, jubilant cry of inexpressible joy.

They gathered round the President, ran ahead, hovered upon the flanks of the little company, and hung like a dark cloud upon the rear. Men, women, and children joined the constantly increasing throng. They came from all the by-streets, running in breathless haste, shouting and hallooing and dancing with delight. The men threw up their hats, the women waved their bonnets and handkerchiefs, clapped their hands, and sang, "Glory to God! glory! glory! glory!"—rendering all the praise to God, who had heard their wailings in the past, their moanings for wives, husbands, children, and friends sold out of their sight, had given them freedom, and, after long years of waiting, had permitted them thus unexpectedly to behold the face of their great benefactor.

"I thank you, dear Jesus, that I behold President Linkum!" was the exclamation of a woman who stood upon the threshold of her humble home, and with streaming eyes and clasped hands gave thanks aloud to the Saviour of men.

A portion of the ruined arsenal in Richmond, April 1865

ALEXANDER GARDNER/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Another, more demonstrative in her joy, was jumping and striking her hands with all her might, crying,—"Bless de Lord! Bless de Lord! Bless de Lord!" as if there could be no end of her thanksgiving.

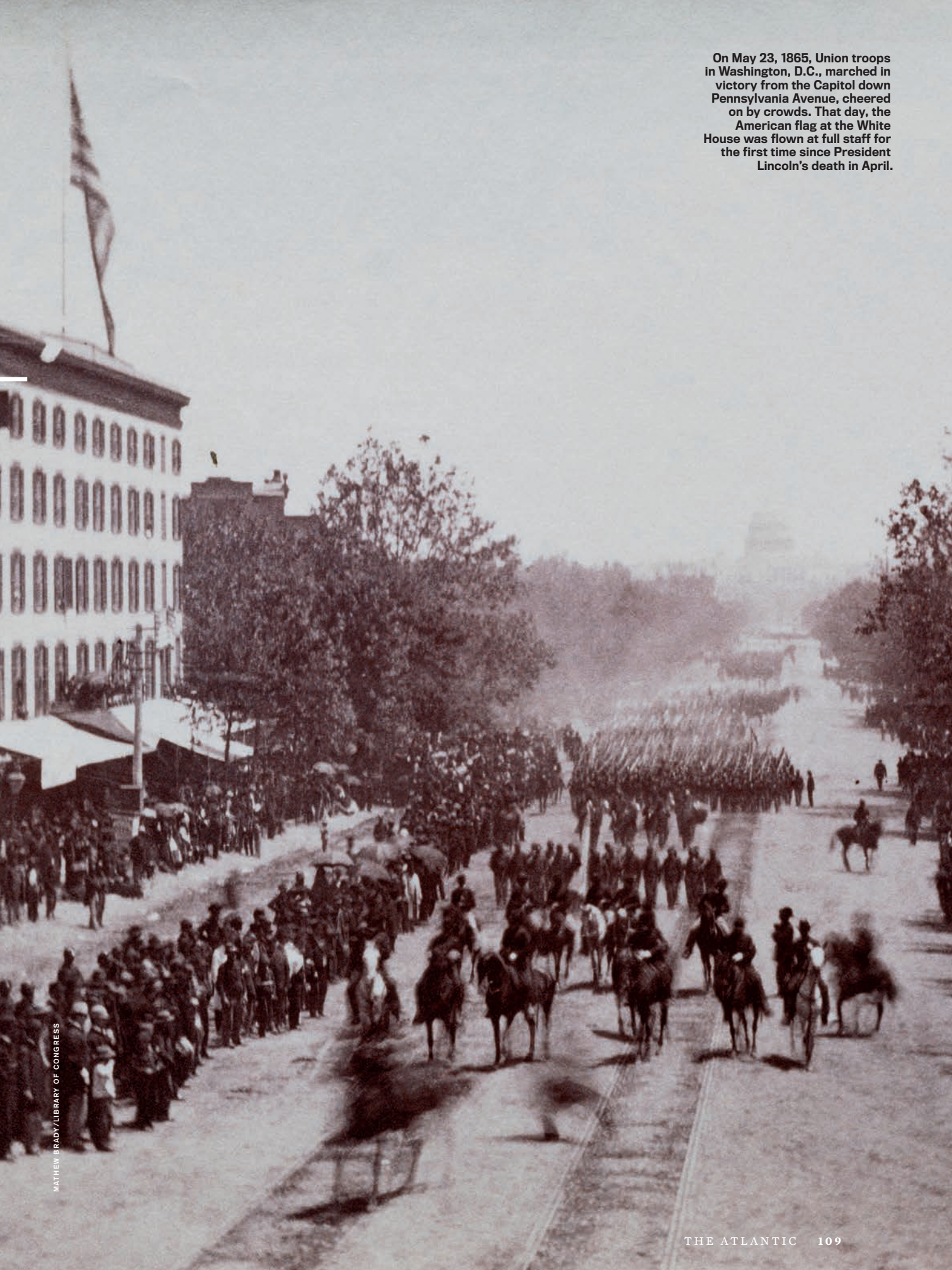
The air rang with a tumultuous chorus of voices. The street became almost impassable on account of the increasing multitude. Soldiers were summoned to clear the way. How strange the event! The President of the United States—he who had been hated, despised, maligned above all other men living, to whom the vilest epithets had been applied by the people of Richmond—was walking their streets, receiving thanksgivings, blessings, and praises from thousands who hailed him as the ally of the Messiah! How bitter the reflections of that moment to some who beheld him! ... Their government overthrown, their President and his cabinet vagrants, driven from house and home to be wanderers upon the earth. They had been promised affluence, Richmond was to be the metropolis of the Confederacy, and Virginia the all-powerful State of the new nation. How terrible the cheat! Their thousand-dollar bonds were not worth a penny. A million dollars would not purchase a dinner. Their money was valueless, their slaves were freemen ...

Abraham Lincoln was walking their streets; and, worst of all, that plain, honest-hearted man was recognizing the "niggers" as human beings by returning their salutations! The walk was long, and the President halted a moment to rest. "May de good Lord bless you, President Linkum!" said an old negro, removing his hat, and bowing with tears of joy rolling down his cheeks. The President removed his own hat, and bowed in silence; but it was a bow which upset the forms, laws, customs, and ceremonies of centuries. It was a death-shock to chivalry, and a mortal wound to caste. Recognize a nigger! Faugh! A woman in an adjoining house beheld it, and turned from the scene in unspeakable disgust. There were men in the crowd who had daggers in their eyes; but the chosen assassin was not there, the hour for the damning work had not come, and that great-hearted man passed on to the executive mansion of the late Confederacy. *A*

1865–1902

PART III
POST-WAR

WITH LEE'S SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX, martial aims gave way to knotty civic and social ones—the challenges of reconciliation and reconstruction. Under what conditions should the estranged Southern states be readmitted to the Union? What rights should be afforded the nation's freedmen? How could the welfare of the newly emancipated slaves best be safeguarded? In ensuing years, what had before been perceived as a loose confederation of states ("the United States are ...") would figure in thought and in speech as a single unit ("the United States is ..."). In *The Atlantic*, this reshaping of society was captured in poetry, fiction, and prose by authors like Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Robert Lowell.



On May 23, 1865, Union troops in Washington, D.C., marched in victory from the Capitol down Pennsylvania Avenue, cheered on by crowds. That day, the American flag at the White House was flown at full staff for the first time since President Lincoln's death in April.

MATHEW BRADY/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The End, and After

BACKGROUND

WHEN LEE'S ARMY—exhausted, starving, and outnumbered—surrendered at Appomattox, the proceedings went remarkably smoothly. Generals Lee and Grant shook hands and signed articles of surrender, Lee gratefully accepted Grant's offer of rations for his troops, and Grant prevented his men from cheering or firing celebratory salutes. "We did not want to exult over their downfall," he later explained. "The war [was] over. The Rebels [were] our countrymen again."

But the fall of the Confederacy meant the invalidation, all at once, of all authority in the South, and order inevitably broke down. In the final segment of his seven-part *Atlantic* series (see page 94 for excerpts from his earlier installments), the former rebel soldier George Cary Eggleston described the chaos of the days following surrender, as marauders robbed, looted, and terrorized the countryside, and no police force, justice system, or municipal government had the authority to keep them in check. He was pleasantly surprised to find that the federal army came to the rescue, helping to reestablish order and "protect all quiet citizens."

By GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON

THE END CAME, technically, at Appomattox, but of the real difficulties of the war the end was not yet. The trials and the perils of utter disorganization were still to be endured ...

Our principal danger was from the lawless bands of marauders who infested the country, and our greatest difficulty in dealing with them lay in the utter absence of constituted authority of any sort. Our country was full of highwaymen,—not the picturesque highwaymen of whom fiction and questionable history tell us ... but plain highwaymen of the most brutal description possible, and destitute even of the merit of presenting a respectable appearance ... At the house of one of my friends where only ladies lived, a body of these men demanded dinner, which was given them. They then required the mistress of the mansion to fill their canteens with sorghum molasses, which they immediately proceeded to pour over the carpets and furniture of the parlor. Outrages of this kind and worse were of every-day enactment, and there was no remedy. There was no State, county, or municipal government in existence among us. We had no courts, no justices of the peace, no sheriffs, no officers of any kind invested with a shadow of authority, and there were not men enough in the community, at first, to resist the marauders, comparatively few of the surrendered soldiers having found their way home as yet. Those districts in which the Federal armies were stationed were peculiarly fortunate. The troops gave protection to the people, and the commandants of posts constituted a government able to enforce order, to which outraged or threatened people could appeal. But these favored sections were only a small part of the whole ... As soon as it became evident [to the federal commanders] that we had no disposition to resist further, but were disposed rather to render such assistance as we could in restoring and maintaining order, everything was done which could be done to protect us. It is with a good deal of pleasure that I bear witness to the uniform disposition shown by such Federal officers as I came in contact with at this time, to protect all quiet citizens, to restore order, and to forward the interests of the community they were called upon to govern ...

We governed the county in which we lived until the establishment of a military post at the county seat relieved us of the task, and the permission given us thus to stamp out lawlessness saved our people from the alternative of starvation or dependence upon the bounty of the government. It was seed-time, and without a vigorous maintenance of order our fields could not have been planted at all.

ORIGINALLY TITLED "A REBEL'S RECOLLECTIONS"; PHOTO BY GEORGE N. BARNARD/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Four years after the war had started there, Charleston was in ruins in April 1865. “Any one who is not satisfied with war should go to Charleston,” General William Sherman said, “and he will pray louder and deeper than ever that, the country, in its long future be spared any more war.”

Assassination

BACKGROUND

JOHN WILKES BOOTH, a Maryland native, spent the war performing in theatrical productions. But the conflict was never far from his mind. In a letter to his mother, he expressed chagrin that he hadn't joined the Confederate army, writing, "I have ... begun to deem myself a coward, and to despise my own existence." He was outraged by the reelection of Lincoln, whom he viewed as the instigator of all the country's woes.

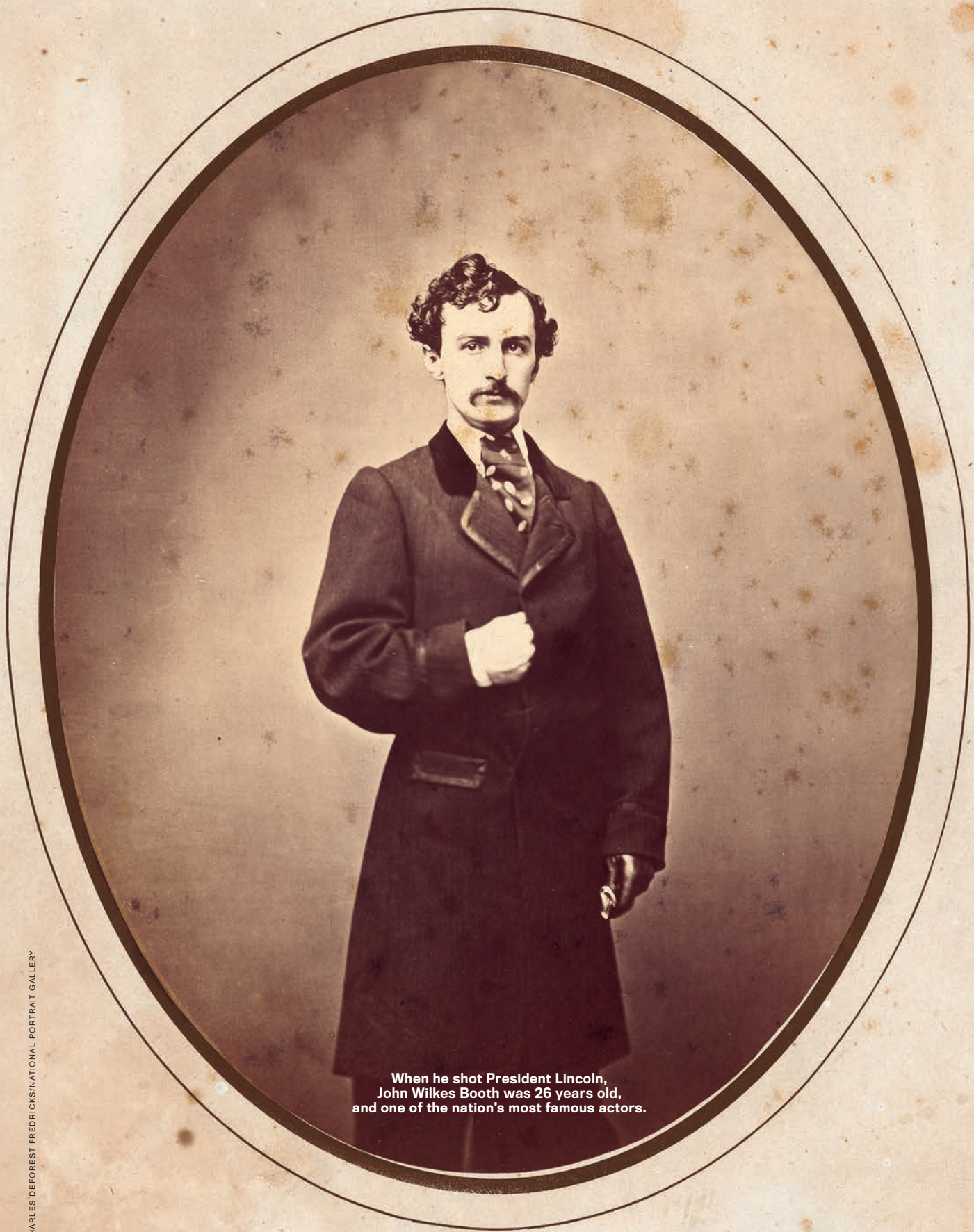
The month after the inauguration, Booth learned that Lincoln would be attending a performance at Ford's Theatre on April 14. That night, he crept into Lincoln's theater box and shot him in the back of the head. It was the first time a president had been murdered. "Wanted" posters were issued for Booth, and on April 26, he was cornered in a tobacco barn and shot by a federal sergeant, who acted against orders to bring him in alive.

Several months later, Charles Creighton Hazewell, a frequent *Atlantic* contributor, sought to make sense of the assassination—speculating that the plot may have been hatched in Canada (where a number of secessionist schemes had originated) and hinting at evidence that the plan had been endorsed at the highest levels of the Confederate government.

By CHARLES CREIGHTON HAZEWELL

THE ASSASSINATION OF President Lincoln threw a whole nation into mourning ... Of all our Presidents since Washington, Mr. Lincoln had excited the smallest amount of that feeling which places its object in personal danger. He was a man who made a singularly favorable impression on those who approached him, resembling in that respect President Jackson, who often made warm friends of bitter foes, when circumstances had forced them to seek his presence; and it is probable, that, if he and the honest chiefs of the Rebels could have been brought face to face, there never would have been civil war,—at least, any contest of grand proportions; for he would not have failed to convince them that all that they had any right to claim, and therefore all that they could expect their fellow-citizens to fight for, would be more secure under his government than it had been under the governments of such men as Pierce and Buchanan, who made use of sectionalism and slavery to promote the selfish interests of themselves and their party ... Ignorance was the parent of the civil war, as it has been the parent of many other evils,—ignorance of the character and purpose of the man who was chosen President in 1860–61, and who entered upon official life with less animosity toward his opponents than ever before or since had been felt by a man elected to a great place after a bitter and exciting contest ...

That one of the most insignificant of [the secessionists'] number should have murdered the man whose election they declared to be cause for war is nothing strange, being in perfect keeping with their whole course. The wretch who shot the chief magistrate of the Republic is of hardly more account than was the weapon which he used. The real murderers of Mr. Lincoln are the men whose action brought about the civil war. Booth's deed was a logical proceeding, following strictly from the principles avowed by the Rebels, and in harmony with their course during the last five years. The fall of a public man by the hand of an assassin always affects the mind more strongly than it is affected by the fall of thousands of men in battle; but in strictness, Booth, vile as his deed was, can be held to have been no worse, morally, than was that old gentleman who insisted upon being allowed the privilege of firing the first shot at Fort Sumter. Ruffin's act is not so disgusting as Booth's; but of the two men, Booth exhibited the greater courage,—courage of the basest kind, indeed, but sure to be attended with the heaviest risks, as the hand of every man would be directed against its exhibitor. Had the Rebels succeeded, Ruffin would have been honored by his fellows; but even a successful Southern Confederacy would have been too hot a country for the abode of a wilful murderer. Such a man would have been no more pleasantly situated



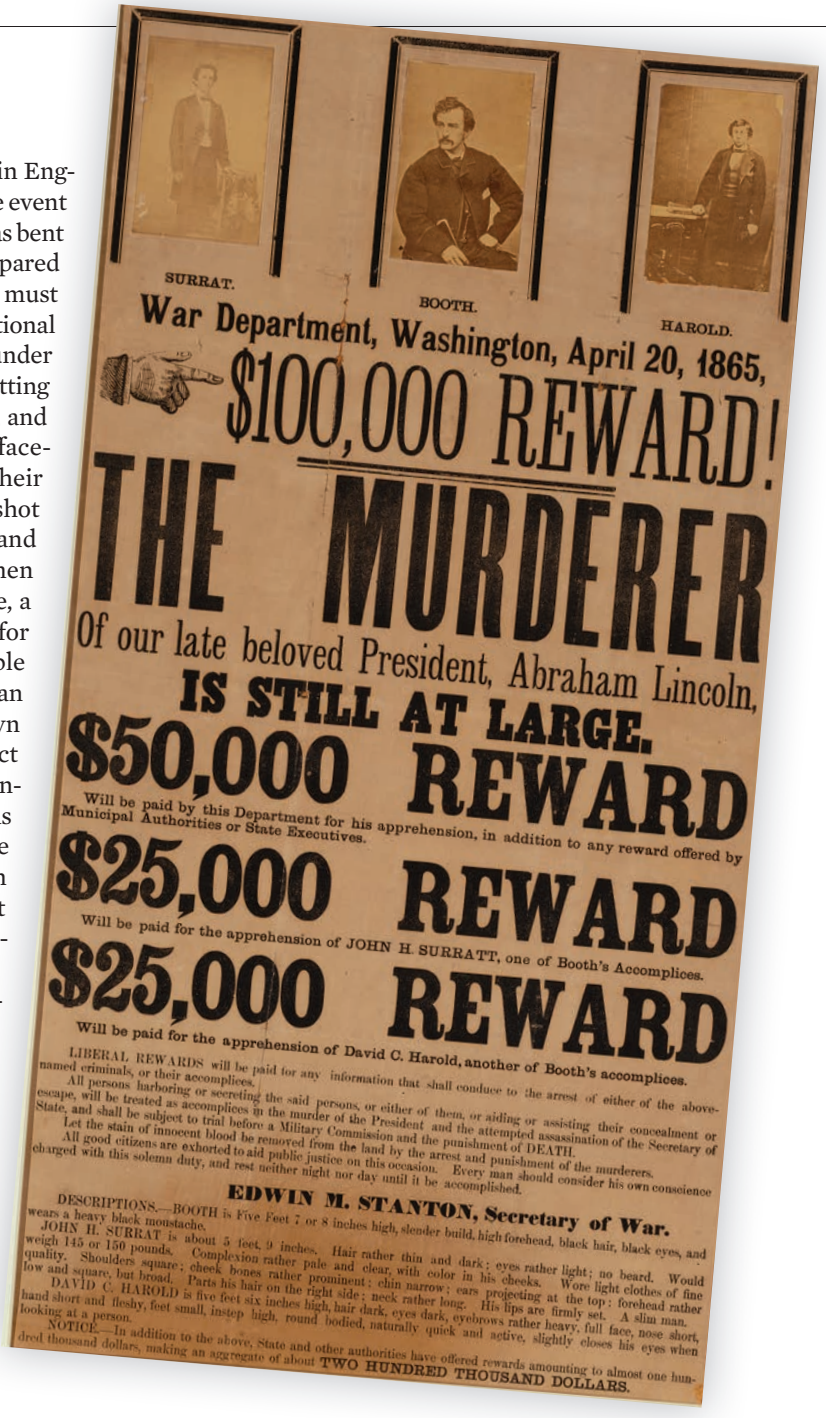
When he shot President Lincoln,
John Wilkes Booth was 26 years old,
and one of the nation's most famous actors.

CHARLES DEFOREST FREDRICKS/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

even in South Carolina than was Benedict Arnold in England. And as he chose to become an assassin after the event of the war had been decided, and when his victim was bent upon sparing Southern feeling so far as it could be spared without injustice being done to the country, Booth must have expected to find his act condemned by every rational Southern man as a worse than useless crime, as a blunder of the very first magnitude. Had he succeeded in getting abroad, Secession exiles would have shunned him, and have treated him as one who had brought an ineffaceable stain on their cause, and also had rendered their restoration to their homes impossible. The pistol-shot of Sergeant Corbett saved him from the gallows, and it saved him also from the denunciations of the men whom he thought to serve. He exhibited, therefore, a species of courage that is by no means common; for he not only risked his life, and rendered it impossible for honorable men to sympathize with him, but he ran the hazard of being denounced and cast off by his own party ... All Secessionists who retain any self-respect must rejoice that one whose doings brought additional ignominy on a cause that could not well bear it has passed away and gone to his account. It would have been more satisfactory to loyal men, if he had been reserved for the gallows; but even they must admit that it is a terrible trial to any people who get possession of an odious criminal, because they may be led so to act as to disgrace themselves, and to turn sympathy in the direction of the evil-doer ... Therefore the shot of Sergeant Corbett is not to be regretted, save that it gave too honorable a form of death to one who had earned all that there is of disgraceful in that mode of dying to which a peculiar stigma is attached by the common consent of mankind.

Whether Booth was the agent of a band of conspirators, or was one of a few vile men who sought an odious immortality, it is impossible to say. We have the authority of a high Government official for the statement that "the President's murder was organized in Canada and approved at Richmond"; but the evidence in support of this extraordinary announcement is, doubtless for the best of reasons, withheld at the time we write. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that the assassination plot was formed in Canada, as some of the vilest miscreants of the Secession side have been allowed to live in that country ... But it is not probable that British subjects had anything to do with any conspiracy of this kind. The Canadian error was in allowing the scum of Secession to abuse the "right of hospitality" through the pursuit of hostile action against us from the territory of a neutral ...

That a plan to murder President Lincoln should have been approved at Richmond is nothing strange; and though such approval would have been supremely foolish, what but supreme folly is the chief characteristic of the whole Southern movement? If the seal of Richmond's approval was placed on a plan formed in Canada, something more than the murder of Mr. Lincoln was intended. It must have been meant to kill every man who could legally take his place, either as President or as President *pro tempore*. The only persons who had any title to step into the Presidency on Mr. Lincoln's death were Mr. Johnson, who became President on the 15th of April, and Mr. Foster, one of the Connecticut Senators, who is President of the Senate ... It does not appear that any attempt was made on the life of Mr. Foster, though Mr. Johnson was on the list of those doomed by the assassins; and the savage attack made on Mr. Seward shows what those assassins were capable of. But had all the members of the



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Administration been struck down at the same time, it is not at all probable that "anarchy" would have been the effect, though to produce that must have been the object aimed at by the conspirators. Anarchy is not so easily brought about as persons of an anarchical turn of mind suppose. The training we have gone through since the close of 1860 has fitted us to bear many rude assaults on order without our becoming disorderly. Our conviction is, that, if every man who held high office at Washington had been killed on the 14th of April, things would have gone pretty much as we have seen them go, and that thus the American people would have vindicated their right to be considered a self-governing race. It would not be a very flattering thought, that the peace of the country is at the command of any dozen of hardened ruffians who should have the capacity to form an assassination plot, the discretion to keep silent respecting their purpose, and the boldness and the skill requisite to carry it out to its most minute details: for the neglect of one of those details might be fatal to the whole project. Society does not exist in such peril as that.

Ode to Lincoln

■ *By* JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL | SEPTEMBER 1865

BACKGROUND **LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION stunned the nation. From April 22 to May 4, his funeral train made its way from Washington to Springfield, Illinois, reversing the president's triumphant post-election journey to Washington in 1861. Buildings along the way were draped with black, and hundreds of thousands of mourners flocked to see his coffin.**

The summer after the assassination, James Russell Lowell—who, in an influential *Atlantic* editorial (see page 38), had endorsed Lincoln's presidential candidacy years earlier, and whose outspoken support over the years had once even inspired Lincoln to send him a thank-you note—gave voice to the nation's grief in a poem delivered at Harvard in honor of students who fell in the war. The lines excerpted below were part of the poem, which Henry James commended for powerfully capturing "the great historic throb" of the war.

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late the Nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief:
Forgive me, if from present things I turn
To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,
And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.
Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World mould aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

ORIGINALLY TITLED "ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION, JULY 21, 1865"

Three Months Among the Reconstructionists

BACKGROUND

IN THE FALL of 1865, Sidney Andrews, a northern-Illinois-based journalist, set out to take stock of the post-war South, traveling extensively in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia—attending state constitutional conventions and speaking with people from a variety of backgrounds. His scathing assessment gave ammunition to those advocating a more aggressive Northern hand in Reconstruction: he wrote disparagingly of a widespread lack of education and culture, an undemocratic caste system, festering racial tensions, and entrenched anti-Union sentiment.

His reports were published in *The Atlantic* and elsewhere, and the topic proved to be of such interest to Northern readers that some of his writings were gathered in an 1866 book, *The South Since the War*.

In the congressional elections that year, advocates of much harsher policies toward the South swept to power, and for the following decade—known as the years of "Radical Reconstruction"—the South would be subjected to firm rules imposed by Congress.

By SIDNEY ANDREWS

I SPENT THE MONTHS of September, October, and November, 1865, in the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. I travelled over more than half the stage and railway routes therein, visited a considerable number of towns and cities in each State, attended the so-called reconstruction conventions at Raleigh, Columbia, and Milledgeville, and had much conversation with many individuals of nearly all classes ...

I often had occasion to notice, both in Georgia and the Carolinas, the wide and pitiful difference between the residents of the cities and large towns and the residents of the country. There is no homogeneity, but everywhere a rigid spirit of caste. The longings of South Carolina are essentially monarchical rather than republican; even the common people have become so debauched in loyalty, that very many of them would readily accept the creation of orders of nobility. In Georgia there is something less of this spirit; but the upper classes continually assert their right to rule, and the middle and lower classes have no ability to free themselves ... Thus, Charleston has much intelligence, and considerable genuine culture; but go twenty miles away, and you are in the land of the barbarians. So, Raleigh is a city in which there is love of beauty, and interest in education; but the common people of the county are at least forty years behind the same class of people in Vermont ...

I think no one can understand the actual condition of the mass of whites in Georgia and the Carolinas, except by some daily contact with them. The injustice done to three fourths of them was hardly less than that done to all the blacks. There were two kinds of slavery, and negro slavery was only more wicked and debasing than white slavery. Nine of every ten white men in South Carolina had almost as little to do with even State affairs as the negroes had ... Whether they are technically in the Union or out of the Union, it is the national duty to deal with these States in such manner as will most surely exalt the lower and middle classes of their inhabitants. The nation must teach them a knowledge of their own rights, while it also teaches them respect for its rights and the rights of man as man ...

There is everywhere a lack of intellectual activity. Schools, books, newspapers,—why, one may almost say there are none outside the cities and towns. The situation is horrible enough, when the full force of this fact is comprehended; yet there is a still lower deep,—there is small desire, even feeble longing, for schools and books and newspapers. The chief end of man seems to have been "to own a nigger" ... It is this general ignorance, and this general indifference to knowledge, that make a Southern trip such wearisome work. You can touch the masses with few of the appeals by which we move our own people. There is very little aspiration for larger life; and, more than

that, there is almost no opportunity for its attainment. That education is the stairway to a nobler existence is a fact which they either fail to comprehend or to which they are wholly indifferent ...

The political leaders of this people have apparently indoctrinated them with the notion that they are superior to any other class in the country. Hence there is usually very little effort to conceal the prevalent scorn of the Yankee,—this term being applied to the citizen of any Northern State. Any plan of reconstruction is wrong that tends to leave these old leaders in power ...

In South Carolina there is very little pretence of loyalty. I believe I found less than fifty men who admitted any love for the Union. There is everywhere a passionate devotion to the State, and the common sentiment holds that man guilty of treason who prefers the United States to South Carolina ... The war has taught this people only that the physical force of the nation cannot be resisted. They will be obedient to the letter of the law, perhaps, but the whole current of their lives flows in direct antagonism to its spirit ...

[In Georgia the] common sense of all classes pushes the necessity of allegiance to the State into the domain of morals as well as into that of politics; and he who did not "go with the State" in the Rebellion is held to have committed the unpardonable sin ... I believe it is the concurrent testimony of all careful travellers in Georgia, that there is everywhere only cold toleration for the idea of national sovereignty, very little hope for the future of the State as a member of the Federal Union, and scarcely any pride in the strength and glory and renown of the United States of America ...

In South Carolina there is very little pretence of loyalty. I believe I found less than fifty men who admitted any love for the Union.

Complaint is made that the Southern people have recently elected military men to most of their local State offices. We do ourselves a wrong in making this complaint. I found it almost everywhere true in Georgia and the Carolinas that the best citizens of to-day are the Confederate soldiers of yesterday. Of course, in many individual cases they are bitter and malignant; but in general the good of the Union, no less than the hope of the South, lies in the bearing of the men who were privates and minor officers in the armies of Lee and Johnston ... I count it an omen of good, when I find that one who bore himself gallantly as a soldier has received preferment. We cannot afford to quarrel on this ground; for, though their courage was for our wounding, their valor was the valor of Americans ...

Further war in the field I do not deem among the possibilities. Be the leaders never so bloodthirsty, the common people have had enough of fighting. The bastard Unionism of North Carolina, the haughty and self-complacent State pride of South Carolina, the arrogant dogmatism and insolent assumption of Georgia,—how shall we build nationality on such foundations? ... The one sole needful condition is, that each State establish a republican form of government, whereby all civil rights at least shall be assured in their fullest extent to every citizen ... Each State has some citizens, who, wiser than the great majority, comprehend the meaning of Southern defeat with praiseworthy insight. Seeing only individuals of this small class, a traveller might honestly conclude that the States were ready for self-government. Let not the nation commit the terrible mistake of acting on this conclusion ... Let us have peace and kindly feeling; yet, that our peace may be no sham or shallow affair, it is painfully essential that we keep these States awhile within national control, in order to aid the few wise and just men therein who are fighting the great fight with stubborn prejudice and hide-bound custom. Any plan of reconstruction is wrong which accepts forced submission as genuine loyalty, or even as cheerful acquiescence in the national desire and purpose ...

Before the war, we heard continually of the love of the master for his slave, and the love of the slave for his master. There was also much talk to the effect that the negro lived in the midst of pleasant surroundings, and had no desire to change his situation ... So, too, in my late visit to Georgia and the Carolinas, they generally seemed anxious to convince me that the blacks had behaved well during the war,—had kept at their old tasks, had labored cheerfully and faithfully, had shown no disposition to lawlessness, and had rarely been guilty of acts of violence, even in sections where there were many women and children, and but few white men.

Yet I found everywhere now the most direct antagonism between the two classes. The whites charge generally that the negro is idle, and at the bottom of all local disturbances, and credit him with most of the vices and very few of the virtues of humanity. The negroes charge that the whites are revengeful, and intend to cheat the laboring class at every opportunity, and credit them with neither good purposes nor kindly hearts. This present and positive hostility of each class to the other is a fact that will sorely perplex any Northern man travelling in either of these States. One would say, that, if there had formerly been such pleasant relations between them, there ought now to be mutual sympathy and forbearance, instead of mutual distrust and antagonism ... I believe the most charitable traveller must come to the conclusion, that the professed love of the whites for the blacks was mostly a monstrous sham or a downright false pretence. For myself, I judge that it was nothing less than an arrant humbug ...

It is proclaimed everywhere that [the negro] will not work, that he cannot take care of himself, that he is a nuisance to society, that he lives by stealing, and that he is sure to die in a few months; and, truth to tell, the great body of the people, though one must not say intentionally, are doing all they well can to make these assertions true. A

The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation

BACKGROUND

BEST KNOWN AS a quintessential Maine writer and the author of *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (a novel first serialized in *The Atlantic*), Sarah Orne Jewett published her first short story in *The Atlantic* at age 19. Her correspondence with the magazine's editor, James T. Fields, and his assistant, William Dean Howells, soon grew into friendship.

In the 1870s, she became friendly with Fields's wife, Annie, and after his death in 1881, the two became inseparable.

In early 1888, when Annie Fields contracted pneumonia and was instructed by a doctor to convalesce in the South, she and Jewett set out for Florida, stopping en route on the island of St. Helena, off the coast of South Carolina, to stay with a friend who was running a school for former slaves. (See page 80 for Charlotte Forten's account of teaching there during the war.) Jewett's "The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation," published later that year, told the tale of an elderly St. Helena woman who, years after the war, carries on with her aristocratic Southern rituals, oblivious that her family is gone and her plantation lies in ruins.

By SARAH ORNE JEWETT

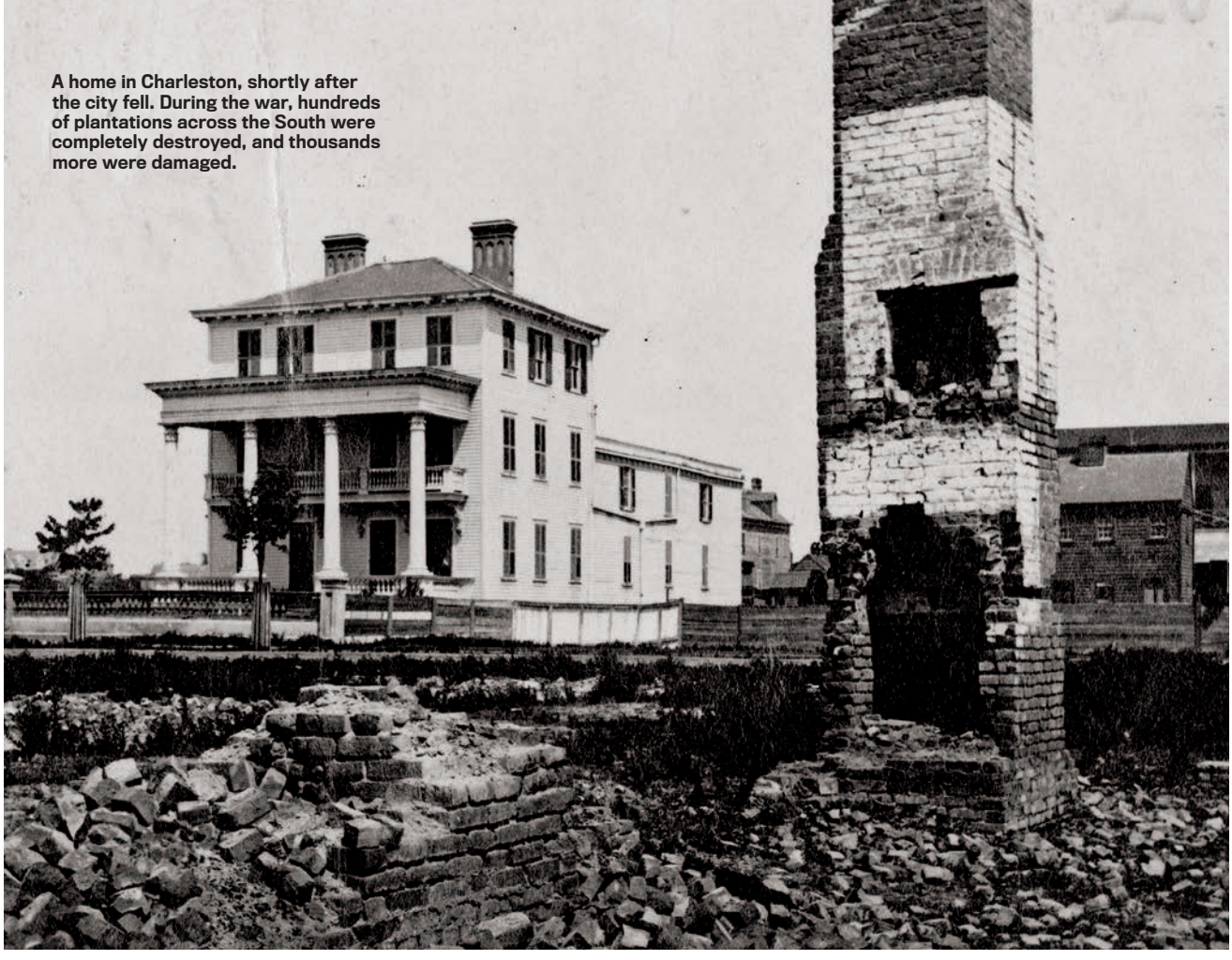
A HIGH WIND WAS blowing from the water into the Beaufort streets,—a wind of as reckless hilarity as March could give to her breezes, but soft and spring-like, almost early-summer-like, in its warmth.

In the gardens of the old Southern houses that stood along the bay, roses and petisporum-trees were blooming, with their delicious fragrance. It was the time of wistarias and wild white lilies, of the last yellow jasmines and the first Cherokee roses. It was the Saturday before Easter Sunday ...

From one of the high houses which stand fronting the sea, with their airy balconies and colonnades, had come a small, slender figure that afternoon, like some shy, dark thing of twilight out into the bright sunshine. The street was empty, for the most part; before one or two of the cheap German shops a group of men watched the little old lady step proudly by. She was a very stately little old lady, for one so small and thin; she was feeble, too, and bending a little with the weight of years, but there was true elegance and dignity in the way she moved, and those who saw her, who shuffled when they walked, and who boasted loudly of the fallen pride of the South, were struck with sudden deference and admiration. Behind this lady walked a gray-headed negro, a man who was troubled in spirit, who sometimes gained a step or two, and offered an anxious but quite unheeded remonstrance. He was a poor, tottering old fellow; he wore a threadbare evening coat that might have belonged to his late master thirty years before.

The pair went slowly along the bay street to the end of the row of new shops, and the lady turned decidedly toward the water, and approached the ferry-steps ... Before the boat was out of hail, long before it had passed the first bank of raccoon oysters, the tide being at the ebb, it was known by fifty people that for the first time in more than twenty years the mistress of the old Sydenham plantation on St. Helena's Island had taken it into her poor daft head to go look after her estates, her crops, and her people. Everybody knew that her estates had been confiscated during the war; that her people owned it themselves now, in three and five and even twenty acre lots; that her crops of rice and Sea Island cotton were theirs, planted and hoed and harvested on their own account. All these years she had forgotten Sydenham, and the live-oak avenue, and the outlook across the water to the Hunting Islands, where the deer ran wild; she had forgotten the war; she had forgotten her children and her husband, except that they had gone away,—the graves to which she carried Easter flowers were her mother's and her father's graves,—and her life was a strange dream ...

The old lady was looking back over the water to the row of fine houses, the once



A home in Charleston, shortly after the city fell. During the war, hundreds of plantations across the South were completely destroyed, and thousands more were damaged.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

luxurious summer homes of Rhetts and Barnwells, of many a famous household now scattered and impoverished. The ferryman had heard of more than one bereft lady or gentleman who lived in seclusion in the old houses ...

The mistress of Sydenham plantation had a way of speaking but seldom, of rarely listening to what anybody was pleased to say in return. Out of the mistiness of her clouded brain a thought had come with unwonted clearness. She must go to the island: her husband and sons were detained at a distance; it was the time of year to look after corn and cotton; she must attend to her house and her slaves. The remembrance of that news of battle and of the three deaths that had left her widowed and childless had faded away in the illness it had brought. She had never comprehended her loss; she was like one bewitched into indifference; she remembered something of her youth, and kept a simple routine of daily life, and that was all ...

In the old times she would have found four oarsmen waiting with a cushioned boat at the ferry; she would have found a saddle-horse or a carriage ready for her on Ladies' Island for the five miles' journey, but the carriage had not come. The poor gray-headed old man recognized her displeasure. He was the only slave left, if she did but know it.

"Fo' Gord's sake, git me some kin' of a cart. Ole mis', she done wake up and mean to go out to Syd'n'am dis day," urged Peter. "Who dis hoss an' kyart in de shed? Who make dese track wid huffs jus' now, like dey done ride by? Yo' go git somebody fo' me, or she be right mad, shore."

The elderly guardian of the shed, who was also of the old *régime*, hobbled away quickly, and backed out a steer, that was broken to harness, and a rickety two-wheeled cart ... They lifted her light figure to the chair in the cart's end, while Peter mounted before her with all a coachman's dignity,—he once had his ambitions of being her coachman,—and they moved slowly away through the deep sand ...

The slow-footed beast of burden was carrying them toward Sydenham step by step, and [Peter] dreaded the moment of arrival ...

They passed the turn of the avenue; they came out to the lawn, and the steer stopped and began to browse. Peter shook from head to foot. He climbed down by the wheel, and turned his face slowly. "Ole mis'!" he said feebly. "*Ole mis'!*"

She was looking off into space. The crumbling, fallen chimneys of the house were there among the weeds, and that was all. The cart jerked as it moved after the feeding steer. The mistress of Sydenham plantation had sought her home in vain.

On Christmas Day and Easter Day, many an old man and woman come into St. Helena's Church who are not seen there the rest of the year ... This Easter morning dawned clear and bright ... One figure came to sit alone in one of the pews, to bend its head in prayer after the ancient habit. Peter led her, as usual, to the broad-aisle doorway, and helped her, stumbling himself, up the steps, and many eyes filled with tears as his mistress went to her place. Even the tragic moment of yesterday was lost already in the acquiescence of her mind, as the calm sea shines back to the morning sun when another wreck has gone down. *A*

The Case of George Dedlow

BACKGROUND

THE MASS OF casualties suffered in the war was staggering. During General Grant's Virginia campaign alone, an average of 2,000 men were wounded each day, and by the war's end, countless soldiers had lost limbs.

In the 1860s, Silas Weir Mitchell, a Philadelphia physician, began to study the neurological effects of the wounds he was seeing. He was also a writer of fiction, and in the midst of his investigations, he composed a short story incorporating many of his findings.

The story was impressive for its scientific detail, but what made it particularly jarring was its bizarre supernatural ending (reprinted here). The narrator, a doctor who joins the Union army, recounts how he loses his limbs to battle and infection until at last he is nothing but "a useless torso." Seeing that he has fallen into a depression, an acquaintance invites the doctor to a spiritualist meeting at which, the acquaintance claims, participants commune with the dead. What happens next was meant to be "absurd," Mitchell would later explain. But because the story was not clearly marked as fiction, some *Atlantic* readers mistook the doctor for a real person, and the story's events as fact.

By SILAS WEIR MITCHELL

A MAN FROM A neighboring ward fell one morning into conversation with the chaplain, within ear-shot of my chair. Some of their words arrested my attention, and I turned my head to see and listen. The speaker, who wore a sergeant's chevron and carried one arm in a sling, was a tall, loosely made person, with a pale face, light eyes of a washed-out blue tint, and very sparse yellow whiskers. His mouth was weak, both lips being almost alike, so that the organ might have been turned upside down without affecting its expression. His forehead, however, was high and thinly covered with sandy hair. I should have said, as a phrenologist, Will feeble,—emotional, but not passionate,—likely to be an enthusiast or a weakly bigot.

I caught enough of what passed to make me call to the sergeant when the chaplain left him.

"Good morning," said he. "How do you get on?"

"Not at all," I replied. "Where were you hit?"

"O, at Chancellorsville. I was shot in the shoulder. I have what the doctors call paralysis of the median nerve, but I guess Dr. Neek and the lightnin' battery will fix it in time. When my time's out I'll go back to Kearsage and try on the school-teaching again. I was a fool to leave it."

"Well," said I, "you're better off than I."

"Yes," he answered, "in more ways than one. I belong to the New Church. It's a great comfort for a plain man like me, when he's weary and sick, to be able to turn away from earthly things and hold converse daily with the great and good who have left the world ..."

"It must be a great comfort," I replied, "if only one could believe it."

"Believe!" he repeated, "how can you help it? Do you suppose anything dies?"

"No," I said. "The soul does not, I am sure; and as to matter, it merely changes form" ...

"Come to-morrow with me, and you shall see and hear for yourself."

"I will," said I, "if the doctor will lend me the ambulance."

It was so arranged, as the surgeon in charge was kind enough, as usual, to oblige me with the loan of his wagon, and two orderlies to lift my useless trunk.

On the day following, I found myself, with my new comrade, in a house in Coates Street, where a "circle" was in the daily habit of meeting. So soon as I had been comfortably deposited in an arm-chair, beside a large pine table, the rest of those assembled seated themselves, and for some time preserved an unbroken silence. During this pause

Union soldiers convalesce in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Before the war, the town was home to about 5,000 people. In May of 1864, after the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, nearly 22,000 wounded men reportedly sought care there.

JAMES GARDNER/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

I scrutinized the persons present. Next to me, on my right, sat a flabby man, with ill-marked, baggy features, and injected eyes. He was, as I learned afterwards, an eclectic doctor, who had tried his hand at medicine and several of its quackish variations, finally settling down on eclecticism, which I believe professes to be to scientific medicine what vegetarianism is to common sense, every-day dietetics. Next to him sat a female,—authoress, I think, of two somewhat feeble novels, and much pleasanter to look at than her books. She was, I thought, a good deal excited at the prospect of spiritual revelations. Her neighbor was a pallid, care-worn girl, with very red lips, and large brown eyes of great beauty. She was, as I learned afterwards, a magnetic patient of the doctor, and had deserted her husband, a master mechanic, to follow this new light. The others were, like myself, strangers brought hither by mere curiosity. One of them was a lady in deep black, closely veiled. Beyond her, and opposite to me, sat the sergeant, and next to him the medium, a man named Blake. He was well dressed, and wore a good deal of jewelry, and had large, black side-whiskers,—a shrewd-visaged, large-nosed, full-lipped man, formed by nature to appreciate the pleasant things of sensual existence ...

The medium ... addressed himself to me. "Sister Euphemia," he said, indicating the lady with large eyes, "will act as your medium" ...

"Think, if you please, sir, of a spirit, and she will endeavor to summon it to our circle."

Upon this, a wild idea came into my head. I answered, "I am thinking as you directed me to do."

The medium sat with her arms folded, looking steadily at the centre of the table. For a few moments there was silence. Then a series of irregular knocks began. "Are you present?" said the medium.

Patients in a ward of Harewood Hospital, in Washington, D.C., peer out from under mosquito netting. The spread of diseases, including malaria, killed two soldiers for every one felled in battle.

The affirmative raps were twice given.

"I should think," said the doctor, "that there were two spirits present."

His words sent a thrill through my heart.

"Are there two?" he questioned.

A double rap.

"Yes, two," said the medium. "Will it please the spirits to make us conscious of their names in this world?"

A single knock. "No."

"Will it please them to say how they are called in the world of spirits?"

Again came the irregular raps,—3, 4, 8, 6; then a pause, and 3, 4, 8, 7.

"I think," said the authoress, "they must be numbers. Will the spirits," she said, "be good enough to aid us? Shall we use the alphabet?"

"Yes," was rapped very quickly.

"Are these numbers?"

"Yes," again.

"I will write them," she added, and, doing so, took up the card and tapped the letters. The spelling was pretty rapid, and ran thus as she tapped in turn, first the letters, and last the numbers she had already set down:—

"UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL MUSEUM, Nos. 3486, 3487."

The medium looked up with a puzzled expression.

"Good gracious!" said I, "they are *my legs! my legs!*"

What followed, I ask no one to believe except those who, like myself, have communed with the things of another sphere. Suddenly I felt a strange return of my self-consciousness. I was reindividualized, so to speak. A strange wonder filled me, and, to the amazement of every one, I arose, and, staggering a little, walked across the room on limbs invisible to them or me. It was no wonder I staggered, for, as I briefly reflected, my legs had been nine months in the strongest alcohol. At this instant all my new friends crowded around me in astonishment. Presently, however, I felt myself sinking slowly. My legs were going, and in a moment I was resting feebly on my two stumps upon the floor. It was too much. All that was left of me fainted and rolled over senseless.

I have little to add. I am now at home in the West, surrounded by every form of kindness and every possible comfort; but, alas! I have so little surety of being myself, that I doubt my own honesty in drawing my pension, and feel absolved from gratitude to those who are kind to a being who is uncertain of being enough himself to be conscientiously responsible. It is needless to add, that I am not a happy fraction of a man; and that I am eager for the day when I shall rejoin the lost members of my corporeal family in another and a happier world. A

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For the Union Dead

■ *By* ROBERT LOWELL | NOVEMBER 1960

BACKGROUND **IN 1960, ROBERT LOWELL wrote a poem for the Boston Arts Festival. In it, he contrasted contemporary Boston—dug up to make room for more parking garages—with the nobility of the city's past, focusing on the image of Boston Common's memorial to Robert Gould Shaw carelessly supported by a plank, as bulldozers "gouge their underworld garage." Shaw, who served as colonel of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment of black soldiers, died heroically. Now, Lowell wrote, his monument—inscribed "*Relinquunt omnia servare rem publicam*" ("They give up everything to serve the Republic")—"sticks like a fishbone / in the city's throat."**

Relinquunt omnia servare rem publicam.

The old South Boston Aquarium stands
in a Sahara of snow now. Its broken windows are boarded.
The bronze weathervane cod has lost half its scales.
The airy tanks are dry.

Once my nose crawled like a snail on the glass;
my hand tingled
to burst the bubbles,
drifting from the noses of the cowed, compliant fish.

My hand draws back. I often sigh still
for the dark downward and vegetating kingdom
of the fish and reptile. One morning last March,
I pressed against the new barbed and galvanized

fence on the Boston Common. Behind their cage,
yellow dinosaur steam shovels were grunting
as they cropped up tons of mush and grass
to gouge their underworld garage.

Parking lots luxuriate like civic
sand piles in the heart of Boston.
A girdle of orange, Puritan-pumpkin-colored girders
braces the tingling Statehouse, shaking

over the excavations, as it faces Colonel Shaw
and his bell-cheeked Negro infantry
on St. Gaudens' shaking Civil War relief,
propped by a plank splint against the garage's earthquake.

Two months after marching through Boston,
half the regiment was dead;
at the dedication,
William James could almost hear the bronze Negroes
breathe.

The monument sticks like a fishbone
in the city's throat.
Its colonel is as lean
as a compass needle.

He has an angry wrenlike vigilance,
a greyhound's gentle tautness;
he seems to wince at pleasure
and suffocate for privacy.

He is out of bounds. He rejoices in man's lovely,
peculiar power to choose life and die—
when he leads his black soldiers to death,
he cannot bend his back.

On a thousand small-town New England greens,
the old white churches hold their air
of sparse, sincere rebellion; frayed flags
quilt the graveyards of the Grand Army of the Republic.

The stone statues of the abstract Union Soldier
grow slimmer and younger each year—
wasp-waisted, they doze over muskets,
and muse through their sideburns.

Shaw's father wanted no monument
except the ditch,
where his son's body was thrown
and lost with his "niggers."

The ditch is nearer.
There are no statues for the last war here;
on Boylston Street, a commercial photograph
showed Hiroshima boiling

over a Mosler Safe, "the Rock of Ages,"
that survived the blast. Space is nearer.
When I crouch to my television set,
the drained faces of Negro school children rise like
balloons.

Colonel Shaw
is riding on his bubble,
he waits
for the blessed break.

The Aquarium is gone. Everywhere,
giant finned cars nose forward like fish;
a savage servility
slides by on grease.

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The Freedmen's Bureau

BACKGROUND

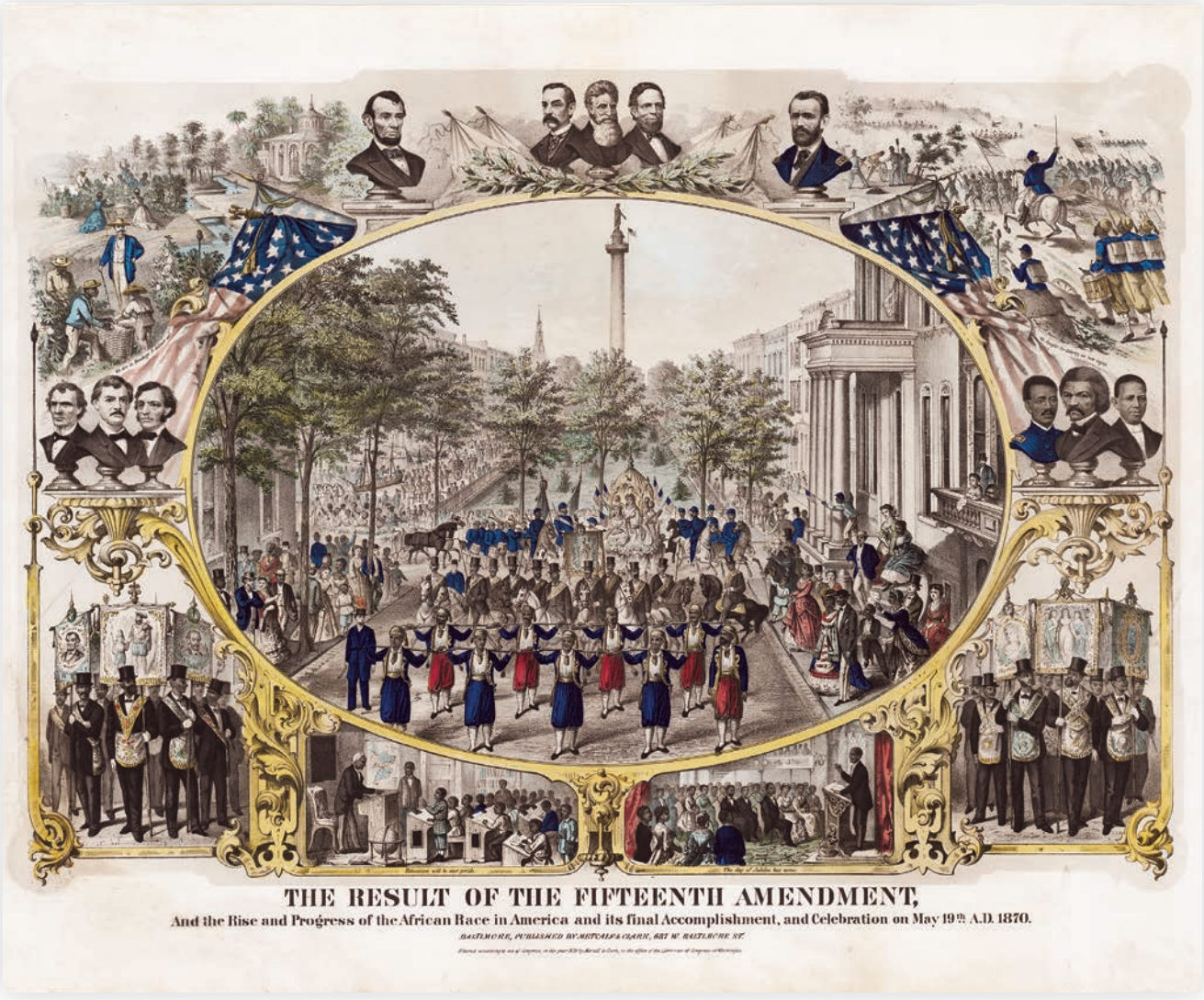
LINCOLN'S EMANCIPATION of the slaves in 1863 was hailed throughout the North as a moral triumph. But the throngs of destitute, minimally educated people it abruptly thrust onto society posed serious problems. For a time, private charitable organizations served as the primary resource for former slaves. But a month before the end of the war, Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (popularly known as the Freedmen's Bureau) to look after the former-slave population. Under the leadership of the Union-army general Oliver O. Howard (who would later establish Howard University), the bureau handled everything from issuing food and clothing to helping people find jobs, promoting education, adjudicating legal disputes, and reuniting families.

The bureau was never adequately staffed, and many Southern whites viewed it with hostility. Nearly 30 years after its dissolution, the social historian and civil-rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois took stock of the bureau's successes and failures, identifying the forces that led to its demise.

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

TO UNDERSTAND AND criticise intelligently so vast a work, one must not forget an instant the drift of things in the later sixties: Lee had surrendered, Lincoln was dead, and Johnson and Congress were at loggerheads; the Thirteenth Amendment was adopted, the Fourteenth pending, and the Fifteenth declared in force in 1870. Guerrilla raiding, the ever present flickering after-flame of war, was spending its force against the Negroes, and all the Southern land was awakening as from some wild dream to poverty and social revolution. In a time of perfect calm, amid willing neighbors and streaming wealth, the social uplifting of 4,000,000 slaves to an assured and self-sustaining place in the body politic and economic would have been an herculean task; but when to the inherent difficulties of so delicate and nice a social operation were added the spite and hate of conflict, the Hell of War; when suspicion and cruelty were rife, and gaunt Hunger wept beside Bereavement,—in such a case, the work of any instrument of social regeneration was in large part foredoomed to failure. The very name of the Bureau stood for a thing in the South which for two centuries and better men had refused even to argue,—that life amid free Negroes was simply unthinkable, the maddest of experiments. The agents which the Bureau could command varied all the way from unselfish philanthropists to narrow-minded busybodies and thieves; and even though it be true that the average was far better than the worst, it was the one fly that helped to spoil the ointment. Then, amid all this crouched the freed slave, bewildered between friend and foe. He had emerged from slavery: not the worst slavery in the world, not a slavery that made all life unbearable,—rather, a slavery that had here and there much of kindliness, fidelity, and happiness,—but withal slavery, which, so far as human aspiration and desert were concerned, classed the black man and the ox together. And the Negro knew full well that, whatever their deeper convictions may have been, Southern men had fought with desperate energy to perpetuate this slavery, under which the black masses, with half-articulate thought, had writhed and shivered ... So the cleft between the white and black South grew ...

It is all well enough for us of another generation to wax wise with advice to those who bore the burden in the heat of the day. It is full easy now to see that the man who lost home, fortune, and family at a stroke, and saw his land ruled by "mules and niggers," was really benefited by the passing of slavery. It is not difficult now to say to the young freedman, cheated and cuffed about, who has seen his father's head beaten to a jelly and his own mother namelessly assaulted, that the meek shall inherit the earth.



METCALF & CLARK/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Above all, nothing is more convenient than to heap on the Freedmen's Bureau all the evils of that evil day, and damn it utterly for every mistake and blunder that was made.

All this is easy, but it is neither sensible nor just ...

Such was the work of the Freedmen's Bureau. To sum it up in brief, we may say: it set going a system of free labor; it established the black peasant proprietor; it secured the recognition of black freemen before courts of law; it founded the free public school in the South. On the other hand, it failed to establish good will between ex-masters and freedmen; to guard its work wholly from paternalistic methods that discouraged self-reliance; to make Negroes landholders in any considerable numbers. Its successes were the result of hard work, supplemented by the aid of philanthropists and the eager striving of black men. Its failures were the result of bad local agents, inherent difficulties of the work, and national neglect ...

The most bitter attacks on the Freedmen's Bureau were aimed not so much at its conduct or policy under the law as at the necessity for any such organization at all. Such attacks came naturally from the border states and the South, and they were summed up by Senator Davis, of Kentucky, when he moved to entitle the act of 1866 a bill "to promote strife and conflict between the white and black races ... by a grant of unconstitutional power." The argument was of tremendous strength, but its very strength was its weakness. For, argued the plain common sense of the nation, if it is unconstitutional, unpracticable, and futile for the nation to stand guardian over its helpless wards, then there is left but one alternative: to make those wards their own guardians by arming them with the ballot ...

So the Freedmen's Bureau died and its child was the Fifteenth Amendment. A

Reconstruction, and an Appeal to Congress for Impartial Suffrage

BACKGROUND

BORN INTO SLAVERY in Maryland in 1818, Frederick Douglass taught himself to read, escaped to the North, and became active in anti-slavery circles, gaining recognition as an eloquent lecturer. In 1845, his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*, became a best seller, propelling him to international prominence. He founded several abolitionist publications, continued to lecture widely, and occasionally advised President Lincoln. By the mid-19th century, he ranked among the most eminent of Americans.

After the war, he remained an advocate for civil rights, and in 1865, when the American Anti-Slavery Society considered disbanding because slavery had at last been outlawed, Douglass asserted, "Slavery is not abolished until the black man has the ballot."

In a pair of *Atlantic* articles in 1866 and '67, Douglass addressed members of the 39th session of Congress, urging them to give black Americans the right to vote. Three years later, the Fifteenth Amendment, prohibiting voter discrimination on the basis of race or color, would be passed by the 40th Congress.

By FREDERICK DOUGLASS

WHETHER THE TREMENDOUS war so heroically fought and so victoriously ended shall pass into history a miserable failure, barren of permanent results ... or whether, on the other hand, we shall, as the rightful reward of victory over treason, have a solid nation, entirely delivered from all contradictions and social antagonisms, based upon loyalty, liberty, and equality, must be determined one way or the other by the present session of Congress ...

The arm of the Federal government is long, but it is far too short to protect the rights of individuals in the interior of distant States. They must have the power to protect themselves, or they will go unprotected, spite of all the laws the Federal government can put upon the national statute-book.

Slavery, like all other great systems of wrong, founded in the depths of human selfishness, and existing for ages, has not neglected its own conservation. It has steadily exerted an influence upon all around it favorable to its own continuance. And to-day it is so strong that it could exist, not only without law, but even against law. Custom, manners, morals, religion, are all on its side everywhere in the South; and when you add the ignorance and servility of the ex-slave to the intelligence and accustomed authority of the master, you have the conditions, not out of which slavery will again grow, but under which it is impossible for the Federal government to wholly destroy it, unless the Federal government be armed with despotic power, to blot out State authority, and to station a Federal officer at every cross-road. This, of course, cannot be done, and ought not even if it could. The true way and the easiest way is to make our government entirely consistent with itself, and give to every loyal citizen the elective franchise,—a right and power which will be ever present, and will form a wall of fire for his protection ...

[The people] demand such a reconstruction as shall put an end to the present anarchical state of things in the late rebellious States,—where frightful murders and wholesale massacres are perpetrated in the very presence of Federal soldiers. This horrible business they require shall cease. They want a reconstruction such as will protect loyal men, black and white, in their persons and property; such a one as will cause Northern industry, Northern capital, and Northern civilization to flow into the South, and make a man from New England as much at home in Carolina as elsewhere in the Republic. No Chinese wall can now be tolerated. The South must be opened to the light of law and liberty, and this session of Congress is relied upon to accomplish this important work ...

This great measure is sought as earnestly by loyal white men as by loyal blacks, and is

GEORGE KENDALL WARREN/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

A portrait of Frederick Douglass made in 1876, the same year the former slave would help unveil the Freedmen's Monument in Washington, D.C.

needed alike by both. Let sound political prescience but take the place of an unreasoning prejudice, and this will be done ...

For better or for worse, (as in some of the old marriage ceremonies,) the negroes are evidently a permanent part of the American population. They are too numerous and useful to be colonized, and too enduring and self-perpetuating to disappear by natural causes. Here they are, four millions of them, and, for weal or for woe, here they must remain. Their history is parallel to that of the country; but while the history of the latter has been cheerful and bright with blessing, theirs has been heavy and dark with agonies and curses ... They now stand before Congress and the country, not complaining of the past, but simply asking for a better future ... It is true that they came to the relief of the country at the hour of its extremest need. It is true that, in many of the rebellious States, they were almost the only reliable friends the nation had throughout the whole tremendous war. It is true that, notwithstanding their alleged ignorance, they were wiser than their masters, and knew enough to be loyal, while those masters only knew enough to be rebels and traitors. It is true that they fought side by side in the loyal cause with our gallant and patriotic white soldiers, and that, but for their help,—divided as the loyal States were,—the Rebels might have succeeded in breaking up the Union, thereby entailing border wars and troubles of unknown duration and incalculable calamity. All this and more is true of these loyal negroes ... These facts speak to the better dispositions of the human heart; but they seem of little weight with the opponents of impartial suffrage.

It is true that a strong plea for equal suffrage might be addressed to the national sense of honor. Something, too, might be said of national gratitude. A nation might well hesitate before the temptation to betray its allies. There is something immeasurably mean, to say nothing of the cruelty, in placing the loyal negroes of the South under the political power of their Rebel masters. To make peace with our enemies is all well enough; but to prefer our enemies and sacrifice our friends,—to exalt our enemies and cast down our friends,—to clothe our enemies, who sought the destruction of the government, with all political power, and leave our friends powerless in their hands,—is an act which need not be characterized here ...

In respect to this grand measure it is the good fortune of the negro that enlightened selfishness, not less than justice, fights on his side. National interest and national duty, if elsewhere separated, are firmly united here. The American people can, perhaps, afford to brave the censure of surrounding nations for the manifest injustice and meanness of excluding its faithful black soldiers from the ballot-box, but it cannot afford to allow the moral and mental energies of rapidly increasing millions to be consigned to hopeless degradation.

Strong as we are, we need the energy that slumbers in the black man's arm to make us stronger ... Nor can we afford to endure the moral blight which the existence of a degraded and hated class must necessarily inflict upon any people among whom such a class may exist. Exclude the negroes as a class from political rights—teach them that the high and manly privilege of suffrage is to be enjoyed by white citizens only,—that they may bear the burdens of the state, but that they are to have no part in its direction or its honors,—and you at once deprive them of one of the main incentives to manly character and patriotic devotion to the interests of the government; in a word, you stamp them as a degraded *caste*, you teach them to despise themselves, and all others to despise them ...

Disfranchisement in a republican government based upon the idea of human equality and universal suffrage, is a very different thing from disfranchisement in governments based upon the idea of the divine right of kings, or the entire subjugation of the masses. Masses of men can take care of themselves. Besides, the disabilities imposed upon all are necessarily without that bitter and stinging element of invidiousness which attaches to disfranchisement in a republic. What is common to all works no special sense of degradation to any. But in a country like ours, where men of all nations, kindred, and tongues are freely enfranchised, and allowed to vote, to say to the negro, You shall not vote, is to deal his manhood a staggering blow, and to burn into his soul a bitter and goading sense of wrong ...

But in a country like ours, where men of all nations, kindred, and tongues are freely enfranchised, and allowed to vote, to say to the negro, You shall not vote, is to deal his manhood a staggering blow, and to burn into his soul a bitter and goading sense of wrong.

What, then, is the work before Congress? It is to save the people of the South from themselves, and the nation from detriment on their account. Congress must supplant the evident sectional tendencies of the South by national dispositions and tendencies. It must cause national ideas and objects to take the lead and control the politics of those States. It must cease to recognize the old slave-masters as the only competent persons to rule the South. In a word, it must enfranchise the negro, and by means of the loyal negroes and the loyal white men of the South build up a national party there, and in time bridge the chasm between North and South, so that our country may have a common liberty and a common civilization ...

The destiny of unborn and unnumbered generations is in your hands. Will you repeat the mistake of your fathers, who sinned ignorantly? or will you profit by the blood-bought wisdom all round you, and forever expel every vestige of the old abomination from our national borders? As you members of the Thirty-ninth Congress decide, will the country be peaceful, united, and happy, or troubled, divided, and miserable. 4

The Death of Slavery

By WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT | JULY 1866

BACKGROUND **WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, the longtime editor of the *New York Evening Post* and the first American poet to attain international prominence, was a staunch abolitionist. "Wherever our flag floats," he wrote after the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision, "it is the flag of slavery." He was also an influential Lincoln supporter. (Bryant, in fact, introduced Lincoln to New Yorkers at his famous Cooper Union speech.) After the war, Bryant hailed the demise of slavery's "cruel reign" in this poem.**

O THOU great Wrong, that, through the slow-paced years,
  Didst hold thy millions fettered, and didst wield
  The scourge that drove the laborer to the field,
And look with stony eye on human tears,
    Thy cruel reign is o'er;
    Thy bondmen crouch no more
In terror at the menace of thine eye;
  For He who marks the bounds of guilty power,
Long-suffering, hath heard the captive's cry,
  And touched his shackles at the appointed hour,
And lo! they fall, and he whose limbs they galled
Stands in his native manhood, disenthralled.

A shout of joy from the redeemed is sent;
  Ten thousand hamlets swell the hymn of thanks;
  Our rivers roll exulting, and their banks
Send up hosannas to the firmament.
    Fields, where the bondman's toil
    No more shall trench the soil,
Seem now to bask in a serener day;
  The meadow-birds sing sweeter, and the airs
Of heaven with more caressing softness play,
  Welcoming man to liberty like theirs.
A glory clothes the land from sea to sea,
For the great land and all its coasts are free.

Within that land wert thou enthroned of late,
  And they by whom the nation's laws were made,
  And they who filled its judgment-seats, obeyed
Thy mandate, rigid as the will of fate.
    Fierce men at thy right hand,
    With gesture of command,
Gave forth the word that none might dare gainsay;
  And grave and reverend ones, who loved thee not,
Shrank from thy presence, and, in blank dismay,
  Choked down, unuttered, the rebellious thought;
While meaner cowards, mingling with thy train,
Proved, from the book of God, thy right to reign.

Great as thou wert, and feared from shore to shore,
  The wrath of God o'ertook thee in the pride;
  Thou sitt'st a ghastly shadow; by thy side
Thy once strong arms hang nerveless evermore.
    And they who quailed but now
    Before thy lowering brow
Devote thy memory to scorn and shame,
  And scoff at the pale, powerless thing thou art.
And they who ruled in thine imperial name,
  Subdued, and standing sullenly apart,
Scowl at the hands that overthrew thy reign,
And shattered at a blow the prisoner's chain.

Well was thy doom deserved; thou didst not spare
  Life's tenderest ties, but cruelly didst part
  Husband and wife, and from the mother's heart
Didst wrest her children, deaf to shriek and prayer;
    Thy inner lair became
    The haunt of guilty shame;
Thy lash dropped blood; the murderer, at thy side,
  Showed his red hands, nor feared the vengeance due.
Thou didst sow earth with crimes, and, far and wide,
  A harvest of uncounted miseries grew,
Until the measure of thy sins at last
Was full, and then the avenging bolt was cast.

Go then, accursed of God, and take thy place
  With baleful memories of the elder time,
  With many a wasting pest, and nameless crime,
And bloody war that thinned the human race;
    With the Black Death, whose way
    Through wailing cities lay,
Worship of Moloch, tyrannies that built
  The Pyramids, and cruel creeds that taught
To avenge a fancied guilt by deeper guilt,—
  Death at the stake to those that held them not.
Lo, the foul phantoms, silent in the gloom
Of the flown ages, part to yield thee room.

I see the better years that hasten by
  Carry thee back into that shadowy past,
  Where, in the dusty spaces, void and vast,
The graves of those whom thou hast murdered lie.
    The slave-pen, through whose door
    Thy victims pass no more,
Is there, and there shall the grim block remain
  At which the slave was sold; while at thy feet
Scourges and engines of restraint and pain
  Moulder and rust by thine eternal seat.
There, 'mid the symbols that proclaim thy crimes,
Dwell thou, a warning to the coming times.

The Result in South Carolina

BACKGROUND

FOR A DECADE or so after the war, radical Republicans held power in Congress. The policies they enacted promoted political participation by blacks while deterring involvement by high-ranking former Confederates. Many Southern whites loathed the state governments they felt were being imposed on them by Reconstruction, perceiving them as inept and corrupt. They began taking action to restore what they called "home rule"—resorting to fraud or violence to discourage black political engagement.

South Carolina was an extreme case. Before the 1876 gubernatorial election, President Ulysses S. Grant sent troops to keep order. The Democratic candidate, Wade Hampton, beat the incumbent Republican, Daniel Henry Chamberlain. But evidence of voter fraud surfaced, and neither candidate would cede the election. Eventually the troops were withdrawn, and in early 1877 the newly elected President Rutherford B. Hayes gave the nod to Hampton.

Several months later, Belton O'Neall Townsend, writing anonymously (and reflecting some of the prejudices of his era), described the fallout, offering a picture of explosive tensions and the reassertion of white political dominance.

By "A SOUTH CAROLINIAN"

WHEN PRESIDENT HAYES was inaugurated, the State was in anarchy. Within a month after the election the garrisons which had been stationed by Grant and Chamberlain in nearly every populated place in the State had been withdrawn from all points ... After their withdrawal the hostile races confronted each other ... Wherever immunity seemed possible the negroes were burning the buildings of whites, stealing their property, and assembling as militia or in mobs to assail whites and terrorize communities by riot and tumult; while murders of whites during arsons, burglaries, highway robberies, and riots became frequent. Every white family in the country kept watch at night, or slept in dread, with dogs turned loose in the yard and the gun at the bedside. Every village and town was patrolled by relays of white citizens from dark till daylight. The moment a crime was reported, the mounted rifle clubs assembled from all parts and scoured the country, to the terror of the blacks, arresting suspected criminals, conveying them to jail, or inflicting summary vengeance. They were sometimes resisted by the colored militia, and regular battles occurred. Individual members of the races were constantly quarreling and fighting. The courts, though recognized by both parties, vainly tried to execute justice. Blacks on the juries would consent to no conviction of one of their race prosecuted by a white man. White jurymen acted similarly in the cases of whites indicted for violence towards blacks ... A reign of terror existed ...

Towards the end of March Chamberlain and Hampton, by invitation of the president, visited Washington to confer with him as to the condition of South Carolina ... Orders were issued for the withdrawal of the troops from the state-house. Chamberlain at once returned to South Carolina, and knowing that further resistance was useless soon surrendered the executive office ... Hampton immediately took possession, and has since been undisputed governor of the State ...

We are now prepared to consider the outgrowths of the president's action ...

Legislative corruption has ceased; and in every branch of the government ... there is greatly increased efficiency. The appointees are men of intelligence and high standing, and are above temptation. So, also, are those elected ...

Since Chamberlain's retirement there have been fifteen or twenty elections ... to fill

OPPOSITE: In a print created two years after the war, John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster shake hands and an eagle drapes a flag over an idealized vision of Reconstruction.

J. L. GILES/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

vacancies in the legislature, etc. On such occasions great numbers of young white men, largely from adjacent counties, ride to and remain about the polls, "to see fair play," they explain. These have not attempted openly to molest, but they have certainly frightened the republican negroes. Accordingly, *every election* has gone democratic ...

There has been a relentless determination to purge the offices of republicans, to get rid of every vestige of the hateful carpet-bag *régime* ...

The most potent instrument for both purging and revenge has been prosecution for official misconduct ... Nearly all the republicans in the State who have ever held office are under indictment, are already convicted and punished ... There has been no lack of purely republican rascality to punish. Members of former legislatures, some still sitting, are indicted for taking bribes ... It has been discovered that a clerk of the senate issued thousands upon thousands of dollars in pay certificates to merchants, which although recorded as paid for stationery were really given for fine wines, liquors, cigars, furniture, novels, etc. ... The managers of a colored state orphan asylum in Columbia ... are found to have been ordering for their wards ... hundreds of dollars' worth of assorted candies, whisky, water-melons, and carpets ...

But not only has there been a crusade against the politicians; there has been a relentless effort to bring to retribution and get out of the way all those negroes who, without holding office, made themselves obnoxious or dangerous ... The jails have been overcrowded all the year: a small one in the country, I have had occasion to notice, used to contain on an average about fifteen prisoners; there are now fifty-one in it, and it has the odor of a wild beast's cage in a managerie. The number of convicts in the penitentiary has increased from three hundred and fifty during the last year to nearly six hundred. Imprisonment is for longer terms, and as many as two and three negroes are frequently hung at a time, once (in May, I think) even five ...

Whatever names parties may hereafter bear in South Carolina ... one thing may safely be predicted: the whites, in the future as in the past, will not tolerate, unless forced, any party which aggressively and in real earnest advocates negro rights, or in the same manner denounces the past course of the South ...

Readers of this paper may find themselves left in some doubt as to the sentiments of the author on the policy whose results are recounted. Nor should they be charged with a lack of discernment ... While he finds some things to approve, he perceives much to deplore. Consequently, he knows not what to say at present. His mind is not made up. A

The Awakening of the Negro

BACKGROUND

IN 1895, NOT LONG after Frederick Douglass died, an educator and author named Booker T. Washington came to national attention. For the next 20 years, Washington occupied the role once held by Douglass as black America's leading figure.

Like Douglass, Washington was a former slave who gained distinction through his intellect and political skills. But while Douglass had dedicated his life to achieving equality for black Americans, Washington—whose ideals were forged in the racially tense atmosphere of the post-war South—promoted a vision in which blacks would better their position primarily by making themselves economically useful to whites.

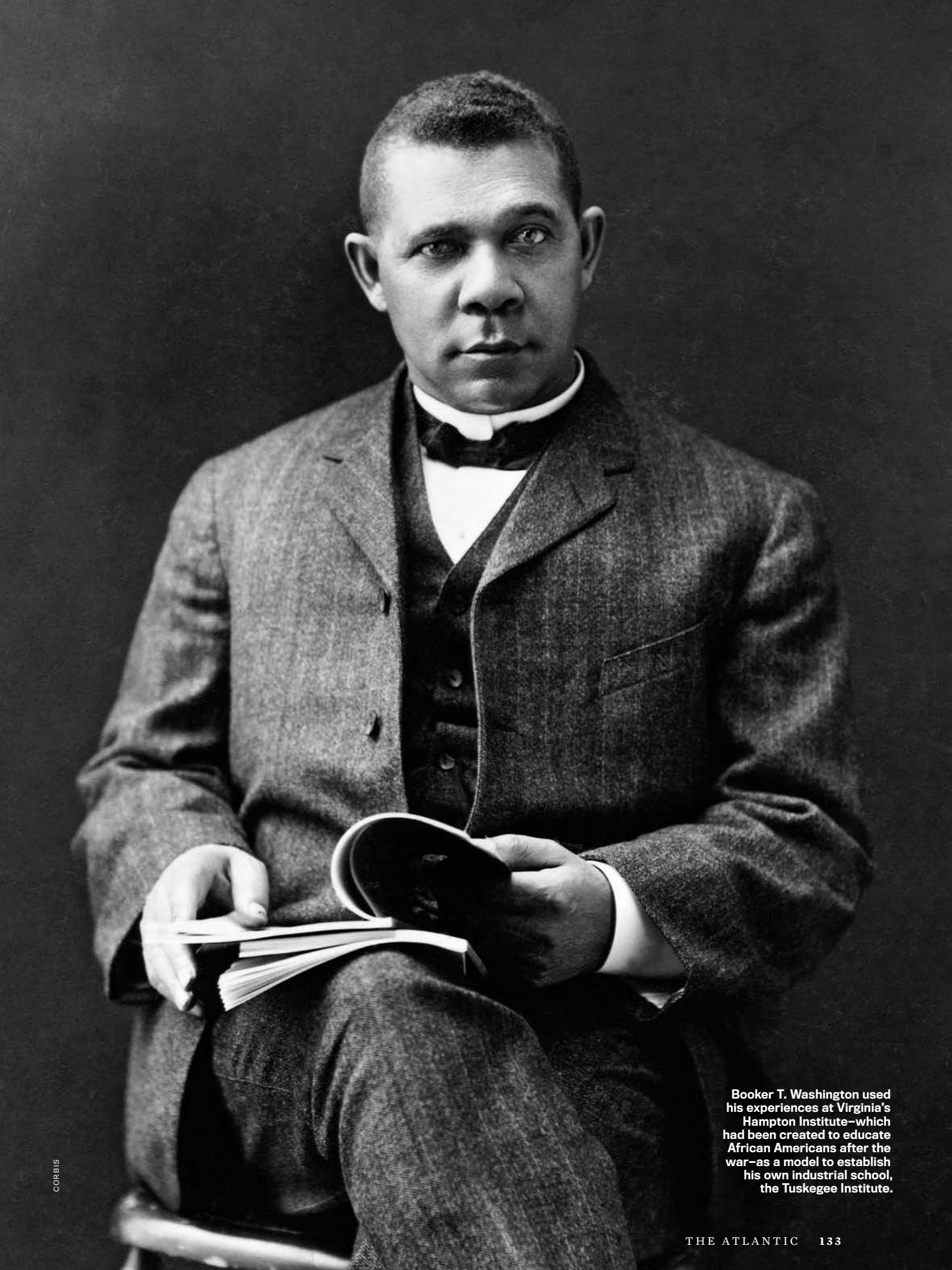
In his September 1895 speech at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Washington assured listeners that the races could be "as separate as the fingers" in "all things that are purely social," but "one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

A year later, he outlined for *Atlantic* readers his vision for racial comity: "Friction between the races will pass away," he wrote, "in proportion as the black man ... can produce something that the white man wants or respects in the commercial world."

By BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

WHEN A MERE boy, I saw a young colored man, who had spent several years in school, sitting in a common cabin in the South, studying a French grammar. I noted the poverty, the untidiness, the want of system and thrift, that existed about the cabin, notwithstanding his knowledge of French and other academic subjects. Another time, when riding on the outer edges of a town in the South, I heard the sound of a piano coming from a cabin of the same kind. Contriving some excuse, I entered, and began a conversation with the young colored woman who was playing, and who had recently returned from a boarding-school, where she had been studying instrumental music among other things. Despite the fact that her parents were living in a rented cabin, eating poorly cooked food, surrounded with poverty, and having almost none of the conveniences of life, she had persuaded them to rent a piano for four or five dollars per month. Many such instances as these, in connection with my own struggles, impressed upon me the importance of making a study of our needs as a race, and applying the remedy accordingly.

Some one may be tempted to ask, Has not the negro boy or girl as good a right to study a French grammar and instrumental music as the white youth? I answer, Yes, but in the present condition of the negro race in this country there is need of something more. Perhaps I may be forgiven for the seeming egotism if I mention the expansion of my own life partly as an example of what I mean. My earliest recollection is of a small one-room log hut on a large slave plantation in Virginia. After the close of the war, while working in the coal-mines of West Virginia for the support of my mother, I heard in some accidental way of the Hampton Institute. When I learned that it was an institution where a black boy could study, could have a chance to work for his board, and at the same time be taught how to work and to realize the dignity of labor, I resolved to go there. Bidding my mother good-by, I started out one morning to find my way to Hampton, though I was almost penniless and had no definite idea where Hampton was. By walking, begging rides, and paying for a portion of the journey on the steam-cars, I finally succeeded in reaching the city of Richmond, Virginia. I was without money or friends. I slept under a sidewalk, and by working on a vessel next day I earned money to continue my way to the institute, where I arrived with a surplus of fifty cents. At Hampton I found the opportunity—in the way of buildings, teachers, and industries provided by the generous—to get training in the class-room and by practical touch with industrial life, to learn thrift, economy, and push. I was surrounded by an atmosphere of business, Christian influence, and a spirit of self-



CORBIS

Booker T. Washington used his experiences at Virginia's Hampton Institute–which had been created to educate African Americans after the war–as a model to establish his own industrial school, the Tuskegee Institute.

help that seemed to have awakened every faculty in me, and caused me for the first time to realize what it meant to be a man instead of a piece of property.

While there I resolved that when I had finished the course of training I would go into the far South, into the Black Belt of the South, and give my life to providing the same kind of opportunity for self-reliance and self-awakening that I had found provided for me at Hampton. My work began at Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1881, in a small shanty and church, with one teacher and thirty students, without a dollar's worth of property. The spirit of work and of industrial thrift, with aid from the State and generosity from the North, has enabled us to develop an institution of eight hundred students gathered from nineteen States, with seventy-nine instructors, fourteen hundred acres of land, and thirty buildings, including large and small; in all, property valued at $280,000. Twenty-five industries have been organized, and the whole work is carried on at an annual cost of about $80,000 in cash; two fifths of the annual expense so far has gone into permanent plant.

What is the object of all this outlay? First, it must be borne in mind that we have in the South a peculiar and unprecedented state of things. It is of the utmost importance that our energy be given to meeting conditions that exist right about us rather than conditions that existed centuries ago or that exist in countries a thousand miles away. What are the cardinal needs among the colored people in the South, most of whom are to be found on the plantations? Roughly, these needs may be stated as food, clothing, shelter, education, proper habits, and a settlement of race relations ...

The problem that the Tuskegee Institute keeps before itself constantly is how to prepare these leaders. From the outset, in connection with religious and academic training, it has emphasized industrial or hand training as a means of finding the way out of present conditions. First, we have found the industrial teaching useful in giving the student a chance to work out a portion of his expenses while in school. Second, the school furnishes labor that has an economic value, and at the same time gives the student a chance to acquire knowledge and skill while performing the labor. Most of all, we find the industrial system valuable in teaching economy, thrift, and the dignity of labor, and in giving moral backbone to students. The fact that a student goes out into the world conscious of his power to build a house or a wagon, or to make a harness, gives him a certain confidence and moral independence that he would not possess without such training ...

The white man was held up as the highest type of civilization, but the negro noted that this highest type of civilization himself did not labor; hence he argued that the less work he did, the more nearly he would be like a white man.

One of the objections sometimes urged against industrial education for the negro is that it aims merely to teach him to work on the same plan that he was made to follow when in slavery. This is far from being the object at Tuskegee. At the head of each of the twenty-five industrial departments we have an intelligent and competent instructor, just as we have in our history classes, so that the student is taught not only practical brick-masonry, for example, but also the underlying principles of that industry, the mathematics and the mechanical and architectural drawing. Or he is taught how to become master of the forces of nature so that, instead of cultivating corn in the old way, he can use a corn cultivator, that lays off the furrows, drops the corn into them, and covers it, and in this way he can do more work than three men by the old process of corn-planting; at the same time much of the toil is eliminated and labor is dignified. In a word, the constant aim is to show the student how to put brains into every process of labor; how to bring his knowledge of mathematics and the sciences into farming, carpentry, forging, foundry work ...

Having been fortified at Tuskegee by education of mind, skill of hand, Christian character, ideas of thrift, economy, and push, and a spirit of independence, the student is sent out to become a centre of influence and light in showing the masses of our people in the Black Belt of the South how to lift themselves up ...

It would be easy for me to fill many pages describing the influence of the Tuskegee graduates in every part of the South. We keep it constantly in the minds of our students and graduates that the industrial or material condition of the masses of our people must be improved, as well as the intellectual, before there can be any permanent change in their moral and religious life ...

Nothing else so soon brings about right relations between the two races in the South as the industrial progress of the negro. Friction between the races will pass away in proportion as the black man, by reason of his skill, intelligence, and character, can produce something that the white man wants or respects in the commercial world. This is another reason why at Tuskegee we push the industrial training. We find that as every year we put into a Southern community colored men who can start a brick-yard, a sawmill, a tin-shop, or a printing-office,—men who produce something that makes the white man partly dependent upon the negro, instead of all the dependence being on the other side,—a change takes place in the relations of the races ...

In connection with this, it is well to bear in mind that slavery taught the white man that labor with the hands was something fit for the negro only, and something for the white man to come into contact with just as little as possible. It is true that there was a large class of poor white people who labored with the hands, but they did it because they were

Under a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, a Tuskegee Institute history class studies at the turn of the century.

GETTY IMAGES

not able to secure negroes to work for them; and these poor whites were constantly trying to imitate the slave-holding class in escaping labor, and they too regarded it as anything but elevating. The negro in turn looked down upon the poor whites with a certain contempt because they had to work. The negro, it is to be borne in mind, worked under constant protest, because he felt that his labor was being unjustly required, and he spent almost as much effort in planning how to escape work as in learning how to work. Labor with him was a badge of degradation. The white man was held up before him as the highest type of civilization, but the negro noted that this highest type of civilization himself did not labor; hence he argued that the less work he did, the more nearly he would be like a white man ...

After fourteen years of experience and observation, what is the result? Gradually but surely, we find that all through the South the disposition to look upon labor as a disgrace is on the wane, and the parents who themselves sought to escape work are so anxious to give their children training in intelligent labor that every institution which gives training in the handicrafts is crowded, and many (among them Tuskegee) have to refuse admission to hundreds of applicants. The influence of the Tuskegee system is shown again by the fact that almost every little school at the remotest cross-roads is anxious to be known as an industrial school, or, as some of the colored people call it, an "industrious" school.

The social lines that were once sharply drawn between those who labored with the hand and those who did not are disappearing. Those who formerly sought to escape labor, now when they see that brains and skill rob labor of the toil and drudgery once associated with it, instead of trying to avoid it are willing to pay to be taught how to engage in it. The South is beginning to see labor raised up, dignified and beautified, and in this sees its salvation. A

Of the Training of Black Men

BACKGROUND

SEVERAL DECADES after the war, slavery's demise had not brought about an integrated society. But W. E. B. Du Bois, a towering intellect from western Massachusetts, was determined to press for progress. He advocated for the right of black Americans to fully develop their minds and talents so that the races might at last meet on equal terms.

Du Bois took issue with the views of Booker T. Washington, whose rise to prominence, Du Bois contended, was attributable to the fact that he told whites what they wanted to hear. As Du Bois would write in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*, "[Washington] insists on thrift and self-respect, but at the same time counsels a silent submission to civic inferiority such as is bound to sap the manhood of any race in the long run." He urged black men, "if they are really men," to oppose their putative spokesman and to "strive for the rights which the world accords to men ... 'That all men are created equal.'"

In 1902, he responded directly to Washington's celebration of industrial training, arguing that blacks—no less than whites—should avail themselves of a higher education.

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

IN ROUGH APPROXIMATION we may point out four varying decades of work in Southern education since the Civil War. From the close of the war until 1876 was the period of uncertain groping and temporary relief. There were army schools, mission schools, and schools of the Freedman's Bureau in chaotic disarrangement, seeking system and coöperation. Then followed ten years of constructive definite effort toward the building of complete school systems in the South ... Meantime, starting in this decade yet especially developing from 1885 to 1895, began the industrial revolution of the South ... In the midst, then, of the larger problem of Negro education sprang up the more practical question of work, the inevitable economic quandary that faces a people in the transition from slavery to freedom, and especially those who make that change amid hate and prejudice, lawlessness and ruthless competition.

The industrial school springing to notice in this decade, but coming to full recognition in the decade beginning with 1895, was the proffered answer to this combined educational and economic crisis, and an answer of singular wisdom and timeliness. From the very first in nearly all the schools some attention had been given to training in handiwork, but now was this training first raised to a dignity that brought it in direct touch with the South's magnificent industrial development, and given an emphasis which reminded black folk that before the Temple of Knowledge swing the Gates of Toil.

Yet ... we have a right to inquire, as this enthusiasm for material advancement mounts to its height, if after all the industrial school is the final and sufficient answer in the training of the Negro race; and to ask gently, but in all sincerity, the ever recurring query of the ages, Is not life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? ... We daily hear that an education that encourages aspiration, that sets the loftiest of ideals and seeks as an end culture and character rather than bread-winning, is the privilege of white men and the danger and delusion of black ...

Without doubt many are asking, Are there a sufficient number of Negroes ready for college training to warrant the undertaking? Are not too many students prematurely forced into this work? Does it not have the effect of dissatisfying the young Negro with his environment? And do these graduates succeed in real life? ...

To-day ... four hundred Negroes, many of whom have been reported as brilliant students, have received the bachelor's degree from Harvard, Yale, Oberlin, and seventy other leading colleges ... How far did their training fit them for life? ... In 1900, the Conference at Atlanta University undertook to study these graduates, and published the results ... Fifty-three per cent of these graduates were teachers,—presidents of

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institutions, heads of normal schools, principals of city school systems, and the like. Seventeen per cent were clergymen; another seventeen per cent were in the professions, chiefly as physicians. Over six per cent were merchants, farmers, and artisans, and four per cent were in the government civil service. Granting even that a considerable proportion of the third unheard from are unsuccessful, this is a record of usefulness ...

There were, in the years from 1875 to 1880, twenty-two Negro graduates from Northern colleges; from 1885 to 1890 there were forty-three, and from 1895 to 1900, nearly 100 graduates. Here, then, is the plain thirst for training; by refusing to give this Talented Tenth the key to knowledge can any sane man imagine that they will lightly lay aside their yearning and contentedly become hewers of wood and drawers of water? ...

The function of the Negro college then is clear: it must maintain the standards of popular education, it must seek the social regeneration of the Negro, and it must help in the solution of problems of race contact and coöperation. And finally, beyond all this, it must develop men ... Herein the longing of black men must have respect: the rich and bitter depth of their experience, the unknown treasures of their inner life, the strange rendings of nature they have seen, may give the world new points of view and make their loving, living, and doing precious to all human hearts. A

Strivings of the Negro People

BACKGROUND

W. E. B. DU BOIS, who would go on to help found the NAACP and serve as a forefather of the civil-rights movement, was first introduced to a national audience in 1897, when *The Atlantic* asked him, while he was working in the sociology department at the University of Pennsylvania, to contribute an article on the aspirations of black Americans. The essay he wrote would become a classic. In it, he asserted a desire for true equality and famously described the "double-consciousness" of the black American: "One ever feels this two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body." This was the first of many essays he would write for *The Atlantic*, and it would later appear as the opening chapter of his book *The Souls of Black Folk*.

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

BETWEEN ME AND the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.

And yet, being a problem is a strange experience,—peculiar even for one who has never been anything else, save perhaps in babyhood and in Europe. It is in the early days of rollicking boyhood that the revelation first bursts upon one, all in a day, as it were. I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thing, away up in the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghanic to the sea. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting-cards—ten cents a package—and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,—refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows. That sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads. Alas, with the years all this fine contempt began to fade; for the world I longed for, and all its dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine. But they should not keep these prizes, I said; some, all, I would wrest from them. Just how I would do it I could never decide: by reading law, by healing the sick, by telling the wonderful tales that swam in my head,—some way. With other black boys the strife was not so fiercely sunny: their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy, or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything white; or wasted itself in a bitter cry, Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house? The "shades of the prison-house" closed round about us all: walls strait and stubborn to the whitest, but relentlessly narrow, tall, and unscalable to sons of night who must plod darkly on in resignation, or beat unavailing palms against the stone, or steadily, half hopelessly watch the streak of blue above.

ADDISON N. SCURLOCK/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

W. E. B. Du Bois, photographed in 1911

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes—foolishly, perhaps, but fervently—that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development.

This is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, and to husband and use his best powers. These powers, of body and of mind, have in the past been so wasted and dispersed as to lose all effectiveness, and to seem like absence of all power, like weakness. The double-aimed struggle of the black artisan, on the one hand to escape white contempt for a nation of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and on the other hand to plough and nail and dig for a poverty-stricken horde, could only result in making him a poor craftsman, for he had but half a heart in either cause. By the poverty and ignorance of his people the Negro lawyer or doctor was pushed toward quackery and demagogism, and by the criticism of the other world toward an elaborate preparation that overfitted him for his lowly tasks. The would-be black savant was confronted by the paradox that the knowledge his people needed was a twice-told tale to his white neighbors, while the knowledge which would teach the white world was Greek to his own flesh and blood. The innate love of harmony and beauty that set the ruder souls of his people a-dancing, a-singing, and a-laughing raised but confusion and doubt in the soul of the black artist; for the beauty revealed to him was the soul-beauty of a race which his larger audience despised, and he could not articulate the message of another people.

This waste of double aims, this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals, has wrought sad havoc with the courage and faith and deeds of eight thousand thousand people, has sent them often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation, and has even at times seemed destined to make them ashamed of themselves. In the days of bondage they thought to see in one divine event the end of all doubt and disappointment; eighteenth-century Rousseauism never worshiped freedom with half the unquestioning faith that the American Negro did for two centuries. To him slavery was, indeed, the sum of all villainies, the cause of all sorrow, the root of all prejudice; emancipation was the key to a promised land of sweeter beauty than ever stretched before the eyes of wearied Israelites. In his songs and exhortations swelled one refrain, liberty ... At last it came ... like a dream. With one wild carnival of blood and passion came the message in his own plaintive cadences:—

"Shout, O children!
Shout, you're free!
The Lord has bought your liberty!"

Years have passed away, ten, twenty, thirty. Thirty years of national life, thirty years of renewal and development, and yet the swarthy ghost of Banquo sits in its old place at the national feast. In vain does the nation cry to its vastest problem,—

"Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble!"

The freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised land. Whatever of lesser good may have come in these years of change, the shadow of a deep disappointment rests upon the Negro people ...

The first decade was merely a prolongation of the vain search for freedom, the boon that seemed ever barely to elude their grasp,—like a tantalizing will-o'-the-wisp, maddening and misleading the headless host. The holocaust of war, the terrors of the Kuklux Klan, the lies of carpet-baggers, the disorganization of industry, and the contradictory advice of friends and foes left the bewildered serf with no new watchword beyond the old cry for freedom. As the decade closed, however, he began to grasp a new idea. The ideal of liberty demanded for its attainment powerful means, and these the Fifteenth Amendment gave him. The ballot, which before he had looked upon as a visible sign of freedom, he now regarded as the chief means of gaining and perfecting the liberty with which war had partially endowed him. And why not? Had not votes made war and emancipated millions? Had not votes enfranchised the freedmen? Was anything impossible to a power that had done all this? A million black men started with renewed zeal to vote themselves into the kingdom. The decade fled away,—a decade containing, to the freedman's mind, nothing but suppressed votes, stuffed ballot-boxes, and election outrages that nullified his vaunted right of suffrage. And yet that decade from 1875 to 1885 held another powerful movement, the rise of another ideal to guide the unguided ... It was the ideal of "book-learning;" the curiosity, born of compulsory ignorance, to know and test the power of the cabalistic letters of the white man, the longing to know. Mission and night schools began in the smoke of battle, ran the gauntlet of reconstruction and at last developed into permanent foundations. Here at last seemed to have been discovered the mountain path to Canaan; longer than the highway

of emancipation and law, steep and rugged, but straight, leading to heights high enough to overlook life.

Up the new path the advance guard toiled, slowly, heavily, doggedly; only those who have watched and guided the faltering feet, the misty minds, the dull understandings, of the dark pupils of these schools know how faithfully, how piteously, this people strove to learn. It was weary work. The cold statistician wrote down the inches of progress here and there, noted also where here and there a foot had slipped or some one had fallen. To the tired climbers, the horizon was ever dark, the mists were often cold, the Canaan was always dim and far away. If, however, the vistas disclosed as yet no goal, no resting-place, little but flattery and criticism, the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect. In those sombre forests of his striving his own soul rose before him, and he saw himself,—darkly as through a veil; and yet he saw in himself some faint revelation of his power, of his mission. He began to have a dim feeling that, to attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another. For the first time he sought to analyze the burden he bore upon his back, that dead-weight of social degradation partially masked behind a half-named Negro problem. He felt his poverty; without a cent, without a home, without land, tools, or savings, he had entered into competition with rich landed, skilled neighbors. To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships. He felt the weight of his ignorance,—not simply of letters, but of life, of business, of the humanities; the accumulated sloth and shirking and awkwardness of decades and centuries shackled his hands and feet. Nor was his burden all poverty and ignorance. The red stain of bastardy, which two centuries of systematic legal defilement of Negro women had stamped upon his race, meant not only the loss of ancient African chastity, but also the hereditary weight of a mass of filth from white whoremongers and adulterers, threatening almost the obliteration of the Negro home.

He does not wish to Africanize America. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development.

A people thus handicapped ought not to be asked to race with the world, but rather allowed to give all its time and thought to its own social problems. But alas! while sociologists gleefully count his bastards and his prostitutes, the very soul of the toiling, sweating black man is darkened by the shadow of a vast despair. Men call the shadow prejudice, and learnedly explain it as the natural defense of culture against barbarism, learning against ignorance, purity against crime, the "higher" against the "lower" races. To which the Negro cries Amen! and swears that to so much of this strange prejudice as is founded on just homage to civilization, culture, righteousness, and progress he humbly bows and meekly does obeisance. But before that nameless prejudice that leaps beyond all this he stands helpless, dismayed, and well-nigh speechless; before that personal disrespect and mockery, the ridicule and systematic humiliation, the distortion of fact and wanton license of fancy, the cynical ignoring of the better and boisterous welcoming of the worse, the all-pervading desire to inculcated disdain for everything black, from Toussaint to the devil,—before this there rises a sickening despair that would disarm and discourage any nation save that black host to whom "discouragement" is an unwritten word.

They still press on, they still nurse the dogged hope ... of a higher synthesis of civilization and humanity, a true progress ...

Thus the second decade of the American Negro's freedom was a period of conflict, of inspiration and doubt, of faith and vain questionings, of *Sturm und Drang*. The ideals of physical freedom, of political power, of school training, as separate all-sufficient panaceas for social ills, became in the third decade dim and overcast. They were the vain dreams of credulous race childhood; not wrong, but incomplete and over-simple. The training of the schools we need to-day more than ever,—the training of deft hands, quick eyes and ears, and the broader, deeper, higher culture of gifted minds. The power of the ballot we need in sheer self-defense, and as a guarantee of good faith. We may misuse it, but we can scarce do worse in this respect than our whilom masters. Freedom, too, the long-sought, we still seek,—the freedom of life and limb, the freedom to work and think. Work, culture, and liberty—all these we need, not singly, but together; for to-day these ideals among the Negro people are gradually coalescing, and finding a higher meaning in the unifying ideal of race,—the ideal of fostering the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to, but in conformity with, the greater ideals of the American republic, in order that some day, on American soil, two world races may give each to each those characteristics which both so sadly lack. Already we come not altogether empty-handed: there is to-day no true American music but the sweet wild melodies of the Negro slave; the American fairy tales are Indian and African; we are the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness. Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal, dyspeptic blundering with the light-hearted but determined Negro humility; or her coarse, cruel wit with loving, jovial good humor; or her Annie Rooney with Steal Away?

Merely a stern concrete test of the underlying principles of the great republic is the Negro problem, and the spiritual striving of the freedmen's sons is the travail of souls whose burden is almost beyond the measure of their strength, but who bear it in the name of an historic race, in the name of this the land of their fathers' fathers, and in the name of human opportunity. A

Why Do So Few Blacks Study the Civil War?

BY TA-NEHISI COATES

IN MY SEVENTH-GRADE YEAR, my school took a bus trip from our native Baltimore to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the sanctified epicenter of American tragedy. It was the mid-'80s, when educators in our inner cities, confronted by the onslaught of crack, Saturday Night Specials, and teen pregnancy, were calling on all hands for help—even the hands of the departed.

Preposterous notions abounded. Black people talked openly of covert plots evidenced by skyrocketing murder rates and the plague of HIV. Conscious people were quick to glean, from the cascade of children murdered over Air Jordans, something still darker—the work of warlocks who would extinguish all hope for our race. The stratagem of these shadow forces was said to be amnesia: they would have us see no past greatness in ourselves, and thus no future glory. And so it was thought that a true history, populated by a sable nobility and punctuated by an ensemble of Negro "firsts," might be the curative for black youth who had no aspirations beyond the corner.

The attempt was gallant. It enlisted every field, from the arts (Phillis Wheatley) to the sciences (Charles Drew). Each February—known since 1976 as Black History Month—trivia contests rewarded those who could recall the inventions of Garrett A. Morgan, the words of Sojourner Truth, or the wizard hands of Daniel Hale Williams. At my middle school, classes were grouped into teams, each of them named for a hero (or a "shero," in the jargon of the time) of our long-suffering, yet magnificent, race. I was on the (Thurgood) Marshall team. Even our field trips felt invested with meaning—the favored destination was Baltimore's National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, where our pantheon was rendered lifelike by the disciples of Marie Tussaud.

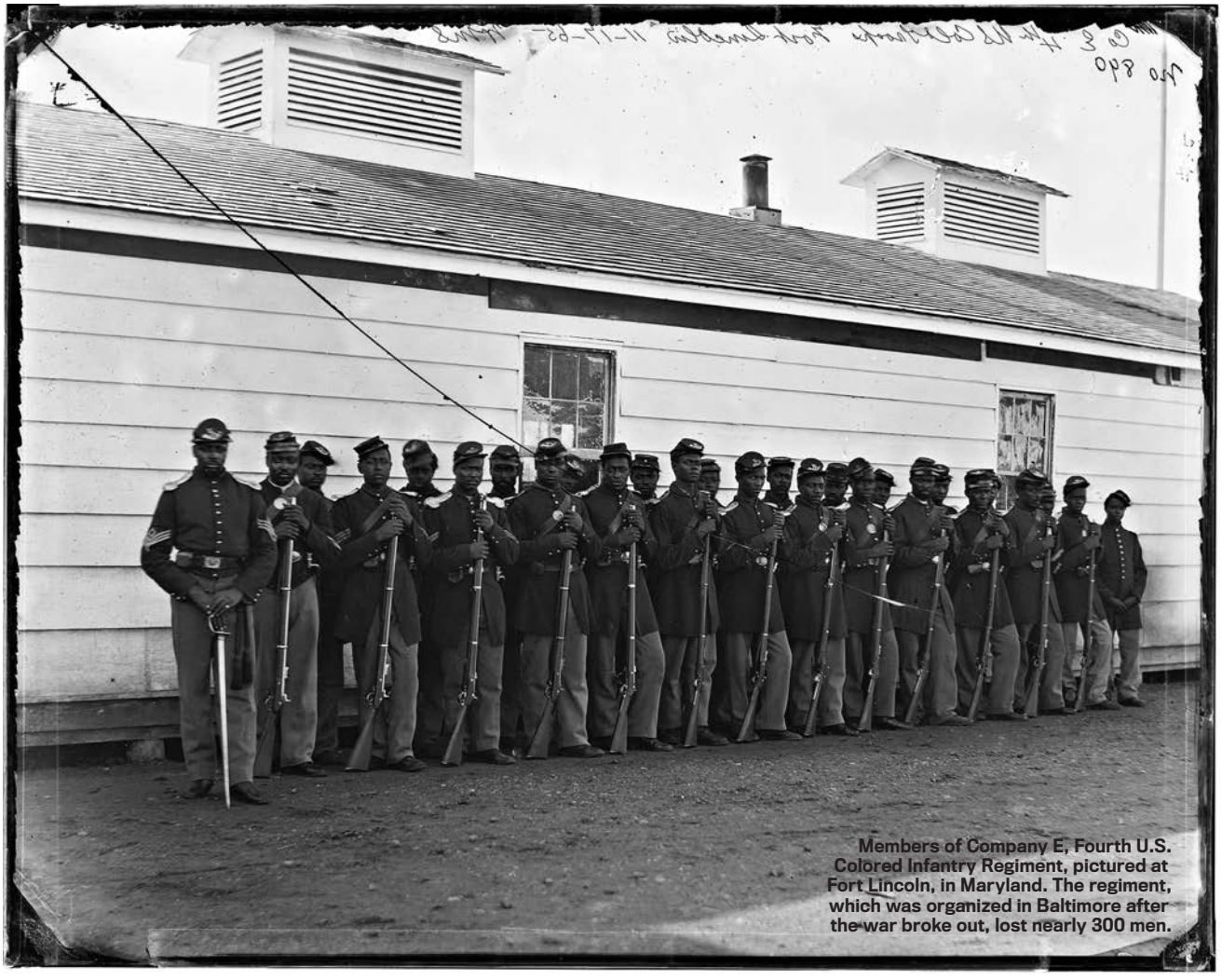
Given this near-totemic reverence for black history, my trip to Gettysburg—the site of the ultimate battle in a failed war to protect and extend slavery—should cut like a lighthouse beam across the sea of memory. But when I look back on those years when black history was seen as tangible, as an antidote for the ills of the street, and when I think on my first visit to America's original hallowed ground, all is fog.

I remember riding in a beautiful coach bus, as opposed to the hated yellow cheese. I remember stopping at Hardee's for lunch, and savoring the respite from my vegetarian father's lima beans and tofu. I remember cannons, and a display of guns. But as for any connections to the very history I was regularly baptized in, there is nothing. In fact, when I recall all the attempts to inculcate my classmates with some sense of legacy and history, the gaping hole of Gettysburg opens into the chasm of the Civil War.

We knew, of course, about Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. But our general sense of the war was that a horrible tragedy somehow had the magical effect of getting us free. Its legacy belonged not to us, but to those who reveled in the costume and technology of a time when we were property.

Our alienation was neither achieved in independence, nor stumbled upon by accident, but produced by American design. The belief that the Civil War wasn't for us was the result of the country's long search for a narrative that could reconcile white people with each other, one that avoided what professional historians now know to be true: that one group of Americans attempted to raise a country wholly premised on property in Negroes, and that another group of Americans, including many Negroes, stopped them. In the popular mind, that demonstrable truth has been evaded in favor of a more comforting story of tragedy, failed compromise, and individual gallantry. For that more ennobling narrative, as for so much of American history, the fact of black people is a problem.

In April 1865, the United States was faced with a discomfiting reality: it had seen 2 percent of its population destroyed because a section of its citizenry would countenance anything to



Members of Company E, Fourth U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment, pictured at Fort Lincoln, in Maryland. The regiment, which was organized in Baltimore after the war broke out, lost nearly 300 men.

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protect, and expand, the right to own other people. The mass bloodletting shocked the senses. At the war's start, Senator James Chesnut Jr. of South Carolina, believing that casualties would be minimal, claimed he would drink all the blood shed in the coming disturbance. Five years later, 620,000 Americans were dead. But the fact that such carnage had been wreaked for a cause that Ulysses S. Grant called "one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse" invited the damnation of history. Honor is salvageable from a military defeat; much less so from an ideological defeat, and especially one so duly earned in defense of slavery in a country premised on liberty.

The fallen Confederacy's chroniclers grasped this historiographic challenge and, immediately after the war, began erasing all evidence of the crime—that is to say, they began erasing black people—from the written record. In his collection of historical essays *This Mighty Scourge*, James McPherson notes that before the war, Jefferson Davis defended secession, saying it was justified by Lincoln's alleged radicalism. Davis claimed that Lincoln's plan to limit slavery would make "property in slaves so insecure as to be comparatively worthless ... thereby annihilating in effect property worth thousands of millions of dollars." Alexander Stephens renounced the notion that all men are created equal, claiming that the Confederacy was

> founded upon exactly the opposite idea ... upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition.

He called this ideology a "great physical, philosophical and moral truth."

But after the war, each man changed his interpretation. Davis referred to the "existence of African servitude" as "only an incident," not the cause of the war. Stephens asserted,

> Slavery, so called, was but the question on which these antagonistic principles ... of Federation, on the one side, and Centralism ... on the other ... were finally brought into ... collision.

Davis later wrote:

> Never was there happier dependence of labor and capital on each other. The tempter came, like the serpent of Eden, and decoyed them with the magic word of "freedom" ... He put arms in their hands, and trained their humble but emotional natures to deeds of violence and bloodshed, and sent them out to devastate their benefactors.

In such revisions of history lay the roots of the noble Lost Cause—the belief that the South didn't lose, so much as it was simply overwhelmed by superior numbers; that General Robert E. Lee was a contemporary King Arthur; that slavery, to be sure a benevolent institution, was never central to the South's true designs. Historical lies aside, the Lost Cause presented to the North an attractive compromise. Having preserved the Union and saved white workers from competing with slave labor, the North could magnanimously acquiesce to such Confederate meretriciousness and the concomitant irrelevance of the country's blacks. That interpretation served the North too, for it elided uncomfortable questions about the profits reaped by the North from Southern cotton, as well as the North's long strategy of appeasement and compromise, stretching from the Fugitive Slave Act back to the Constitution itself.

By the time of the 50th-anniversary commemoration of Gettysburg, this new and comfortable history was on full display. Speakers at the ceremony pointedly eschewed any talk of the war's cause in hopes of pursuing what the historian David Blight calls "a mourning without politics." Woodrow Wilson, when he addressed the crowd, did not mention slavery but asserted that the war's meaning could be found in "the splendid valor, the manly devotion of the men then arrayed against one another, now grasping hands and smiling into each other's eyes." Wilson, born into the Confederacy and the first postbellum president to hail from the South, was at that very moment purging blacks from federal jobs and remanding them to separate washrooms. Thus Wilson executed a familiar act of theater—urging the country's white citizens away from their history, while continuing to act in the spirit of its darkest chapters. Wilson's ideas were not simply propaganda, but notions derived from some of the country's most celebrated historians. James McPherson notes that titans of American history like Charles Beard, Avery Craven, and James G. Randall minimized the role of slavery in the war; some blamed the violence on irreconcilable economic differences between a romantic pastoral South and a capitalistic manufacturing North, or on the hot rhetoric of radical abolitionists.

In our present time, to express the view of the enslaved is to understand what it means to live in a country that will never apologize for slavery, but will not stop apologizing for the Civil War.

With a firm foothold in the public memory and in the academic history, the comfortable narrative found its most influential expression in the popular media. Films like *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone With the Wind* revealed an establishment more interested in the alleged sins perpetrated upon Confederates than in the all-too-real sins perpetrated upon the enslaved people in their midst. That predilection continues. In 2010's *The Conspirator*, the director Robert Redford's Mary Surratt is the preferred victim of political persecution—never mind those whose very lives were persecution. The new AMC show *Hell on Wheels* deploys the trope of the blameless Confederate wife ravished and killed by Union marauders, as though Fort Pillow never happened.

The comfortable narrative haunts even the best mainstream presentations of the Civil War. Ken Burns's eponymous and epic documentary on the war falsely claims that the slaveholder Robert E. Lee was personally against slavery. True, Lee once asserted in a letter that slavery was a "moral & political evil." But in that same letter, he argued that there was no sense protesting the peculiar institution and that its demise should be left to "a wise Merciful Providence." In the meantime, Lee was happy to continue, in Lincoln's words, wringing his "bread from the sweat of other men's faces."

Burns also takes as his narrator Shelby Foote, who once called Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest, a slave-trader and Klansman, "one of the most attractive men who ever walked through the pages of history," and who presents the Civil War as a kind of big, tragic misunderstanding. "It was because we failed to do the thing we really have a genius for, which is compromise," said Foote, neglecting to mention the Missouri Compromise, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the fact that any further such compromise would have meant the continued enslavement of black people.

For that particular community, for my community, the message has long been clear: the Civil War is a story for white people—acted out by white people, on white people's terms—in which blacks feature strictly as stock characters and props. We are invited to listen, but never to truly join the narrative, for to speak as the slave would, to say that we are as happy for the Civil War as most Americans are for the Revolutionary War, is to rupture the narrative. Having been tendered such a conditional invitation, we have elected—as most sane people would—to decline.

In my study of African American history, the Civil War was always something of a sideshow. Just off center stage,

it could be heard dimly behind the stories of Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, and Martin Luther King Jr., a shadow on the fringe. But three years ago, I picked up James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* and found not a shadow, but the Big Bang that brought the ideas of the modern West to fruition. Our lofty notions of democracy, egalitarianism, and individual freedom were articulated by the Founders, but they were consecrated by the thousands of slaves fleeing to Union lines, some of them later returning to the land of their birth as nurses and soldiers. The first generation of the South's postbellum black political leadership was largely supplied by this class.

Transfixed by the war's central role in making democracy real, I have now morphed into a Civil War buff, that peculiar specimen who pores over the books chronicling the battles, then walks the parks where the battles were fought by soldiers, then haunts the small towns from which the soldiers hailed, many never to return.

This journey—to Paris, Tennessee; to Petersburg, Virginia; to Fort Donelson; to the Wilderness—has been one of the most meaningful of my life, though at every stop I have felt myself ill-dressed in another man's clothes. What echoes from nearly all the sites chronicling the war is a deep sense of tragedy. At Petersburg, the film in the visitor center mourns the city's fall and the impending doom of Richmond. At the Wilderness, the park ranger instructs you on the details of the men's grisly deaths. The celebrated Civil War historian Bruce Catton best sums up this sense when he refers to the war as "a consuming tragedy so costly that generations would pass before people could begin to say whether what it had bought was worth the price."

All of those "people" are white.

For African Americans, war commenced not in 1861, but in 1661, when the Virginia Colony began passing America's first black codes, the charter documents of a slave society that rendered blacks a permanent servile class and whites a mass aristocracy. They were also a declaration of war.

Over the next two centuries, the vast majority of the country's blacks were robbed of their labor and subjected to constant and capricious violence. They were raped and whipped at the pleasure of their owners. Their families lived under the threat of existential violence—in just the four decades before the Civil War, more than 2 million African American slaves were bought and sold. Slavery did not mean merely coerced labor, sexual assault, and torture, but the constant threat of having a portion, or the whole, of your family consigned to oblivion. In all regards, slavery was war on the black family.

African Americans understood they were at war, and reacted accordingly: running away, rebelling violently, fleeing to the British, murdering slave-catchers, and—less spectacularly, though more significantly—refusing to work, breaking tools, bending a Christian God to their own interpretation, stealing back the fruits of their labor, and, in covert corners of their world, committing themselves to the illegal act of learning to read. Southern whites also understood they were in a state of war, and subsequently turned the antebellum South into a police state. In 1860, the majority of people living in South Carolina and Mississippi, and a significant minority of those living in the entire South, needed passes to travel the roads, and regularly endured the hounding of slave patrols.

It is thus predictable that when you delve into the thoughts of black people of that time, the Civil War appears in a different light. In her memoir of the war, the abolitionist Mary Livermore recalls her pre-war time with an Aunt Aggy, a house slave. Livermore saw Aggy's mixed-race daughter brutally attacked by the patriarch of the home. In a private moment, the woman warned Livermore that she could "hear the rumbling of the chariots" and that a day was coming when "white folks' blood is running on the ground like a river."

After the war had started, Livermore again met Aunt Aggy, who well recalled her prophecy and saw in the Civil War, not tragedy, but divine justice. "I always knowed it was coming," the woman told Livermore.

> "I always heard the rumbling of the wheels. I always expected to see white folks heaped up dead. And the Lord, He's kept His promise and avenged His people, just as I knowed He would."

For blacks, it was not merely the idea of the war that had meaning, but the tangible violence, the actions of black people themselves as the killers and the killed, that mattered. Corporal Thomas Long, of the 33rd United States Colored Troops, told his fellow black soldiers,

> "If we hadn't become soldiers, all might have gone back as it was before ... But now things can never go back, because we have shown our energy and our courage and our natural manhood."

Reflecting on the days leading to the Civil War, Frederick Douglass wrote:

> I confess to a feeling allied to satisfaction at the prospect of a conflict between the North and the South. Standing outside the pale of American humanity, denied citizenship, unable to call the land of my birth my country, and adjudged by the supreme court of the United States to have no rights which white men were bound to respect, and longing for the end of the bondage of my people, I was ready for any political upheaval which should bring about a change in the existing condition of things.

He went on to assert that the Civil War was an achievement that outstripped the American Revolution:

> It was a great thing to achieve American independence when we numbered three millions. But it was a greater thing to save this country from dismemberment and ruin when it numbered thirty millions.

The 20th century, with its struggles for equal rights, with the triumph of democracy as the ideal in Western thought, proved Douglass right. The Civil War marks the first great defense of democracy and the modern West. Its legacy lies in everything from women's suffrage to the revolutions now sweeping the Middle East. It was during the Civil War that the heady principles of the Enlightenment were first, and most spectacularly, called fully to account.

In our present time, to express the view of the enslaved—to say that the Civil War was a significant battle in the long war against bondage and for government by the people—is to compromise the comfortable narrative. It is to remind us that some of our own forefathers once explicitly rejected the republic to which they'd pledged themselves, and dreamed up another country, with slavery not merely as a bug, but as its very premise. It is to point out that at this late hour, the totems of the empire of slavery—chief among them, its flag—still enjoy an honored place in the homes, and public spaces, of self-professed patriots and vulgar lovers of "freedom." It is to understand what it means to live in a country that will never apologize for slavery, but will not stop apologizing for the Civil War.

In August, I returned to Gettysburg. My visits to battlefields are always unsettling. Repeatedly, I have dragged my family along, and upon arrival I generally wish that I hadn't. Nowhere, as a black person, do I feel myself more of a problem than at these places, premised, to varying degrees, on talking around me. But of all the Civil War battlefields I've visited, Gettysburg now seems the most honest and forward-looking. The film in the visitor center begins with slavery, putting it at the center of the conflict. And in recent years, the National Park Service has made an effort to recognize an understated historical element of the town—its community of free blacks.

The Confederate army, during its march into Pennsylvania, routinely kidnapped blacks and sold them south. By the time Lee's legions arrived in Gettysburg, virtually all of the town's free blacks had hidden or fled. On the morning of July 3, General George Pickett's division prepared for its legendary charge. Nearby, where the Union forces were gathered, lived Abraham Brien, a free black farmer who rented out a house on his property to Mag Palmer and her family. One evening before the war, two slave-catchers had fallen upon Palmer as she made her way home. (After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, slave-catchers patrolled the North, making little distinction between freeborn blacks and runaways.) They bound her hands, but with help from a passerby, she fought them off, biting off a thumb of one of the hunters.

Faulkner famously wrote of Pickett's Charge:

> For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863 ... and it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet ... That moment doesn't need even a fourteen-year-old boy to think *This time*.

These "Southern boys," like Catton's "people," are all white. But I, standing on Brien's property, standing where Mag Palmer lived, saw Pickett's soldiers charging through history, in wild pursuit of their strange birthright—the license to beat and shackle women under the cover of night. That is all of what was "in the balance," the nostalgic moment's corrupt and unspeakable core.

FOR THE PORTION of the country that still honors, or traces its ancestry to, the men who fired on Fort Sumter, and thus brought war, the truthful story of the Civil War tells of a defeat richly deserved, garnered in a pursuit now condemned. For the blameless North, it throws up the failed legacy of appeasement of slaveholders, the craven willingness to bargain on the backs of black people, and the unwillingness, in the Reconstruction years, to finish what the war started.

For realists, the true story of the Civil War illuminates the problem of ostensibly sober-minded compromise with powerful, and intractable, evil. For radicals, the wave of white terrorism that followed the war offers lessons on the price of revolutionary change. White Americans finding easy comfort in nonviolence and the radical love of the civil-rights movement must reckon with the unsettling fact that black people in this country achieved the rudiments of their freedom through the killing of whites.

And for black people, there is this—the burden of taking ownership of the Civil War as Our War. During my trips to battlefields, the near-total absence of African American visitors has been striking. Confronted with the realization that the Civil War is the genesis of modern America, in general, and of modern black America, in particular, we cannot just implore the Park Service and the custodians of history to do more outreach—we have to become custodians ourselves.

The Lost Cause was spread, not merely by academics and Hollywood executives, but by the descendants of Confederate soldiers. Now the country's battlefields are marked with the enduring evidence of their tireless efforts. But *we* have stories too, ones that do not hinge on erasing other people, or coloring over disrepute. For the Civil War to become Our War, it will not be enough to, yet again, organize opposition to the latest raising of the Confederate flag. The Civil War confers on us the most terrible burden of all—the burden of moving from protest to production, the burden of summoning our own departed hands, so that they, too, may leave a mark. A

Ta-Nehisi Coates is an Atlantic *senior editor.*

Grapes of Wrath

BY JEFFREY GOLDBERG

ON THE MORNING of September 17, 1862, the day that would prove the bloodiest of the Civil War, Major General Ambrose Burnside ordered his Ninth Corps to attack General Robert E. Lee's weakened right flank in the fields outside Sharpsburg, Maryland. A steep-banked creek, the Antietam, separated 12,000 Union troops from the gathered enemy, including several hundred Georgian troops—some of whom were lodged in trees, lashed to branches to help steady their aim. A three-arched stone bridge spanned the creek.

The larger set-piece battles at Antietam, which took place across acres of cornfields and woods, were diffuse, complicated, and often ambiguous in outcome. The clash at the creek was none of these. On one bank, Union soldiers. Above them, on the hill opposite, Confederate sharpshooters. Between them, a narrow bridge.

When the 11th Connecticut Regiment launched the first attack, attempting to ford the creek, its soldiers were cut down at once by the Georgians. Another Union attempt was made, a double-quick march toward the bridge. This was also a bloody failure. Finally, Brigadier General Edward Ferrero's brigade, made up of the 51st Pennsylvania and the 51st New York, rushed the bridge. The Southerners, low on ammunition, retreated. The Union troops took the bluff. Dead Confederates littered the hill and hung in the trees. The Union dead and wounded numbered in the high hundreds. (In all, the Battle of Antietam would leave 23,000 Americans dead, wounded, or missing.)

The open fields around Burnside's Bridge are today lovely and tranquil: stone fences, birds in the trees, sloping hills, a slow-moving creek. Stand on the far side of the bridge looking up at the facing bluff, and the question will force itself on you: How did the 11th Connecticut gird themselves to ford the creek? How did Ferrero's men impel themselves to march into the Georgian fire? Brigadier General Samuel Sturgis wrote in his after-action report, "They started on their mission of death full of enthusiasm." Enthusiasm! What could account for this?

Whiskey, for one thing. Ferrero promised his men unlimited whiskey, should they take the bridge. Never underestimate whiskey. And never underestimate comradeship, either. The army was organized geographically; a man served with his townspeople. Tales of cowardice would follow a man home. But there is something else, too, that moved these men.

The most famous 12 words ever published in the pages of *The Atlantic* belong to Julia Ward Howe: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." The rest of the eternal first stanza of "Battle Hymn of the Republic" promises vengeance against the enemies of freedom: "He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored." Vengeance is effective motivation. But a different source of motivation is also found in the lesser-known fifth stanza: the draw of transfiguring martyrdom. As Christ died "to make men holy," Howe wrote, "let us die to make men free."

These lines came to mind when I read a description of the men who were slaughtered in Antietam Creek in the first fusillade: "A crowd of earnest young Connecticut boys."

Apocalyptic abolitionists in the style of Julia Ward Howe were not represented in great numbers in the Union army. But the Massachusetts officer corps, and much of New England, was deeply abolitionist. Could the cause of freedom have been what pushed these men forward? This had been, of course, Howe's mission in writing her hymn: to propel the Union soldier to his Christ-like destiny.

Howe wrote the "Battle Hymn" in a single gray morning in the Willard Hotel, in Washington, D.C., and she sold it for $4 to *The Atlantic*, which published it on the first page of its February 1862 issue. For soldiers, another anthem, "John Brown's Body," the tune of which was appropriated for Howe's marching song, was always more popular; it promises revenge and redemption of a more profane sort, envisioning Jefferson Davis hanging from a sour-apple tree. But the "Battle Hymn" has become immortal, in part because so many different Americans, from Billy Graham to Martin Luther King Jr., have adopted it. The lyrics not only stir the blood, but encapsulate the messianic notion that America is perfectible, and that the American idea can in turn perfect the world.

After the war ended, many soldiers wrote that they had fought for justice. In the moment of battle, of course, more-mundane motivations may have had greater salience. But the "Battle Hymn" expresses the noblest aspirations of the Union. The bravery of the men who crossed Burnside's Bridge that day suggests that Julia Ward Howe understood something profound about the nature of their cause.

Jeffrey Goldberg is a national correspondent for The Atlantic. *"Battle Hymn of the Republic," as it originally appeared in the February 1862* Atlantic, *is shown on the next page.*

THE

ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

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BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC.

MINE eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps,
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat:
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by TICKNOR AND FIELDS, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

MARCHING ON

Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," as it appeared on the first page of *The Atlantic* in February 1862. "The poem was somewhat praised on its appearance," Howe recalled years later, "but the vicissitudes of the war so engrossed public attention that small heed was taken of literary matters."

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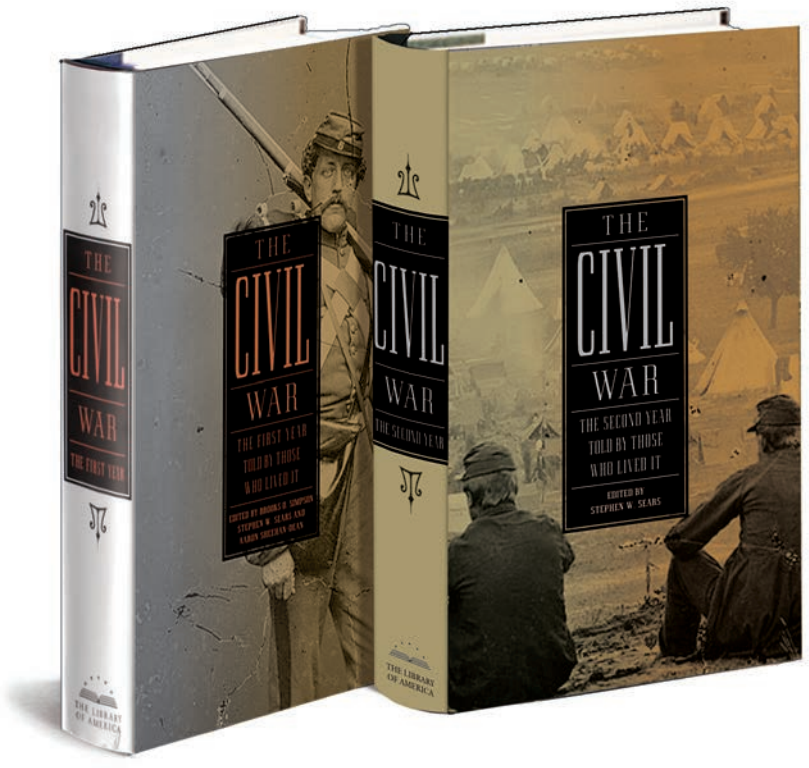

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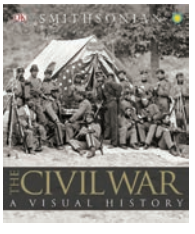

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