

Last Days of Southern Confederacy

E. M. Green, D. D., in Presbyterian Standard.

The formal dissolution of President Davis' cabinet and the final dispersion of what remained of the Confederate army, occurred at Washington, Ga. This aristocratic old town, which claims to have been the first in America to bear the name of the illustrious Father of his Country, is the terminus of one branch of the Georgia railroad which runs in the direction of Abbeville, S. C. After the surrender of General Lee and the abandonment of Richmond, the President and his cabinet, gathered hastily and all that pertained to the government, including the little that was left of the treasury, and escorted by a small military guard, came as far as Washington in the effort to cross the Savannah River and pass through the country to Abbeville, 42 miles distant, where they would reach another railroad, a system leading farther south. Mrs. Davis accompanied her husband and on their arrival they were met by Dr. Joseph Robertson, who took them to his home and entertained them during their brief stay in Washington.

This house in which they were cordially received and entertained, was a large brick building on the court house square, known as "The Bank," having been originally built for that purpose and so used for many years. Mrs. Harrison, the President's private secretary, brought the trunks and boxes containing the Confederate papers and other valuables of which he was in charge. But it was found to be impracticable to convey these things across the country. The Richmond bankers in the attempt to take their specie and other bank deposits over to Abbeville, lost everything at the hand of robbers. A large number of Confederate soldiers, following the President to Washington, now thronged the town. The silver and gold in the Confederate treasury was distributed among them, each receiving about six dollars. Mr. Davis, realising the desperate situation of affairs, conveyed his cabinet in the guest chamber of the house in which he was being entertained and announced to them that under the serious circumstances surrounding them, every man would be compelled to look to his own safety; that no effort would be made to have another meeting and that the cabinet was now dissolved.

Pursuing his journey under the escort of a few devoted adherents, Mr. Davis took with him a small army tent for

camping, but had not gone far when he was aroused one morning by the noise of pistol shots, and he knew at once that the attack was made by United States soldiers. He rushed from the tent to stop the firing and prevent the needless sacrifice of human life. He was in delicate health and had been suffering recently with neuralgia; and seeing her husband going out in the chilly morning air without his coat, Mrs. Davis hastily threw on his shoulders the first thing she could put her hand on. It proved to be her own waterproof cloak. It was this that gave rise to the story that when arrested he was trying to disguise himself in female attire. He suffered a long imprisonment, as is well known, in Fortress Monroe. It was understood that he was held for trial on the charge of high treason, and that the Chief Justice of the United States Su-



Frank Barned, 28, an electrical contractor of London, Ont., is charged with deliberately driving his automobile on a sidewalk at Niagara Falls, Ont., and killing Smyrle Muirhead. Muirhead and his wife were out walking with Barned's estranged wife. Barned escaped and police have failed to find him.

preme Court would preside at the trial. The Hon. Charles O'Connor, of New York, said to be the ablest lawyer in the United States, was retained for its defense. The people of the South were anxious for the trial to be held, knowing well that the result would be a complete exoneration of President Davis and a triumphant vindication of the Confederate cause. None knew this better than his enemies themselves, and Mr. Davis was never brought to trial.

I had been a chaplain in the Confederate army, and soon after the war I became pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Washington while the incidents I have related were fresh in the minds of the people. Dr. Robertson, above mentioned, was an elder in my church, and the members of his family enjoyed telling me how the soldiers of the northern army came in search of Mr. Davis soon after he had left, ransacked the house in search of him and sat on the boxes commanding the Confederate records, without suspecting the nature of their contents. These boxes were safely kept and later on were turned over to those who had a right to dispose of them.

Among the acquaintances formed while I lived in Washington was that of Alexander H. Stephens, vice president of the Confederate States, who often visited his friend, General Robert Toombs, one of many nearest neighbors. Mr. Stephens' boyhood had been spent in Washington and in early life he had united with the church of which I had recently become pastor. Visiting him on one occasion at "Liberty Hall," his bachelor home in the adjacent town of Crawfordville, we spent several quiet hours together and I took advantage of the opportunity to obtain from his first-hand information in regard to the famous Hampton Roads conference in which he had taken a conspicuous part. This he kindly gave me, and it was in substance this:

The Hampton Roads conference was held at the suggestion of General Lee, who informed the President that his line of battle was so thin and so long drawn out, that General Grant could break through at any point that he might choose to concentrate his forces; that he might be able to keep the enemy in check long enough for a conference of peace to be held and the most favorable terms secured, but urged him to arrange for a conference with the least possible delay. Acting upon his request the President asked Mr. Stephens if he would head a commission to hold a peace conference with the United States authorities. He promptly consented to do so, and Judge Campbell, of Alabama, and Senator R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, were appointed on the commission with Mr. Stephens. President Lincoln agreed to the conference and it was arranged that it should be held on shipboard, in Hampton Roads, and the date was fixed for the meeting.

Before starting on their voyage up the bay the Southern commissioners held a preliminary meeting and their chairman, Mr. Stephens, was asked to have an interview with President Davis and ask for definite instructions as to their duty and the scope and limit of their authority. He accordingly called on Mr. Davis, who, in reply to his request for instruction placed in his hand a large sealed envelope endorsed with these words: "Not to be opened until you reach Hampton Roads," and said to him, "You will find your instructions in this paper, and I have none others to give you."

As the commissioners were approaching the place of meeting they opened the sealed envelope to learn what they were to do, and to their amazement they read in the very first item of their instruction that they were to demand the recognition of the independence of the Confederate states as the basis of a peace settlement. They feared that their mission would be fruitless, but they were under orders and proceeded on their way. Soon the two steamers were drawn up side by side and President Lincoln and his secretary of state, Mr. Seward, stepped aboard the Southern steamer, evidently elated with the thought that they were to receive the surrender of the Southern Confederacy. The two bodies of commissioners were soon seated around the council table.

Mr. Lincoln was the first to speak, and reaching over, he took up a sheet of paper from the table and said to the Southern commissioners: "Gentlemen, to make a long matter short, I will write on this paper, 'The Union Shall Be Preserved,' and under it you may write the conditions to please yourselves."

Mr. Stephens replied that he might write that the seceding states should return to their places in the Union, with their rights unimpaired and no penalties attached to their act of secession. Mr. Lincoln replied, "If you do not write that, I will. I want the Union restored; the Union of Sovereign and Equal States. The institution of African slavery was disowned, as constituting the wealth of the South and the whole labor system upon which her prosperity depended. It was known that Mr. Lincoln had said that his emancipation Proclamation was a war measure, and was not issued by virtue of any constitutional authority vested in him. He had also said that if paying for the slaves would stop the war, he would recommend that \$240,000,000 be appropriated for that purpose. But what he said on this occasion, was in this peculiar phrase, simply this: 'The Nigger shant

Surprise!



Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Quinn entertained Mrs. Charles Burke at their home on Hawthorne Ave., Portland, Ore. The affair was informal and not prompt. Mrs. Burke lost control of her car while turning to look behind her and stepped on the gas instead of the brake. As a result the machine climbed upon the Quinn's front porch at high speed.

stand in the way of the Union."

But the whole discussion received a check when Mr. Stephens said, "Well, gentlemen, to make a long matter short, as Mr. Lincoln has observed, I have to say that we from the South are here present to insist that the essential basis of a settlement of the present difficulties between the two sections of this country is and must be the recognition of the independence of the Southern Confederacy."

An expression of disappointment and pain passed over Mr. Lincoln's face and he said, "Gentlemen, if that is your position, we are wasting time," and the deliberations of the conference were soon brought to a close.

When he had finished this detailed account of the conference, I said to him, "Mr. Stephens, I thank you, but I am almost sorry that you have told me all this, for here we are in poverty and distress as a people, undergoing all the horrors of reconstruction which we might have been saved; for I infer from your statements that if you had not been bound by your instructions you might have secured peace terms altogether favorable to the South, and settle the whole trouble on generous conditions."

His reply was very striking. It was in substance this, "I thought so once; I do not think so now. I am persuaded that the war ended in the only way it could end. General Lee and some others realized that the military resources of the South were exhausted. But the people as a whole were not defeated and would not believe that they could be defeated. No peace conference could have settled matters without leaving the seeds of another war. The soldiers in the field were ragged and hungry and tired but they were not whipped; their spirit was indomitable. If we had made peace on

Mr. Lincoln's terms, they would have believed we had betrayed them and probably when we returned they would have hung us as traitors on a limb of the first tree they could get us to. No, it was a fight to the finish, one side or the other had to go down in complete and acknowledged defeat. The war had to end just as it did. When General Lee surrendered all knew that the end had come.

Mr. Stephens was probably right. Our people fought for great interests and great principles. The Southern States had no war against the United States. They claimed the right under the Constitution of peaceable secession and acted strictly on the defensive. On this issue they were defeated by vastly superior forces and our people have accepted the result bravely and in good faith.

Danville, Ky.

A Mystery Solved.

Dearborn Weekly.

The tales told by those who go down to the sea in ships are many and varied but there has never been a more fascinating story than that of the mysterious disappearance of the crew of the brig Marie Celeste. The Marie Celeste sailed from New York to Genoa in the year 1872, and after having been spoken by a passing vessel the previous day, she was found drifting in the Mediterranean abandoned by every living creature. The captain had his wife and child on board, and in the dining saloon the table was fully set for a morning meal. There was no confusion in the appearance of anything on the ship; it just looked as if the captain and crew had vanished into the ether.

Many theories have been advanced to account for the strange case of the Marie Celeste, and a few years ago several eminent authors had a shot at elucidating the mystery in the pages of a popular magazine. But if the story which has just come to light can be accepted, they were all wide of the mark. After 42 years there has just come a disclosure from a Captain H. Luce, who is well known all over the Mediterranean, who states that he has the true story of the Marie Celeste from a man from whom he met in Australia, who was formerly the bosun of the ill-fated vessel.

The tale told by the bosun, in brief, is that on the day before the Marie Celeste expected to reach port, there was sighted a devilish vessel. On this vessel a large sum of money in gold and silver was found, and immediately a scheme was formed, participated in by the captain and the whole of the crew, that the money should be divided in certain proportions, and the Marie Celeste abandoned. The crew arrived at the port of Cadiz in boats borrowed from the deck, the names on which they had changed, and after reporting the loss of their fictitious vessel they scattered to various parts of the world.

The old saying that the truth will out sooner or later seems exemplified in this case. Captain Luce apparently has no reason to doubt the veracity of the ex-bosun. The disclosure completes the last chapter of a story that

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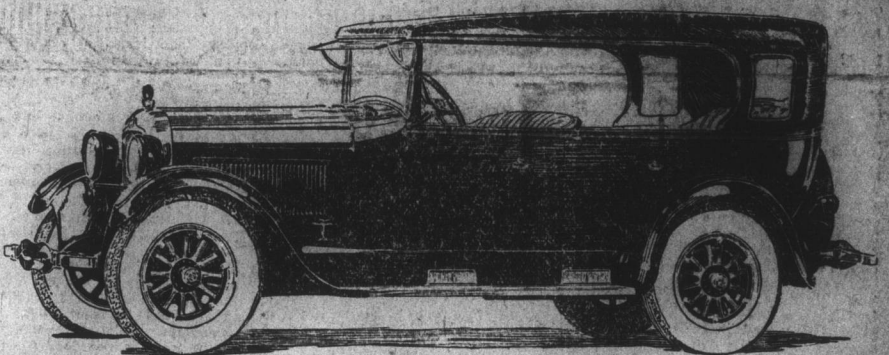
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has been taken well-nigh a half-century in the telling.

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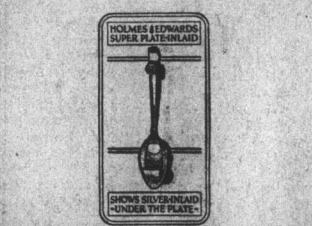
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