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Seacoast Defences of South Carolina and Georgia.

TO REV. J. WILLIAM JONES, D. D.,

Secretary Southern Historical Society :

Dear Sir—General Long's sketch in the February number of the "*Southern Historical Papers*," under the pregnant title "SEACOAST DEFENCES OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA," seems to call for some notice at my hands as Chief of Staff, for nearly two years, of the forces that successfully held those defences against all assailants by sea or land, during that period. The whole drift or reach of that sketch is so clearly indicated in the concluding paragraphs that I shall here reproduce them.

"General Lee received an order about the middle of March (1862), assigning him to duty in Richmond, in obedience to which he soon after repaired to that place. The works that he had so skillfully planned were now near completion. In three months he had established a line of defence from Winyan bay on the northeast coast of South Carolina, to the mouth of Saint Mary's river in Georgia, a distance of more than two hundred miles. This line not only served for a present defence, but offered an *impenetrable barrier to the combined Federal forces operating on the coast, until they were carried by General Sherman* in his unopposed march through Georgia and South Carolina, near the close of the war.

"That the importance of these works may be properly understood, it will be necessary to know what they accomplished. In the first place, they protected the most important agricultural section of the Confederacy from the incursions of the enemy, and covered the most important line of communication between the Mississippi and the Potomac.* Besides these material advantages, it produced great moral effect in giving the inhabitants of the Southern States a feeling of security and confidence.

*General Long omits from consideration the particularly great value of Charleston to the Confederate States as a port for the entry of military supplies from abroad, and of exportation of cotton.

**Memoir of a Narrative Received of Colonel John B. Baldwin, of Staunton,
Touching the Origin of the War.**

By Rev. R. L. DABNEY, D. D.

[The following paper from the able pen of Rev. Dr. R. L. Dabney will be read with deep interest, and will be found to be a valuable contribution to the history of the origin of the war.

It may be worth while in this connection to recall the fact that when soon after the capture of Fort Sumter and Mr. Lincoln's proclamation, a prominent Northern politician wrote Colonel Baldwin to ask: "What will the Union men of Virginia do now?" he immediately replied: "*There are now no Union men in Virginia.* But those who *were* Union men will stand to their arms, and make a fight which shall go down in history as an illustration of what a brave people can do in defence of their liberties, after having exhausted every means of pacification.'"]

In March, 1865, being with the army in Petersburg, Virginia, I had the pleasure of meeting Colonel Baldwin at a small entertainment at a friend's house, where he conversed with me some two hours on public affairs. During this time, he detailed to me the history of his private mission, from the Virginia Secession Convention, to Mr. Lincoln in April, 1861. The facts he gave me have struck me, especially since the conquest of the South, as of great importance in a history of the origin of the war. It was my earnest hope that Colonel Baldwin would reduce them into a narrative for publication, and I afterwards took measures to induce him to do so, but I fear without effect. Should it appear that he has left such a narrative, while it will confirm the substantial fidelity of my narrative at second hand, it will also supersede mine, and of this result I should be extremely glad. Surviving friends and political associates of Colonel Baldwin must have heard him narrate the same interesting facts. I would earnestly invoke their recollection of his statements to them, so as to correct me, if in any point I misconceived the author, and to confirm me where I am correct, so that the history may regain, as far as possible, that full certainty of which it is in danger of losing a part by the lamented death of Colonel Baldwin. What I here attempt to do, is to give faithfully, in my own language, what I understood Colonel Baldwin to tell me, according to my best comprehension of it. His narration was eminently perspicuous and impressive.

It should also be premised, that the Virginia Convention, as a body, was not in favor of secession. It was prevalently under the

influence of statesmen of the school known as the "Clay-Whig." One of the few original secessionists told me that at first there were but twenty-five members of that opinion, and that they gained no accessions, until they were given them by the usurpations of the Lincoln party. The Convention assembled with a fixed determination to preserve the Union, if forbearance and prudence could do it consistently with the rights of the States. Such, as is well known, were, in the main, Colonel Baldwin's views and purposes.

But Mr. Lincoln's inaugural, with its hints of coercion and usurpation, the utter failure of the "Peace-Congress," and the rejection of Mr. Crittenden's overtures, the refusal to hear the commissioners from Mr. Davis' Government at Montgomery, and the secret arming of the Federal Government for attack, had now produced feverish apprehensions in and out of the Convention. Colonel Baldwin considered Mr. Wm. Ballard Preston, of Montgomery county, as deservedly one of the most influential members of that body. This statesman now began to feel those sentiments, which, soon after, prompted him to move and secure the passage of the resolution to appoint a formal commission of three ambassadors from the Convention to Lincoln's Government, who should communicate the views of Virginia, and demand those of Mr. Lincoln. [That commission consisted of Wm. B. Preston, Alex. H. H. Stuart and Geo. W. Randolph. We will refer to its history in the sequel.] Meantime Mr. Preston, with other original Union men, were feeling thus: "If our voices and votes are to be exerted farther to hold Virginia in the Union, *we must know* what the nature of that Union is to be. We have valued Union, but we are also Virginians, and we love the Union only as it is based upon the Constitution. If the power of the United States is to be perverted to invade the rights of States and of the people, we would support the Federal Government no farther. And now that the attitude of that Government was so ominous of usurpation, we must know whither it is going, or we can go with it no farther." Mr. Preston especially declared that if he were to become an agent for holding Virginia in the Union to the destruction of her honor, and of the liberty of her people and her sister States, he would rather die than exert that agency.

Meantime Mr. Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, sent Allen B. Magruder, Esq., as a confidential messenger to Richmond, to hold an interview with Mr Janney (President of the Convention), Mr. Stuart, and other influential members, and to urge that one of them should come to Washington, as promptly as possible, to con-

fer with Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Magruder stated that he was authorized by Mr. Seward to say that Fort Sumter would be evacuated on the Friday of the ensuing week, and that the Pawnee would sail on the following Monday for Charleston, to effect the evacuation. Mr. Seward said that secrecy was all important, and while it was extremely desirable that one of them should see Mr. Lincoln, it was equally important that the public should know nothing of the interview. These gentlemen held a conference, and determined that as each of them was well known in Washington by person, the required secrecy could not be preserved if either of them went. They therefore asked Colonel Baldwin to go, furnished with the necessary credentials to Mr. Lincoln. He at first demurred, saying that all his public services had been to Virginia, and that he knew nothing of Washington and the Federal politics, but they replied that this was precisely what qualified him, because his presence there would not excite remark or suspicion. Colonel Baldwin accordingly agreed to the mission, and went with Mr. Magruder the following night, reaching Washington the next morning by the "Acquia Creek route" a little after dawn, and driving direct to the house of Mr. Magruder's brother. [These gentlemen were brothers of General J. B. Magruder of Virginia]. These prefatory statements prepare the way for Colonel Baldwin's special narrative.

He stated that after breakfasting and attending to his toilet at the house of Captain Magruder, he went with Mr. A. B. Magruder, in a carriage, with the glasses carefully raised, to Seward, who took charge of Mr. Baldwin, and went direct with him to the White House, reaching it, he thought, not much after nine o'clock A. M. At the door, the man who was acting as usher, or porter, was directed by Colonel Baldwin's companion, to inform the President that a gentleman wished to see him on important business. The man replied, as Colonel Baldwin thought, with an air of negligence, that he would report the application of course, but that it would be useless, because the President was already engaged with very important personages. Some card, or such missive, was given him, and he took it in. He soon returned with a surprised look, and said that the gentleman was to be admitted instantly. Colonel Baldwin accordingly followed him and Mr. Seward into what he presumed was the President's ordinary business room, where he found him in evidently anxious consultation with three or four elderly men, who appeared to wear importance in their aspect. Mr. Seward whispered something to the President, who at once arose

with eagerness, and without making any movement to introduce Colonel Baldwin, said bluntly, in substance: "Gentlemen, excuse me, for I must talk with this man at once. Come this way, sir!" (to Colonel Baldwin). He then took him up stairs to quite a different part of the house, and into what was evidently a private sleeping apartment. There was a handsome bed, with bureau and mirror, washstand, &c., and a chair or two. Lincoln closed the door and locked it. He then said: "Well, I suppose this is Colonel Baldwin, of Virginia? I have heard of you a good deal, and am glad to see you. How d' ye, do sir?" Colonel Baldwin presented his note of credential or introduction, which Lincoln read, sitting upon the edge of the bed, and spitting from time to time on the carpet. He then, looking inquiringly at Colonel Baldwin, intimated that he understood he was authorized to state for his friends in the Virginia Convention the real state of opinion and purpose there. Upon Colonel Baldwin's portraying the sentiments which prevailed among the majority there, Lincoln said querulously: "Yes! your Virginia people are good Unionists, but it is always with an *if*! I don't like that sort of Unionism." Colonel Baldwin firmly and respectfully explained, that in one sense no freeman could be more than a conditional Union man, for the value of the Union was in that equitable and beneficent Constitution on which it was founded, and if this were lost, "Union" might become but another name for mischievous oppression. He also gave Mr. Lincoln assurances, that the description which he was making of the state of opinion in Virginia, was in perfect candor and fidelity, and that he might rest assured the great body of Virginia, in and out of the Convention, would concur in these views, viz: That although strongly opposed to a presidential election upon a sectional, free-soil platform, which they deplored as most dangerous and unwise, Virginia did not approve of making that, evil as it was, a *casus belli*, or a ground for disrupting the Union. That much as Virginia disapproved it, if Mr. Lincoln would only adhere faithfully to the Constitution and the laws, she would support him just as faithfully as though he were the man of her choice, and would wield her whole moral force to keep the border States in the Union, and to bring back the seven seceded States. But that while much difference of opinion existed on the question, whether the right of secession was a constitutional one, all Virginians were unanimous in believing that no right existed in the Federal Government to coerce a State by force of arms, because it was expressly withheld by the Con-

stitution; that the State of Virginia was unanimously resolved not to acquiesce in the usurpation of that power, as had been declared by unanimous joint resolution of her present Legislature, and by the sovereign Convention now sitting, according to the traditionary principles of the State; that if Virginia remained in the Union, the other border States would follow her example, while, if she were driven out, they would probably go with her, and the whole South would be united in irreconcilable hostility to his Government; and that the friends of peace desired to have a guarantee that his policy towards the seven seceded States would be pacific, and would regard their rights as States; without which guarantee the Convention could not keep the people in the Union, even if they would.

Lincoln now showed very plainly that this view was distasteful to him. He intimated that the people of the South were not in earnest in all this. He said that in Washington he was assured that all the resolutions and speeches and declarations of this tenor from the South were but a "game of brag," intended to intimidate the administration party, the ordinary and hollow expedient of politicians; that, in short, when the Government showed its hand, there would "be nothing in it but talk." Colonel Baldwin assured him solemnly that such advisers fatally misunderstood the South, and especially Virginia, and that upon the relinquishment or adoption of the policy of violent coercion, peace or a dreadful war would inevitably turn. Lincoln's native good sense, with Colonel Baldwin's evident sincerity, seemed now to open his eyes to this truth. He slid off the edge of the bed, and began to stalk in his awkward manner across the chamber, in great excitement and perplexity. He clutched his shaggy hair, as though he would jerk out handfuls by the roots; he frowned and contorted his features, exclaiming: "I ought to have known this sooner! You are too late, sir, *too late!* Why did you not come here four days ago, and tell me all this?" turning almost fiercely upon Colonel Baldwin. He replied: "Why, Mr. President, you did not ask our advice. Besides, as soon as we received permission to tender it, I came by the first train, as fast as steam would bring me. "Yes, but you are too late, I tell you, *too late!*" Colonel Baldwin understood this as a clear intimation that the policy of coercion was determined on, and that within the last four days. He said that he therefore felt impelled, by a solemn sense of duty to his country, to make a final effort for impressing Lincoln with the truth.

"Never," said he to me, "did I make a speech on behalf of a client, in jeopardy of his life, with such earnest solemnity and endeavor." "And," he added, "there was no simulated emotions; for when he perceived from Lincoln's hints, and from the workings of his crafty and saturnine countenance, the truculence of his purpose, his own soul was filled with such a sense of the coming miseries of the country, and of the irreparable ruin of the Constitution, that he felt he would willingly lay down his life to avert them." He endeavored to make the President feel that Providence had placed the destiny of the country in his hands, so that he might be forever blessed and venerated as the second Washington—the savior of his country—or execrated as its destroyer. What policy, then, did the Union men of Virginia advise? We believe, answered Colonel Baldwin, that one single step will be sufficient to paralyze the secession movement, and to make the true friends of the Union masters of the situation. This was a simple proclamation, firmly pledging the new administration to respect the Constitution and laws, and the rights of the States; to repudiate the power of coercing seceded States by force of arms; to rely upon conciliation and enlightened self-interest in the latter to bring them back into the Union, and meantime to leave all questions at issue to be adjudicated by the constitutional tribunals. The obvious ground of this policy was in the fact that it was not the question of free-soil which threatened to rend the country in twain, but a well grounded alarm at the attempted overthrow of the Constitution and liberty, by the usurpation of a power to crush States. The question of free-soil had no such importance in the eyes of the people of the border States, nor even of the seceded States, as to become at once a *casus belli*. But, in the view of all parties in the border States, the claim of coercion had infinite importance. If, as Mr. Lincoln had argued, secession was unconstitutional, coercion was more clearly so. When attempted, it must necessarily take the form of a war of some States against other States. It was thus the death-knell of constitutional Union, and so a thorough revolution of the Federal Government. It was the overthrow of the reserved rights of the States, and these were the only bulwark of the liberty of the people. This, then, was the real cause of alarm at the South, and not the claim of free-soil, unjust as was the latter; hence, all that was necessary to reduce the free-soil controversy to harmless and manageable dimensions, was to reassure the South against the dreaded usurpation of which free-soil threatened to be

made the pretext. This, Colonel Baldwin showed, could easily be done by a policy of conciliation, without giving sanction to what Mr. Lincoln's administration chose to regard as the heresy of secession! The Government would still hold the Union and the Constitution as perpetual, and the separate attitude of the seceded States as temporary, while it relied upon moderation, justice, self-interest of the Southern people, and the potent mediation of the border States to terminate it. "Only give this assurance to the country, in a proclamation of five lines," said Colonel Baldwin, and we pledge ourselves that Virginia (and with her the border States) will stand by you as though you were our own Washington. So sure am I, he added, "of this, and of the inevitable ruin which will be precipitated by the opposite policy, that I would this day freely consent, if you would let me write those decisive lines, you might cut off my head, were my life my own, the hour after you signed them."

Lincoln seemed impressed by his solemnity, and asked a few questions: "But what am I to do meantime with those men at Montgomery? Am I to let them go on?" "Yes, sir," replied Colonel Baldwin, decisively, "until they can be peaceably brought back." "And open Charleston, &c., as ports of entry, with their ten per cent. tariff. *What, then, would become of my tariff?*" This last question he announced with such emphasis, as showed that in his view it decided the whole matter. He then indicated that the interview was at an end, and dismissed Colonel Baldwin, without promising anything more definite.

In order to confirm the accuracy of my own memory, I have submitted the above narrative to the Honorable A. H. H. Stuart, Colonel Baldwin's neighbor and political associate, and the only surviving member of the commission soon after sent from the Virginia Convention to Washington. In a letter to me, he says: "When Colonel Baldwin returned to Richmond, he reported to the four gentlemen above named, and to Mr. Samuel Price, of Greenbrier, *the substance of his interview with Lincoln substantially as he stated it to you.*"

I asked Colonel Baldwin what was the explanation of this remarkable scene, and especially of Lincoln's perplexity. He replied that the explanation had always appeared to him to be this: When the seven Gulf States had actually seceded, the Lincoln faction were greatly surprised and in great uncertainty what to do; for they had been blind enough to suppose that all Southern opposition to a sectional president had been empty bluster. They were

fully aware that neither Constitution nor laws gave them any right to coerce a State to remain in the Union. The whole people, even in the imperious North, knew and recognized this truth. The *New York Tribune*, even, admitted it, violent as it was, and deprecated a Union "pinned together with bayonets." Even General Winfield Scott, the military "Man Friday," of Federal power, advised that the Government should say: "Erring Sisters, go in peace." So strong was the conviction, even in the Northern mind, that such journals as *Harper's Weekly* and *Monthly*, shrewdly mercenary in their whole aim, were notoriously courting the secession feeling. New York, the financial capital of America, was well known to be opposed to the faction and to coercion. The previous Congress had expired without daring to pass any coercive measures. The administration was not at all certain that the public opinion of the American people could be made to tolerate anything so illegal and mischievous as a war of coercion. [Subsequent events and declarations betrayed also how well the Lincoln faction knew at the time that it was utterly unlawful. For instance: when Lincoln launched into that war, he did not dare to say that he was warring against States, and for the purpose of coercing them into a Federal Union of force. In his proclamation calling for the first seventy-five thousand soldiers, he had deceitfully stated that they were to be used to support the laws, to repossess Federal property and places, and to suppress irregular combinations of individuals pretending to or usurping the powers of State Governments. The same was the tone of all the war speakers and war journals at first. They admitted that a State could not be coerced into the Union; but they held that no State really and legitimately desired to go out, or had gone out—"the great Union-loving majority in the South had been overruled by a factious secession minority, and the Union troops were only to liberate them from that violence, and enable them to declare their unabated love for the Union." No well informed man was, at first, absurd enough to speak of a State as "committing treason" against the confederation, the creature of the States; the measure was always spoken of as "Secession," the actors were "Secessionists," and even their territory was "Secesia." It remained for an ecclesiastical body, pretended representative of the Church of the Prince of Peace, in their ignorant and venomous spirit of persecution, to apply the term "treason" first to the movement in favor of liberty.] The action of the seven States, then, perplexed the Lincoln faction excessively. On the

other hand, the greed and spite of the hungry crew, who were now grasping the power and spoils so long passionately craved, could not endure the thought that the prize should thus collapse in their hands. Hence, when the administration assembled at Washington, it probably had no very definite policy. Seward, who assumed to do the thinking for them, was temporizing. Colonel Baldwin supposed it was the visit, and the terrorizing of the "radical governors," which had just decided Lincoln to adopt the violent policy. They had especially asserted that the secession of the seven States, and the convening and solemn admonitions of State conventions in the others, formed but a system of bluster, or, in the vulgar phrase of Lincoln, but a "game of brag;" that the Southern States were neither willing nor able to fight for their own cause, being paralyzed by their fear of servile insurrection. Thus they had urged upon Lincoln, that the best way to secure his party triumph was to precipitate a collision. Lincoln had probably committed himself to this policy, without Seward's privity, within the last four days; and the very men whom Colonel Baldwin found in conclave with him were probably intent upon this conspiracy at the time. But when Colonel Baldwin solemnly assured Lincoln that this violent policy would infallibly precipitate the border States into an obstinate war, the natural shrewdness of the latter was sufficient to open his eyes, at least partially, and he saw that his factious counsellors, blinded by hatred and contempt of the South, had reasoned falsely; yet, having just committed himself to them, he had not manliness enough to recede. And above all, the policy urged by Colonel Baldwin would have disappointed the hopes of legislative plunder, by means of inflated tariffs, which were the real aims for which free-soil was the mask.

Thus far Colonel Baldwin's narrative proceeded. The conversation then turned upon the astonishing supineness (or blindness) of the conservatives, so-called, of the North, to the high-handed usurpations of their own rights, perpetrated by Lincoln and Seward, under pretext of subduing the seceded States, such as the suspension of *habeas corpus*, the State prisons, the arrests without indictment, and the martial law imposed, at the beck of the Federal power, in States called by itself "loyal." I asked: "Can it be possible that the Northern people are so ignorant as to have lost the traditionary rudiments of a free government?" His reply was, that he apprehended the Northern mind really cared nothing for

liberty; what they desired was only *lucrative* arrangements with other States.

The correctness of Colonel Baldwin's surmises concerning the motives of Lincoln's policy receives these two confirmations. After the return of the former to Richmond, the Convention sent the commission, which has been described, composed of Messrs. Wm. B. Preston, A. H. H. Stuart, and Geo. W. Randolph. They were to ascertain definitely what the President's policy was to be. They endeavored to reach Washington in the early part of the week in which Fort Sumter was bombarded, but were delayed by storms and high water, so that they only reached there via Baltimore, Friday, April 12th. They appeared promptly at the White House, and were put off until Saturday for their formal interview, although Lincoln saw them for a short time. On Saturday Lincoln read to them a written answer to the resolutions of Convention laid before him, which was obviously scarcely dry from the pen of a clerk. "This paper," says Mr. Stuart, "was ambiguous and evasive, but in the main professed peaceful intentions." Mr. Stuart, in answer to this paper, spoke freely and at large, "urging forbearance and the evacuation of the forts, &c." Lincoln made the objection that all the goods would be imported through the ports of Charleston, &c., and the sources of revenue dried up. "I remember," says Mr. Stuart, "that he used this homely expression: 'If I do that, what will become of my revenue? I might as well shut up house-keeping at once!' But his declarations were distinctly pacific, and he expressly disclaimed all purpose of war." Mr. Seward and Mr. Bates, Attorney General, also gave Mr. Stuart the same assurances of peace. The next day the commissioners returned to Richmond, and the very train on which they traveled carried Lincoln's proclamation, calling for the seventy-five thousand men to wage a war of coercion. "This proclamation," says Mr. Stuart, "was carefully withheld from us, although it was in print; and we knew nothing of it until Monday morning, when it appeared in the Richmond papers. When I saw it at breakfast, I thought it must be a mischievous hoax; for I could not believe Lincoln guilty of such duplicity. Firmly believing it was a forgery, I wrote a telegram, at the breakfast table of the Exchange Hotel, and sent it to Seward, asking him if it was genuine. Before Seward's reply was received, the Fredericksburg train came in, bringing the Washington papers, containing the proclamation."

The other confirmation of Colonel Baldwin's hypothesis was pre-

sented a few weeks after the end of the war, in a curious interview with a personal friend and apologist of Seward. The first volume of my life of Jackson had been published in London, in which I characterized the shameless lie told by Seward to the commissioners from Montgomery, through Judge Campbell, touching the evacuation of Sumter. This friend and apologist of Seward said that I was unjust to him, because when he promised the evacuation, he designed and thought himself able to fulfil it; but between the making and breaking of the pledge, a total change of policy had been forced upon the administration, against Mr. Seward's advice, "by Thad. Stevens and the radical governors." Seward, abolitionist, and knave as he was, still retained enough of the statesman-like traditions of the better days of the republic, to know that coercion was unlawful, and that a war between the States was, of course, the annihilation of the Union. It suited his partisan and selfish designs to talk of an "irrepressible conflict," and to pretend contempt for "effeminate slavocrats;" but he had sense enough to know that the South would make a desperate defence of her rights, and would be a most formidable adversary, if pushed to the wall. Hence, Mr. Seward, with General Scott, had advised a temporizing policy towards the Montgomery government, without violence, and Mr. Lincoln had acceded to their policy. Hence, the promises to Judge Campbell. Meantime, the radical governors came down, "having great wrath," to terrorize the administration. They spoke in this strain: "Seward cries perpetually that we must not do this, and that, for fear war should result. Seward is shortsighted. War is precisely the thing we should desire. Our party interests have everything to lose by a peaceable settlement of this trouble, and everything to gain by collision. For a generation we have been 'the outs;' now at last we are 'the ins.' While in opposition, it was very well to prate of Constitution, and of rights; but now *we* are the government, and mean to continue so; and our interest is to have a strong and centralized government. It is high time now that the government were revolutionized and consolidated, and these irksome 'States' rights' wiped out. We need a strong government to dispense much wealth and power to its adherents; we want permanently high tariffs, to make the South tributary to the North; and now these Southern fellows are giving us precisely the opportunity we want to do all this, and shall Seward sing his silly song of the necessity of avoiding war? War is the very thing we should hail! The Southern men are rash, and now profoundly ir-

ritated. Our plans should be, by some artifice, to provoke them to seem to strike the first blow. Then we shall have a pretext with which to unite the now divided North, and make them fly to arms. The Southerners are a braggart, but a cowardly and effeminate set of bullies; we shall easily whip them in three months. But this short war will be, if we are wise, our sufficient occasion. We will use it to destroy slavery, and thus permanently cripple the South. And that is the stronghold of all these ideas of 'limited government' and 'rights of the people.' Crush the South, by abolishing slavery, and we shall have all we want—a consolidated government, an indefinite party ascendancy, and ability to lay on such tariffs and taxes as we please, and aggrandize ourselves and our section!"

These, Mr. Seward's apologist declared to me, were the reasons which, together with their predictions and threats of popular rage, converted Lincoln from the policy of Seward to that of Stevens. Hence the former was compelled to break his promise through Judge Campbell, and to assist in the malignant stratagem by which the South Carolinians were constrained "to fire on the flag." The diabolical success of the artifice is well known.

The importance of this narrative is, that it unmasks the true authors and nature of the bloody war through which we have passed. We see that *the Radicals provoked it, not to preserve, but to destroy the Union.* It demonstrates, effectually, that Virginia and the border States were acting with better faith to preserve the Union than was Lincoln's Cabinet. Colonel Baldwin showed him conclusively that it was not free-soil, evil as that was, which really endangered the Union, but coercion. He showed him that, if coercion were relinquished, Virginia and the border States stood pledged to labor with him for the restoration of Union, and would assuredly be able to effect it. Eight slave-holding border States, with seventeen hireling States, would certainly have wielded sufficient moral and material weight, in the cause of what Lincoln professed to believe the clear truth and right, to reassure and win back the seven little seceded States, or, if they became hostile, to restrain them. But coercion arraigned fifteen against seventeen in mutually destructive war. Lincoln acknowledged the conclusiveness of his reasoning in the agony of remorse and perplexity, in the writhings and tearings of hair, of which Colonel Baldwin was witness. But what was the decisive weight that turned the scale against peace, and right, and patriotism? It was the interest of a sectional tariff! His single objection, both to the wise advice of

Colonel Baldwin and Mr. Stuart, was: "Then what would become of my tariffs?" He was shrewd enough to see that the just and liberal free-trade policy proposed by the Montgomery Government would speedily build up, by the help of the magnificent Southern staples, a beneficent foreign commerce through Confederate ports; that the Northern people, whose lawless and mercenary character he understood, could never be restrained from smuggling across the long open frontier of the Confederacy; that thus the whole country would become habituated to the benefits of free-trade, so that when the schism was healed [as he knew it would be healed in a few years by the policy of Virginia], it would be too late to restore the iniquitous system of sectional plunder by tariffs, which his section so much craved. Hence, when Virginia offered him a safe way to preserve the Union, he preferred to destroy the Union and preserve his tariffs. The war was conceived in duplicity, and brought forth in iniquity.

The calculated treason of Lincoln's Radical advisers is yet more glaring. When their own chosen leader, Seward, avowed that there was no need for war, they deliberately and malignantly practiced to produce war, for the purpose of overthrowing the Constitution and the Union, to rear their own greedy faction upon the ruins. This war, with all its crimes and miseries, was proximately concocted in Washington city, by Northern men, with malice prepense.

Official Correspondence of Governor Letcher, of Virginia.

The following letters are of interest and value as illustrating the history of the times. Their originals, kindly presented to the Society by Governor Letcher, constitute a valuable addition to our collection of autographs.

Upon a request of Governor Letcher that Lieutenant-Colonel Hardee, United States Army, be allowed to come to Richmond to drill the Virginia cavalry then encamped at the Fair Grounds, General Scott wrote the following letters.

General Hardee complied with the request, and drilled the cavalry several days.

NEW YORK, October 22, 1860.

His Excellency JOHN LETCHER, *Governor of Virginia*:

My Dear Sir—I have caused a copy of your letter to be forwarded to Lieutenant-Colonel Hardee, who is, I think, still at West Point, though relieved from duty there. It is not competent for a