Recollections of A. L.

[Ida's Harlan's see p. 5]

I never saw A. L. until after his election to the office of Pres't of U.S. I saw him the first time Feb 23d, 1861, at Willard's Hotel, Washington D.C. the day of his arrival at the Capital City; in reference to usual preliminary arrangements for his inauguration on the 4th day of the following March.

He & his family occupied apartments on the second floor in the front part of the house

Sense of entertainment. He was overwhelmed with callers. The room in which he stood the centre & back & sides leading to it, was crowded full of people, each one apparently intent on obtaining an opportunity to say a few words to him privately

I called only to pay my respects & had no intention of remaining but a few minutes, often than the exigency of the usual civilities (& mild description)

I saw A. L. the 2nd time 9 days later. In the 2nd a page came to me at my desk in the Senate-Chamber & said

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The Pres't-elect is in the Presidents Room & wishes to see you'. I confess that I felt a little flurried by this announcement. I had not been accustomed to being called on by Presidents of the U.S. Hence, to gain a little time for self composure I said to the little page, 'Who do you know the h-e wishes to see me?' 'Eh' said he, 'the messenger came to the door of the Senate Chamber & sent me to tell you'. 'All right' said I 'you may tell the P's messenger that I will call immediately' which of course I did without the least delay.

— — / — — — (Brief description of Pres't Room)

I was met by Pres't in person who, after the ordinary greetings offered me a seat, & seated himself near me, & one else was in the room. He commenced the conversation by saying, in a half playful, half serious tone & manner, "I sent for you to tell me whom to appoint as member of my Cabinet". I responded, saying 'Mr Pres't as that duty under the constitution devolves in the first instance, on the president, I have not given to the subject a second thought; I have no names to suggest; I expect to be satisfied with your selections".

He then said he had about concluded to nominate Hon. E. Lenard of N.Y. for Secty of State etc (Bates - Smith, Wells, Blair still stalk & Office) I that he thought he ought to appoint

Simon Cameron (Pa) & S. P. Chase of O. for the remaining two places — but was in doubt whether to offer Mr Cameron; I would like to have me express my opinion frankly on that point.

"Well" said I "Mr Pres!: if that is the only question involved, I have not the slightest doubt that Mr C. ought to be made Secty of the Treasury;" & then proceeded to mention without hesitation or reserve, my reasons for this opinion. He thanked me cordially for my frankness; & took my leave. This interview lasted probably about 10 or 15 mins.

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the third time I saw him A. L. was a few minutes before 12 o'clock noon, Mch 4/1861. He entered the Senate Chamber, arm in arm with the ex-gov Pres; J. B. escorted by the Senate Committee of arrangements - Messrs Doolittle of Wis. Pearce of Md. & Baker of Or: & they were seated in front of the Secty desk, facing the body of Senators & invited guests. After a few minutes delay, he was escorted to a platform constructed at the east front of the Capitol building, preceded by the justices of the Supreme Court of the U.S. & followed by the Senate, its officers, & other high officials, where he met an immense audience

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almost immediately after the fall of Richmond and the surrender of the Confederate at Appomattox. On that occasion we soon drove across the Potomac River at Long Bridge, into Va., & thence in the direction of Falls Church. Thro' the country still marred & scarred — perhaps I ought to say devastated by the recent presence of great armies, who had stripped it of almost every vestige of the environments of civilized life, including its more complete habitations — not buildings, ordinarily, but dwellings; fences, fields & gardens & ornamental shrubbery all of which had been denuded of their more majestic products — the native timber.

After a very short, occupying several hours we returned to Washington to resume the routine of our respective official duties.

This drive can become to me historical, first because it was the last one taken by me in his company; and proved to be so near the end of his life, and secondly because he had suddenly become, in the pale of Richmond and the surrender of the Confederate army, April 9 at Appomattox, a different man from what I had ever before seen in him. His whole appearance, poise and bearing had marvellously changed. He was, in fact, transfigured. That indescribable sadness which had previously seemed to be an adamantal (?) element of his very being, had been suddenly exchanged for an equally indescribable expression of serene joy; as

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of conscious ideal - the great purpose of his life had been achieved. His countenance had become radiant, — emitting spiritual light - something like a halo. Yet there was no manifestation of exultation, or ecstacy. He seemed the very personification of supreme satisfaction # His conversation was, of course, correspondingly exhilerating.

On the evening of the same day April 11, 1865; he was serenaded at the Executive Mansion. An immense crowd of people assembled at its - north front, filling the open grounds out across Pennsylvania Ave. & Lafayette Park. It was the first time he had been seen by the public since the surrender of Gen'l Lee's army, which it was intuitively felt ended the war of the rebellion. The people were ~~was~~ hilarious; almost crazy with joy. He addressed them from an upper window. Almost every sentence was smothered with applause. He spoke on the subject of the reconstruction of the recently insurrectionary states.

His speech was mild. At its close the great mass of people seemed reluctant to ~~leave~~ leave, and commenced calling for other distinguished persons, one after another, whom they conjectured might be with the President. In this they erred. The Presi-

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was almost alone. He urged me to make a speech. With great reluctance I consented, & he introduced as a Senator from Iowa who was soon to be sworn in the Interior. I had been nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate for that position, but had not yet taken the oath of office. my theme was

My speech was brief. The wisdom of forbearance and generous kindness, now that the war was happily ended, towards our erring brethren," which evidently met the hearty approval of everybody present.

At the Conclusion I took leave of the President. It was the last time I ever saw him alive. On the evening of April 13 1865 I left W. to visit my home in this little city. While on the road, at Richmond the dreadful news reached me, by telegraph, of his assassination.

I returned at once to W. where I saw his remains cred in state, "lying in state" in the rotunda of the National Capitol.

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