NOTES OF AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. A. B. CHANDLER, SEPTEMBER 16, 1898.

From the spring of 1863 until his death in April, 1865, I saw Mr. Lincoln almost every day, often many times a day. I at that time was one of the three confidential cipher clerks in the employ of the War Department, the other two being Mr. Tinker of the Western Union Telegraph Co. and Mr. Bates of the Bank. My office was one of the three occupied by the military telegraph; it was commonly called "The President's Room" because he came there so often. I was alone in the room and as few people came there to see me he could be alone. He often said to me, "I come here to escape my persecutors; hundreds of people come in and say they want to see me for only a minute. That means if I can hear their story and grant their request in a minute it will be enough." My office contained a large flat-top desk, at one side of which I always sat receiving anf sending my messages. Mr. Lincoln ordinarily took the chair on the other side of this desk; here he would read over the mass of telegrams received by the Department, all of which came to my office. It was the rule in those days to make three copies of all the messages received by the Department, one of these was what we called a "hard copy" and was saved for the records of the War Department; two carbons were made on yellow tissue paper, one for

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War Department; two carbons were made on yellow tissue paper, one for Mr. Lincoln and one for Mr. Stanton. Mr. Lincoln's set was always put into what we called the "President's drawer" of my desk. He would come in at any time of the night or day and go at once to this drawer and take out a file of the telegrams and begin at the top to read them. His position in running over these telegrams was sometimes very curious. He had a habit of sitting frequently on the edge of his chair with his right knee dragged down on to the floor. I remember a curious expression of his when he got to the bottom of the new telegrams and began on those that he had read before. It was, "Well, I guess I have got down to the raisins." The first two or three times he said this he made no explanation and I did not ask one, but one day after the remark he looked up under his eyebrows at mewith a funny twinkle in his eye, and said, "I used to know a little girl out West who had a habit of eating too much now and then. One day she ate a good many more raisins than she ought to and followed them up with a quantity of other goodies.

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It made her very sick and she had to throw up. After a time the raisins began to come. She gasped and looked at her mother and said, "Well I will be better now, I guess I have got down to the raisins."

Mr. Lincoln frequently wrote telegrams in my office. His method of composition was slow and alaborious. It was evident that he thought out what he was going to say before he touched his pencil to the paper. He would sit looking out of the window, his left elbow on the table, his hand scratching his temple, his lips moving and frequently he spoke the sentence aloud or in a half whisper. After he was satisfied that he had got the proper expression, he would write it out on the paper. If one examines the originals of Mr. Lincoln's telegrams and letters, he will find very few erasures and very little interlining. This, of course, was because he had them definitely in his mind before he wrote them on paper. In this he was the exact opposite of Mr. Stanton, who wrote with feverish haste, often scrathcing out words and interlining ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ constantly. Frequently he would seize a sheet which he had filled and impatiently tear it into pieces.

Mr. Lincoln frequently, while waiting for telegrams or when

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Mr. Lincoln frequently, while waiting for telegrams or when desirous of getting away from his persecutors, as he called them, would stay for a long time in the office. He would often amuse himself with a book. It was not infrequent for him to tip his chair back against the wall, his feet crossed and high in the air or resting on the desk, and read half aloud. He often amused himself in reading by mispronouncing words and by throwing the accent on the wrong syllable. Sometimes he did this, I fancy, for my benefit, but mainly simply as an amusement. He was always peculiarly pleased of he ran upon an alliteration and would repeat it over several times aloud. Any peculiar phrasing or rhythm caught his ear and he would repeat it to himself again and again.

If Mr. Lincoln had an especially important dispatch to send he always looked after it himself. I remember at the time of the draft riots in the summer of '63, he wished to telegraph to Governor Seymour (dispatch to be looked up) he wrote the message out before he came over to the office; coming in with it he sat down beside me and read it over aloud to me. I think his reason for doing this was two-fold, to assure himself that he had it as he wanted it, and that I understood what he meant.

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The president took the greatest interest in the soldiers who had been sentenced to death, and never, if he couldhelp it, would allow a man to be shot. I remember that at least adozen times while I was in the War Department he came himself from the White House with messages ordering execution to be stayed. He would not confide these messages to an orderly lest they go astray, and he would caution the operator that they be sent immediately in order that there might be no delay or mistake. He seemed to me to have great faith in doing things himself. I remember at the time the commissioners were sent down to Fortress Monroe to treat with representatives of the Confederacy that the result was unsatisfactory, and Mr. Lincoln decided that he must go himself. He sat in my office with his head dropped down and soliloquized, as he frequently did, "If you want a thing done right you must do it yourself."

One of the most exciting times that we ever had in the War Department was during the Battle of Gettysburg on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of July, 1863. I think that Mr. Lincoln spent more than half his time

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of July, 1863. I think that Mr. Lincoln spent more than half his time when not asleep, in my office during that battle. He read every telegram with the greatest eagerness and frequently was so anxious that he would rise from his seat and come around and lean over my shoulder while I was translating the cipher. For several days previous to the battle, while Hooker was following Lee into Pennsylvania, I noticed that he seemed peculiarly anxious about the movements of the Fifth Corps. "What is Meade doing?" was his constant inquiry. I did not attach any importance to this matter at the moment, but when Meade replaced Hooker I understood Mr. Lincoln's interest; he was studying Meade. After the Battle of Gettysburg the President urged Meade to pursue Lee and engage him before he should cross the Potomac. His anxiety was as great as it had been during the battle itself, and now, as then, he walked up and down the floor, his face grave and anxious, wringing his hands and showing every sign of distress. As the telegrams would come in he traced the positions of the two armies on the map and would call me to point out their location; it was not that I could help him at all, but he seemed to feel the need of talking to some one. As Lee approached the river he said almost in anguish, "If he does not intercept him there will be no battle." Finally, a telegram came from Meade (look this up) saying that under such and such circumstances he

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would engage the enemy at such and such a time. "Yes," said the President bitterly, "He will fight a magnificent battle when there is no enemy there."

There never was a more tender-hearted man; he could not bear to see any distress. I remember one morning his coming into my office with a distressed expression on his face and saying to Major Eckert, "Eckert, who is that woman crying out in the hall? What is the matter with her?" Eckert said he did not know but would find out. He came back soon and said it was a woman who had come a long distance expecting to go down to the army to see her husband, that she had some very important matters to consult him about. An order had gone out a short time before to allow no women in the army except in special cases. She was bitterly disappointed and was crying over it. Mr. Lincoln sat moodily for a moment after hearing this story, and suddenly looking up, said, "Let's send her down. You write the order, Eckert." Major Eckert hesitated a moment and said, "Would it not be better in this case Mr. Lincoln, for Mr. Hardy to write the order?" "Yes," said Mr. Lincoln, that is better, let Hardy write it." Eckert went out and soon

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coln, that is better, let Hardy write it." Eckert went out and soon returned saying, "Mr. Lincoln, would it not be better in this case to let the woman's husband come up here?" Mr. Lincoln's face lighted up with pleasure. "Yes, yes," he said, "let's bring him up." The order was written and the woman was told that her husband would come to Washington. This done, the woman's sorrow seemed lifted from Mr. Lincoln's heart and he sat down to his yellow tissue telegrams with a serene face.

It was not rare for Mr. Lincoln to bring intimate friends into my office for a chat. I remember his coming in one day with Norman Judd, an important Illinois politician and at that time Minister to Prussia. He introduced him to me by saying, "This is the man I have had over in Prussia." The two sat down and began to discuss war matters. I remember that Mr. Judd said to Mr. Lincoln that to him, 5000 miles away, it seemed the policy of the government was too conciliatory, that there had not been enough retaliation. "Well," Mr. Lincoln said, "did you ever hear the story of Bill Grimes?" No, Mr. Judd said he had not. "Well," he said, "Bill Grimes had an enemy across the river and he had a habit of making dreadful threats of what he was go-

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ing to do to his enemy. One day somebody said to him, "Well, Bill, when you go over to thrash your enemy what if he should strike back and you get the worst of it?" The idea of the man fighting back had never occurred to Bill Grimes, and, shaking his head, "Well, I never thought of that, I guess I won't go." You see, Judd, that it is always possible for the other fellow to retaliate and we have had to think of that in this war.

In the summer of '64 at the time that Early made his raid upon Washington Mr. Lincoln was in the office a great deal. The only lively skirmish of that affair he saw himself being at Fort Stevens. At the time when he came back to Washington he came directly to the telegraph office coming into my room. He sat down and told us all about it with great gusto. Taking a sheet of our military telegraph paper he drew on it a crude diagram illustrating the arrangement of the forces in the engagement, and I remember that in the course of his description he told us two little stories, much to the disgust of Mr. Stanton who never could tolerate or forgive Mr. Lincoln's jocularity.

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Stanton who never could tolerate or forgive Mr. Lincoln's jocularity. One of the stories I remember was of a man who had been much troubled by the hens scratching up his garden, and who invented what he called a "patent double back-action hen-walker." This was a kind of an attachment to the hen's leg and foot which, whenever she scratched sent her ahead until it walked her out of the garden. After this story he told us of a "her persuader," as he called it, a man who arranged a trap door under his hen's nest; when the hen had laid an egg the weight on the door opened it and the egg dropped through. The hen observing asshe walked off that she had not laid an egg and was supposed to be persuaded to try again.

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