

Here was manifested a most unusual comprehension and description of the character of the approaching struggle: it was unsuspected; it was close at hand; it was sizeable!

On this day, January 12, when White forecast great conflict, three States (Mississippi on January 9, Florida on January 10, and Alabama on January 11) had joined South Carolina in secession.³ White apparently lacked this information, but granting she had it, her statement insisted that more States would yet "join that State [South Carolina], and there will be a most terrible war." This is precisely what happened, for seven more States joined the parade out of the Union between January 19 and May 20.⁴

Nevertheless White easily might have been labeled an alarmist on January 12 when she envisaged imminent strife, for on January 3 the Crittenden Referendum Propositions had been placed before the Senate,⁵ and this effort with compromise was soon followed by another, the Thomas Corwin Peace Measure, designed to negate the Personal Liberty Laws that

established by the official periodical (Review and Herald) of the Seventh-day Adventist church. See Review and Herald, January 1, 1861, p. 56; January 15, p. 72. Also a non-Adventist, Martha Ensign, present at the service, corroborated the narrative of Loughborough. Loughborough, op. cit., p. 237. An elder of the Parkville church verified the loss of at least ten sons in the war, in accordance with White's prediction concerning the loss of life. Ibid., p. 239.

³James G. Randall, Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1937), pp. 254-55, 254 n. 1.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John J. Crittenden, "Peace Resolutions," Documents of American History, ed. Henry S. Commager (2 Vols., 7th ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1963), I, 369-71. Hereafter cited as Documents of American History. James F. Rhodes, United States History (9 Vols.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1928), III, 141, 141 n.

were so obnoxious to the Southerners.⁶ Furthermore, in February delegates from twenty States convened in a Peace Conference at Washington to compromise differences.⁷ And as the thirty-sixth Congress was about to expire, a "thirteenth amendment" to the Constitution was rushed through the legislative process to forever guarantee slavery where it existed.⁸

So much for statecraft; what of public sentiment--at least on the surface? To begin with, on December 3, 1860, President Buchanan in his Annual Message to Congress completely rationalized away any recourse to the sword when he intoned:

The fact is, that our Union rests upon public opinion, and can never be cemented by the blood of its citizens shed in civil war. If it cannot live in the affections of the people, it must one day perish. Congress possess[es] many means of preserving it by conciliation; but the sword was not placed in their hand to preserve it by force.⁹

A few days later, on December 22, William H. Seward, secretary of state elect to the Lincoln cabinet, in a Pilgrim Day speech predicted a tranquil settlement of the national ills within the next sixty days.¹⁰

⁶Horace Greeley, The American Conflict (2 Vols.; Hartford, Conn.: O. D. Case Co., 1866), I, 386-88.

⁷Ibid., I, 396-406.

⁸John G. Nicolay and John Hay, Lincoln: A History (10 Vols.; New York: Century Co., 1890), X, 89-90; U. S. Congress, Senate, Congressional Globe, 36th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington: Globe Print. Off., 1861), pp. 1283-85, 1402-1403, app. p. 350. Hereafter cited as Globe.

⁹Quoted in James Buchanan, "Annual Message to Congress," Documents of American History, I, 366, 369; Greeley, op. cit., I, 371.

¹⁰Ibid., I, 429, 429 n. 2.

In mid-February, Thomas R. R. Cobb, the ardent Georgia secessionist who was a member of the committee preparing the Confederate constitution, wrote to his wife, "The almost universal belief here [at Montgomery] is that we shall not have war."¹¹

And only two days before inauguration Lincoln declared in Philadelphia: "I have felt all the while justified in concluding that the crisis, the panic, the anxiety of the country at this time is artificial."¹²

Small wonder, therefore, that Alexander H. Stephens, vice-president of the Confederacy, told a Savannah audience on March 21 "that their revolution had thus far been accomplished without shedding a drop of blood--that the fear of a deadly collision with the Union they had renounced was nearly dispelled. . . ."¹³

April, of course, was punctuated by the Sumter fight, the Proclamation of Blockade of the South, and the call of nearly 75,000 State militiamen into Federal service.¹⁴ This succession of calamities befell the Union in the twelve weeks following the Parkville Vision.

Nevertheless, in spite of these harbingers, during the interim from Lincoln's call for volunteers till the Bull Run clash, the New York Times printed this dictum: "Let us make quick work. . . . A strong

¹¹Quoted in Edward Channing, History of the United States (6 Vols.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1905-25), VI, 264.

¹²Quoted in Harper's Weekly, March 2, 1861, p. 135. (Re-issue.)

¹³Quoted in Greeley, op. cit., I, 437-38.

¹⁴David S. Muzzey, United States of America Through the Civil War (New York: Ginn and Co., 1922), pp. 543-45.

active 'pull together' will do our work effectually in thirty days."¹⁵

And on May 4 Harper's Weekly editorially concluded that "if Abraham Lincoln is equal to the position he fills, this war will be over by January, 1862."¹⁶

The President himself must have had the same hope even as late as July 4 when he wrote to Congress: "It is now recommended that you give legal means for making this contest a short and decisive one. . . ."¹⁷

Actually, during these months the anticipated means chiefly relied upon for quick victory, if war developed, was Union strangulation of the Confederacy by naval blockade. Thus Harper's Weekly explained: "It seems to be expected that by August next there will not be a Confederate port . . . which will not be hermetically sealed by United States ships of war."¹⁸ And the New York Times dogmatized: "Whatever war there is, may easily be made a war at sea,--a war of blockades,--a war having for its sole object the protection of American property and preservation of American commerce."¹⁹ (Italics supplied.)

Evidently, therefore, it required months for the Northerners to arouse to the gravity of the Southern threat. Accordingly, William G.

¹⁵ Quoted in Robert L. Dabney, Life and Campaigns of Thomas J. Jackson (New York: Blelock and Co., 1866), 210 n.

¹⁶ Harper's Weekly, May 4, 1861, p. 274. (Re-issue.)

¹⁷ Quoted in Greeley, op. cit., I, 557; Globe, 37th Cong., 1st sess., p. 11, app. p. 2; Allan Nevins, War for the Union (2 Vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), I, 153; Nicolay, op. cit., IV, 371.

¹⁸ Harper's Weekly, April 27, 1861, p. 258. (Re-issue.)

¹⁹ The New York Times, January 10, 1861, p. 4.

Stevenson, who had spent the first thirteen months of the controversy as an impressee in the Confederate army, wrote an impassioned plea in an attempt to arouse the Northern populace:

Sure am I, that if the North had known the whole truth as to the power, the unanimity, and the deadly purpose of the leaders in rebellion, the government would have been far better prepared for promptly meeting the crisis.²⁰

The ex-impressee at a later point in his work turned to the current situation as it obtained during the fall of 1862 and re-emphasized:

The planters were, and are yet, in bloody earnest in this rebellion; and my impression since coming North, is that the mass of Union loving people here are asleep, because they do not fully understand the resource and earnestness of the South.²¹

It is evident, therefore, that White's apprehensions on January 12 at Parkville of an impending major war was in sharp contrast with the lethargy which prevailed in the Northern States for months.

That there would be four years of blood-packed warfare, thousands of casualties, numerous fresh cemeteries, public and private debts as common as rainwater, and endless personal tragedies for both Northerners and Southerners, was frankly beyond the ken of most Americans. They understood little of the nature of nineteenth-century fighting, having had little acquaintance with it other than Indian skirmishes and the Mexican War dress rehearsal.

²⁰ William G. Stevenson, Thirteen Months in the Rebel Army (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1959), p. 9. (Reprint.) This opinion was voiced September 15, 1862.

²¹ Ibid., p. 45.