1865 April 15

I arranged with Speed, with whom I took dinner for a cabinet meeting at twelve meridian at the room of the Secretary of the Treasury, in order that the government should experience no detriment, and that prompt and necessary action might be taken to assist the new Chief Magistrate in preserving and promoting the public tranquility. We accordingly met at noon. Mr Speed reported that the President had taken the oath which was administered by the Chief Justice, and had expressed a desire that the affairs of the government should proceed without interruption. Some diversity took place as to the propriety of an inaugural address, but the general impression was that it would be imprudent. I was most decidedly of that opinion.

President Johnson who was invited to be present, deported himself ~~with perfect sanity or propriety during the interview~~ admirably, and on the subject of an inaugural was of opinion that his acts would best declare his said policy. In all essentials it would be the same as that of the late President. He desired the members of the Cabinet to go forward with their duties without any change. Mr Hunter, Chief Clerk of the State Department was designated to act as interim as Secretary of State. I suggested Mr Speed, but I saw it was not acceptable in certain quarters. Stanton especially expressed a hope that Hunter should be assigned to the duty.

A room for the President as an office was proposed until he could occupy the Executive Mansion, and Mr McCulloch offered the adjoining room, adjoining his own in the Treasury building. I proposed the State Department as appropriate and proper, at least until other rooms could be procured. a Secretary of State, or so long as the President desired. Mr Stanton said that papers of the Secretary would be disturbed - it would be better, he thought, to do so. Stanton I saw was in a perplexed state of mind. among other things Grand papers would fall under the hands of Johnson's eye which he did not wish to be seen.

1865 April 15 Saturday

On returning to my home this morning of Saturday, I found Miss Miller who has been ill and confined to the house from indisposition for a week had been twice sent for by Mrs Lincoln, to come to Mrs Peters and The housekeeper informing the Steward of Mrs W's health had gradually declined and grown worse during the morning Mr Miller on learning the fact hastened home and found her much worse than when he came away second time he sent for Dr Stone who promptly came, although the weather was inclement & pitchy dark. She remained at the Executive mansion through the day.

For myself, anxious, shocked, exhausted but not inclined to sleep, the day passed off strangely.

On Sunday the 16th the President & cabinet met by agreement at 10 a.m. at the Treasury. The President was half an hour behind time. Stanton was more than an hour late. He brought with him papers, and how many suggestions relative to the measures before the cabinet at our last meeting with President Lincoln. The general policy of the treatment of the rebels and the rebel states was freely discussed. President Johnson is not disposed to treat treason lightly, and the chief rebels he would punish with exemplary severity.

Stanton has divided his original plan and made the re-establishing of state government applicable to North Carolina, leaving Virginia which has a loyal governor, to arrange that matter of election to which I had objected, but elaborating it for North Carolina as the other states

Being at the War Department Sunday evening, I was detained conversing with Stanton and finally Senator Sumner came in. He was soon followed by Secretary Welles & Hon Mr Dawes from Massachusetts & some two or three others - Attorney General Speed also came in - Stanton took from his table his answer to an enquiry from Sumner, his document which had been submitted to the Cabinet and which was still a Cabinet measure,

I went after breakfast to the Executive Mansion. There was a chilly cold rain and everything seemed gloomy. On the Avenue in front of the White house was a crowd of colored people - mostly women and children weeping and wailing their loss. This crowd did not appear to diminish through the whole of that cold wet day - they seemed not to know what was to be their fate since their great benefactor was dead, and their hopeless grief affected me more than almost anything else, though strong and brave men wept when I met them. At the White House all was dismay and sad. Mrs W. was with Mrs L. and came to meet me into the library. Speed came in and we were left together. As we were descending the stairs, Tad who was looking from the window at the foot turned and seeing us cried aloud in his tears "O Mr Nelson who killed my father?" Neither Speed nor myself could restrain our tears, nor give the poor boy any satisfactory answer -

1865 April 15

I arranged with Spua, with whom I took room for a cabinet meeting at twelve meridian at the room of the Secretary of the Treasury, in order that the government should sustain no detriment, and that prompt and necessary action might be taken to assist the new Chief Magistrate in preserving and promoting the public tranquility. We accordingly met at noon. Mr Spua reported that the President had taken the oath which was administered by the Chief Justice, and had expressed a desire that the affairs of the government should proceed without interruption. Some discussion took place as to the propriety of an inaugural address, but the general impression was that it would be imprudent. I was most decidedly of that opinion.

President Johnson who was invited to be present, deported himself ~~with [illegible] and dignity~~ courteously, and on the subject of an inaugural ~~was of opinion that~~ said his acts would best declare his policy. In all essentials it would be the same as that of the late Cabinet. He desired the members of the Cabinet to go forward with their duties without any change. Mr Hunter, Chief Clerk of the State Department was designated to act as interim as Secretary of State. I suggested Mr Spua, but I saw it was not acceptable in certain quarters. Stanton especially expressed a hope that Hunter should be assigned to the duty.

until he could be sworn for the President in an office more proper and Mr Millward offered his adjoining room, adjoining his own in the Treasury building. I suggested at least the State Department as appropriate and proper, until other was a Secretary of State, or so long as the Presidents pleasure. Mr Stanton said best objections arose at once. The papers of the Secretary would be disturbed — it would be better, he thought, he should be at the State Department. I saw that a purpose — among other things Seward papers would fall under the Johnson eye which he did not wish to be seen.

1865 April 15 Saturday

On returning to my home this morning Saturday, I found Mrs Miller who has been ill and confined to the house from indisposition for a week had been twice sent for by Mrs Lincoln, to come to her at Peters

The housekeeper informing the Sister of Mrs W's health had for that consultation turned away the Surgeon Mr Taylor, Mr Miller on learning the facts by him came very second time Wednesday evening: and Thursday morning very imprudently gone, although the weather was inclement

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