

William H. Seward

By  
Gideon Welles

No 2 - p. - 688

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This reserve it appeared from subsequent disclosures consisted of an understanding between himself and certain leading opponents with whom he had held private conference during the winter, the main purpose of which was to prevent any collision or decisive movement during the remnant of Mr Buchanan's administration. The motives of Mr Seward in promoting delay were undoubtedly well intentioned, founded on faith that he if in power could in some way by some expedient, reconcile differences. The secessionists had a different object. They knew it would be more difficult to unite the Southern people in a war against the Buchanan administration than against Lincoln, the black republican whose election they had opposed, and whom they pronounced, and caused those who confided in them to believe to be an enemy to the South. The politicians, in Congress and out of it, who gathered in and about Washington that winter, were willing to postpone action during the few remaining days of the expiring administration, and none more so than the feeble and irresolute but intelligent President who felt himself incapable of firmly holding the reins and successfully guiding the government in that crisis. Illadvised bewildered, paralysed and betrayed, he readily caught at any plan which would give him quiet and enable him to tide over the short remnant of his official life. The private conferences of the leaders during the winter led to temporary arrangements, and humiliating terms with avowed disunionists, acquiesced in the seizure (sic) of Forts, Arsenals and other public property. The government was to do nothing while the rebels were very active & permitted to organise and do everything to resist the government after the 4th of March should the demands not be complied with, and exactions not be met by concession, for a dissolution of the Union.

The failure to take prompt, energetic and decisive measures against the secession movements at the commencement, and thus like Andrew Jackson



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William H. Seward  
John W. Foster

No. 2 - 500



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him injustice.

He was a centralist in his tendencies not a disunist and in his efforts to delay action he was on what Mr Adams calls "The delusive track of expediency," without fixed principles, or any clear and well defined policy. His prophecies of pacification within ninety days, iterated and reiterated, were based on no facts. He never made known what he proposed to do to reconcile differences except, as declared in his speech of the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, by meeting exaction with concession, submitting to the doctrine of coercion and evacuating the national fortresses in the seceding [seceding] states. With faith in expedients, he expressed his readiness for a national convention to revive the Constitution and also for an amendment, to prohibit forever, beyond revocation any authority in Congress to interfere with the subject of slavery. As the war was inevitable, it was fortunate for the country that so honest, so determined, so sagacious and capable a man as Lincoln was President to meet it with his rare comprehension, humane instincts, fixed principles, calm forbearance? and regard for federal and state rights.



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in 1863 to resist the beginning of evil, [sic] great want of executive ability. The intention of the President and the efforts of others to put his effort for a few weeks the evil day were from whatever motive were unfortunate for the reputation of President Bushner [sic], but were unfortunate for the country. In every point of view the foregoing policy of the winter of 1861 may be considered a mistake a national misfortune. Not that a conflict could have been prevented. The controversy which had been thirty years maturing had become so deep seated, the propositions were so vast, the passions were so excited that no earthly power could have saved the country from war. The men who combined against the government for alleged grievances had after long preparation finally succeeded in obtaining control of the civil organization of the states in one section of the Union, and were determined to have the assembly in the form [sic] Government, or a new confederacy of their own. But if hostilities could not have been prevented, it is scarce [sic] to be doubted they would have been of less proportion had the administration of Mr. Bushner [sic] put forth the strong hand of power against the first organization to disorganize, a provoked, defended and held the fortress and public property entrusted to the keeping; but the friends of the freedom and outgoing administration in Washington united on a different policy, though from different motives. The administration felt early that delay was important that it would be an emboldening [sic] and unhappy if not a disastrous complication for them to make open war on the government whilst it was administered by a man of their own selection and whose general course they approved. Mr. Seward, who in private free communication with though politically opposed to them, persuaded himself that if the confederate did not take the field until there was a change of administration, he could then with his resources [sic] be expedient and means transmute the country. In this he was as sincere as in any political act of his life. Those who charge him with unpopularity and sinister designs against the government and the Union do



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He was a centralist in his tendencies not a disunist and in his efforts to delay action he was on what Mr Adams calls "The delusive track of expediency," without fixed principles, or any clear and well defined policy. His prophecies of pacification within ninety days, iterated and reiterated, were based on no facts. He never made known what he proposed to do to reconcile differences except, as declared in his speech of the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, by meeting exaction with concession, submitting to the doctrine of coercion and evacuating the national fortresses in the seceding [seceding] states. With faith in expedients, he expressed his readiness for a national convention to revive the Constitution and also for an amendment, to prohibit forever, beyond revocation any authority in Congress to interfere with the subject of slavery. As the war was inevitable, it was fortunate for the country that so honest, so determined, so sagacious and capable a man as Lincoln was President to meet it with his rare comprehension, humane instincts, fixed principles, calm forbearance? and regard for federal and state rights.



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He was a centralist in his tendencies not a democrat and in his efforts to  
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William H Seward

By  
Isidore Wells

No 2

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The failure to take prompt, energetic and decisive measures against the ~~secession~~ movements at the commencement, and thus like <sup>and</sup> Andrew Jackson



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in 1832 to resist the begining of evil, disp<sup>laid</sup> <sup>[sic]</sup> great want of Executive ability. The indecision of the President and the efforts of others to putt <sup>[sic]</sup> off for a few weeks the evil day were ~~frp, whatever, pbeve~~ from whatever motive <sup>were unfortunate</sup> for the reputation of President Buchan, <sup>[sic]</sup> but more unfortunate for the country. In every point of view the temporising policy of the winter of 1861 may be considered a mistake a national misfortune. Not that a conflict could have been prevented. The controversy which had been thirty years maturing had become so deep seated, its proportions were so vast, the passions were so excited that no earthly power could have saved the country from war. The men who combined against the government for alleged grievances had after long preparation finally <sup>succeeded</sup> in obtaining control of the civil organisation of the ~~states~~ in one section of the Union, and ~~even~~ <sup>were</sup> determined to have the <sup>ascendancy</sup> in the <sup>general</sup> government, or a new confederacy of their own. But if hostilities could not have been prevented, it is <sup>[e]</sup> scarcely to be doubted they would have been of less proportion had the administration of Mr Buchan <sup>[sic]</sup> put forth the strong hand of power against the first organisation to disorganise, & protected, defended and held the fortress and public property entrusted to its keeping; But the friends of the incoming and outgoing administrations in Washington united on a different policy, though from different motives. The ~~secessionists~~ <sup>[sic]</sup> felt truly that delay was important-- that it would be an embarrassing and unhappy if not a disastrous complication for them to make open war on the government whilst it was administered by a man of their own selection and whose general ~~course~~ they approved. Mr Seward, who was in <sup>pretty free</sup> communication with though politically opposed to them, persuaded himself that if the contestants did not take the field until there was a change of administration, he could <sup>[e]</sup> then with his resources, expedients and means tranquilise the country. In this he was as sincere as in any political act of his life. Those who charge him with unpatriotic and ulterior designs against the government and the Union do him injustice.



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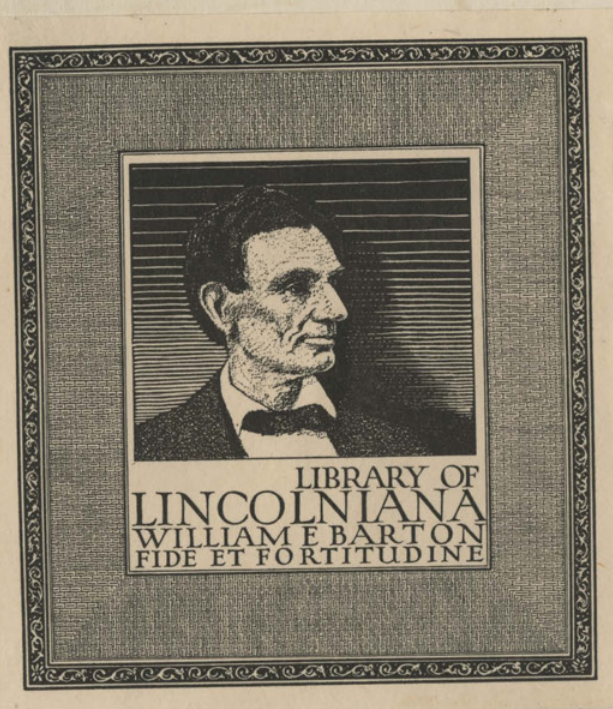
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William E. Barton



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WILLIAM H. SEWARD

BY

GIDEON WELLES

A MANUSCRIPT CONTAINING

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENT ON

SECRETARY SEWARD.

Michael E. Barton

Mills Sub 464

Jan 4, 1924



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MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING

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he <sup>had</sup> held private conference during the winter, the main purpose of which was to <sup>prevent</sup> ~~delay~~ any collision or decisive movement during the remainder of Mr Buchanan's administration. The motives of Mr Seward in promoting delay were undoubtedly ~~good~~ and well intentioned, founded on ~~his~~ <sup>in some ways</sup> faith that if in power ~~he~~ could by ~~diplom~~ <sup>subtly</sup> expedient, reconcile differences. The ~~opponents~~ <sup>subtly</sup> had a different object. They knew it would be <sup>more</sup> difficult to unite the southern people in a war against <sup>the</sup> ~~Buchanan~~ <sup>administration</sup> than who was ~~their~~ <sup>Lincoln</sup> President than against the black republican Lincoln, whom election they had opposed, and whom they <sup>proposed</sup> ~~believed~~ <sup>and caused them who confided in them to believe to be</sup> an enemy to the south. All the politicians in ~~Washington~~ Congress and out of it, who gathered in and about Washington that winter, were willing to postpone action during the few remaining days of the expiring administration, and none more so than the







Was that ~~the~~ <sup>there</sup> war a conflict could have been prevented. The controversy which had been thirty years maturing had become so deep seated, ~~its~~ <sup>its</sup> ~~passions~~ <sup>passions</sup> were so vast, the passions were so excited, ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~no earthly power could have saved us from the war.~~ <sup>no earthly power could have saved us from the war.</sup> The men who combined against the ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> which a powerful party combination had ~~government for all the purposes had that party with its divisions~~ <sup>government for all the purposes had that party with its divisions</sup> ~~been preparing for thirty years.~~ <sup>been preparing for thirty years.</sup> ~~After~~ <sup>After</sup> long prelude finally succeeded in obtaining control of the civil organization of the state in one section of the union, and its leaders were determined to have the ascendancy in the government, or a new confederacy of their own.

Had the ~~Buchanan~~ <sup>But</sup> if hostilities could not have been prevented, <sup>it is scarcely to be doubted</sup> they would have been of less proportion and the ~~these~~ <sup>of Mr. Buchanan</sup> administration put forth the strong hand <sup>of power</sup> against the first organization to disorganize, its protection, defended and held the fortresses and public property entrusted to its keeping. But the friends of the incoming and outgoing administrations in Washington <sup>united on</sup> ~~adopted~~ a different policy, ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> though from different motives. The secret felt truly <sup>delay was inevitable - that</sup> that it would be an embarrassing and unhappy ~~complication~~ <sup>complication</sup> if not a disastrous complication for them to make open war on the administrative government <sup>it was</sup> ~~while~~ <sup>administered</sup> by <sup>men</sup> of their own selection. <sup>and when</sup> ~~Mr. Seward~~ <sup>Mr. Seward</sup>, who was in pretty free communication with though



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 and ulterior designs against the government and the  
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war was inevitable, it was fortunate for the  
Country that so honest, so determined, so sagacious  
<sup>and capable</sup> <sup>was President to meet it</sup>  
a man as Lincoln, with his own comprehensive,  
human instincts, fixed principles, <sup>calm forbearance</sup> and regard  
for federal and state rights. ~~was the chief negotiator~~



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