Among the numerous "Copperhead" newspapers which flourished in the adverse Northern soil during the Civil War, several of them, because of the forceful personalities of the editors and incidents connected with the suppression by the government, achieved a nation-wide reputation. Among these was The Jeffersonian of West Chester, Pennsylvania, edited by the fiery Democrat, John Hodgson.

The newspaper had been started as a four-page weekly by Hodgson in 1842, and by the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, commanded a considerable circulation. Its motto, streaming across the top of the front page of every issue, indicates something of the spirit of the journal—"Be just and fear not. Let all the ends thou aimest at be thy God's, thy country's and truth's."

The three other papers in the borough of West Chester were unanimously Republican after the formation of that party. They were the Village Record, American Republican, and Chester County Times. The Jeffersonian, by virtue of its minority position and spirited editorials, proved to be the most influential and colorful of all. Hodgson, thirty-five years of age at the time of the founding of the "Jeff," indulged in a type of editorial recklessness which, while it won the admiration of hardy Democrats, more often created life-long enemies. The victims of his sarcasm were legion. And the editorials, set up spontaneously from

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1 Charge of Cardinal Wolsey to Cromwell in Shakespeare's Henry VIII., Act III., Scene 2.
the cases of type without the previous use of pen and ink, possessed a directness of approach that leaves the present day reader gasping for breath.

That great pride was taken in those masterpieces may be inferred from the answer to a certain Squire Haines who, before suing the editor for libel, wished to ascertain whether “that article is by yourself or whether it is the production of another.” The reply shot back: “I have just been handed a note bearing your signature, respectfully asking whether I write my own editorials. Certainly I do, and no one else. I feel myself fully capable to do so.”

In 1857, Hodgson was elected to the State Legislature. A contemporary, Henry S. Evans, editor of the Village Record thus appraised his fellow journalist:

Fearless of personal consequences, he has boldly espoused every party doctrine and measure, while others stood trembling and hesitating and calculating to see how the wind would blow. . . . When the entire party deserted President Pierce he remained his firm friend. . . . He has been more abused by his political opponents than any other man. . . . We like . . . Hodgson—you know where to find him.

In the decade just prior to the Civil War, West Chester could not have been a dull place in which to have lived. While the census returns of 1860 reveal a borough of only 4757 souls of whom 561 were colored, there was a considerable intellectual activity, plenty of gossip, and a whirlpool of politics. Hodgson, commenting on the cultural tradition, pointed with pride to the community as “The modern Athens, basking under the benign influence of schools, churches, etc.”

A constant source of excitement was the slavery issue. Due in large measure to the stolid abolition wing among the Quakers, anti-slavery sentiment spread and

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2 The Jeffersonian, August 8, 1848.
8 Quoted in The Jeffersonian, September 19, 1857.
4 The Jeffersonian, November 28, 1848.
became firmly entrenched. There were organized, not far from West Chester in 1853, the Progressive Friends of Longwood who were too radical for the others. As a result such speakers as William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Philips, Mrs. Lucretia Mott and a score of other notables graced the abolition meetings in and about West Chester.

_The Jeffersonian_, as was to be expected, attempted to discredit the anti-slavery movement completely. After a typical meeting of the reformers in April 1854, the participants were informed that

The people are thoroughly sick of the incessant negro agitation, and were it not for the political aspirants and office seekers for places of profit by playing the harlequin to other men's consciences, we should hear less of it. . . . At the meeting there was quite a number of this double-faced gentry, striving with shamefacedness for crumbs of abolition comfort.5

On July 6, 1854, the new Republican party came officially into being at Jackson, Michigan and on June 17, 1856, the first national nominating committee met in Philadelphia. Such a proximity of events aided the new political alignment in West Chester and Chester County where adherents increased with some rapidity. Albeit, in estimating the significance of the local election of October 14, 1856, Hodgson cheerfully prophesied:

The existence of the Republican party is near its close. Its last struggle will be on the 4th of November next. . . . The bitterness of the contest is over and the country is safe. It has always been so under the rule of the Democratic party.6

Amid the hullabaloo over the Dred Scott decision of 1857, the editor from his sanctum sanctorum on High Street accused those who objected to the verdict of the Supreme Court of "being carried away by Constitutional prejudice and mental weakness."7

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5 _The Jeffersonian_, April 29, 1854.
6 _Ibid._, October 25, 1856.
7 _Ibid._, March 28, 1857.
West Chester was one of the main stations on the Underground Railroad, the Dred Scott decision, much to Hodgson's chagrin, was held in almost open and complacent contempt. And this practice of flouting the law he placed in the same category with treason.

Opportunities were provided from time to time to further brand the abolition elements and the Republican party, but none quite equalled that which came with the raid of John Brown on Harper's Ferry, October 1859. The editor of The Jeffersonian wrote:

> We cannot excuse the leaders of the Republican party for this dreadful occurrence. . . . The murderous and savage onset at the Ferry is the legitimate result of the denunciations and instructions of such men as . . . Seward, Hale, Chase, and Greeley. In principle and feelings these men stand on the same platform as this blood-thirsty Brown. The difference is simply one of courage. They talk. He acts.\(^8\)

And, as for the abolitionists, they

have held their conventions all over the country, and taught the blackest treason year after year in the very streets and assembly rooms of West Chester. They have denounced the purest patriots that ever lived, from the immortal Washington down; and branded the noblest works of these men—the Declaration of Independence as a "lie" and the Constitution of the United States as an "agreement with Hell" and a "Covenant with Death."\(^9\)

When the State of Virginia hanged John Brown, Hodgson could not understand the anguish and manifestations of sorrow all over the North. "Why this sympathy for such an outlaw?" he inquired, "Why this grief for a man whose whole life is a dishonored history?"\(^10\)

Coming on down to the presidential campaign of 1860, The Jeffersonian looms large with diatribes and innuendoes. As might be expected Abraham Lincoln

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8 The Jeffersonian, October 29, 1859.
9 Ibid., October 22, 1859.
10 Ibid., November 19, 1859.
and his failings were ready themes for every issue. The editor began by explaining that

Mr. Lincoln was comparatively unknown to the people of this section of the Union until during the past winter when he made a tour to the Middle and New England States delivering political stump speeches at twenty-five cents per capita admission. He delivered a speech in the Cooper Institute . . . [from which] he realized $200 . . . the fact of his charging admission fee to his lectures—a thing unknown before in our political history . . . received the rebuke which such political showmanship deserved.11

Moreover, it seems that the Macomb (Illinois) Eagle had dug up from its files a speech made by Abraham Lincoln in 1844. In this address Lincoln had attempted to lower the prestige of Thomas Jefferson:

The character of Jefferson was repulsive. . . . Continually mulling about liberty, equality, and the degrading cause of slavery, he brought his own children under the hammer, and made money of his debaucheries. Even at his death he did not manumit his numerous offsprings, but left them body and soul, to degradation and the cart-strip. A daughter of this vaunted champion of Democracy was sold some years ago, at public auction in New Orleans, and purchased by a society of gentlemen, who wished to testify by her liberation their admiration of the statesman who “Dreamed of freedom in a slave’s embrace.”

Now to Hodgson, Thomas Jefferson was like unto Jehovah himself and to cast aspersions on his reputation was nothing short of blasphemy. Following the above quotation, he wrote:

This single line I have quoted gives more insight into the character of the man (Lincoln) than volumes of panegyric. It will outlive his epitaph write it who may. A man who thus speaks of the author of the Declaration of American Independence is utterly destitute of the feelings of a patriot, and ought to have the brand of shame affixed upon his forehead by the American people.12

Under the stress of election excitement, just three days before the verdict of the ballot box there ap-

11 The Jeffersonian, May 26, 1860.
12 Ibid., September 29, 1860.
peared the following prophecy in the columns of The Jeffersonian:

We now make the prediction that, in the event of Lincoln's election to the presidency, a dissolution of the Union will follow. We are no alarmist, but we can read the "signs of the times," and the "handwriting on the wall." . . . As sure as there is a God in Heaven, we will have fearful times in our country should the North elect Lincoln. His election would not only be an intentional insult to the South, but will be regarded as a declaration of war. . . . We have said that the election of Lincoln will be the death-knell to our Republic. We say so because we believe it.

The election returns for Chester County showed 5022 votes for Breckinridge, 7732 for Lincoln (15 townships out of the 61 townships and boroughs recorded a balance for Breckinridge). In West Chester, the county seat, Lincoln had 514 and his leading opponent 219 votes. While the county was behind the Lincoln platform, it was evident that the Democrats maintained a considerable following.

In the Democratic defeat, Hodgson blamed the outcome of the election squarely on the "northern fanatical abolition" and by January inquired:

Now in view of the Curtin [Governor of Pennsylvania] and Lincoln war against the South, soon to be commenced, the question arises—who will be the volunteers? Who will march South and with the coveted aid of negroes, shoot, and butcher our fellow countrymen? Whichever party will be willing we know one that will not. The Democratic party will not. Not a single Democrat can so volunteer.

In a further attempt to discredit Lincoln, an item which had appeared in some of the opposition papers was reprinted in the unofficial spokesman for the Democrats in Chester County.

During the presidential campaign the temperance men were given to understand that "old Abe" was perfectly abstemious—"never touches a drop of spiritous liquors." The tavern bills

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13 The Jeffersonian, November 3, 1860.
14 Ibid., January 12, 1861.
for entertainment of himself and suite, on their trip from Springfield to Washington, indicate plainly that if he is not a heavy drinker of the ardent himself, he must delight in the companionship of the tallest kind of suckers. The following bill for one day’s entertainment at Albany speaks for itself:

The State Of New York:
To T. Rossele & Son.
One day’s board of Hon. A. Lincoln and suite, parlors, dinners and breakfast in parlor .................. $576.50
Wine and liquors ........................................... 357.00
Segars ......................................................... 16.00
Telegraph .................................................... 1.13
Congress water, $2.50, baggage $4.87 .................... 7.37
Carriages ..................................................... 12.00
Sundry articles, stoves, chairs, etc. .................. 150.00

TOTAL $1120.00

There were 18 persons in the party, which is an average of 9 bottles a head.

Hodgson agreed with the Post:

We are not surprised after such drinking, at a considerable charge for Congress Water. Neither is it wonderful that breakages for stoves, chairs, and so forth, were set down at a hundred and fifty dollars. Fellows with nine bottles of liquor under their belts must have been in a state to break everything about them, even their own necks.\(^{15}\)

Of further grievances there were aplenty. Lincoln was not at all interested, for instance, in quieting “excited feelings most prevalent in the South” that had arisen on account of the results of the election:

Nero fiddling while Rome was burning is not an inapt illustration of Mr. Lincoln smoking his segar, drinking his lager beer, and cracking his familiar jokes up in Springfield, while the country is on the verge of ruin. He is probably occupied over his lager and segar with the question as to how many of the endorsers of Helper’s book he will put into his cabinet.\(^{16}\)

Then, in February, the sorrowing Democrat, surveying the great American scene, assumed the rôle of the

\(^{15}\) The Jeffersonian, March 16, 1861.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., November 24, 1860.
prophet Jeremiah in Lamentations over the fate of Zion:

The election of Abe Lincoln to the presidency will, we doubt not, go down in history as the great mistake of this age and of the American people. Some of the deplorable fruits it has already produced are before the world. The States discordant and almost belligerent, the Union virtually dissolved, commerce, manufactures and agriculture seriously depressed, and thousands and tens of thousands of mechanics and laborers without employment.\(^\text{17}\)

Commenting on the inaugural, the editor wrote that

... as a whole, it is a lame, unsatisfactory and discreditable production, inferior in every respect to anything that has ever emanated from any former President. In one word, the tiger’s claws are not the less formidable because concealed under the velvety fur of Sewardism.\(^\text{18}\)

Though the citizens had long been accustomed to Hodgson and had endured his steady stream of abuse, when the war started the spectacle of a disloyal newspaper in their midst enraged them completely. Their feelings became articulated through the Republican Congressman, John Hickman, a one time Democrat, a gifted orator and one of the ablest men that Chester County has ever produced. The standard historian of Chester County says of him that, “His speeches attracted attention throughout the civilized world for their force and keenness of satire. He was a leading candidate for Vice-President when Lincoln was nominated for President in 1860.”\(^\text{19}\)

Through the very nature of the circumstances Hickman and Hodgson were in a constant embroglio. Practically every issue of *The Jeffersonian* contained a caustic reference to “Hickman and his gang.” The fact that Hickman had bolted from the Democratic party

\(^{17}\) *The Jeffersonian*, February 23, 1861.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., March 9, 1861.

in a quarrel with Buchanan made him, in the estimate of the irate editor, a second Benedict Arnold. With the advent of war this personal quarrel became increasingly bitter.

Under what seems to have been a constant attack from several quarters, including the Hickman sector, Hodgson, believing that his life was actually endangered, came forth with a lengthy tirade entitled, "Hunting for Blood."

No man has been belied and falsified more than the editor of this paper during the past few weeks. Men who . . . profess to be Christian and make long prayers, . . . have spared no pains to eke out falsehood, to encourage mob spirit, to lay traps, to encourage eaves-dropping and slander . . . governed by feelings of personal hatred . . . if they dared would mob us, but for want of sufficient courage, sneakingly and stealthily belie and slander us.20

This was followed up with a complete repudiation of the charge of being a Secessionist and a claim to be standing as always "under the Stars and Stripes." However, this appeal, linked up with the fact that Hodgson was a Major in the State Militia, and various other evidences of loyalty, made little, if any, impression on the citizenry. The skepticism of the patriots is not surprising when one considers the initial cause for offense and the defiant Democrat proudly hurling such barbs as these: He had "a few of as fierce and vindictive enemies as any other man in this pleasant little borough of West Chester. . . We shall be very careful to give them no cause to change their tactics. Their friendship would ruin us."21

Later, when the opprobrium, "Copperhead," came into popular use, Hodgson even gloried in the epithet. "There is an applicability about it which speaks out boldly and has a palpable meaning,"22 said he, and then proceeded to print one of the favorite anti-Copper-

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20 The Jeffersonian, May 25, 1861.
21 Ibid., June 1, 1861.
22 Ibid., March 21, 1863.
head songs which was "respectfully dedicated to the Loyal League." The last stanza read:

Then "Loyal Men!" "League" Men! "Loyal Men," Rally!
Whilst at home in their shame the vile Copperheads dally.
To slaughter the rebels—and when they are dead
You may plant your brave heels on the Copperhead's head!  

By the middle of June, the rumor had circulated well over the country that the miscreant was about to be arrested and hanged for treason. No doubt the wish was father to the thought. The populace was reënforced in this belief by the 'Bloodhounds of Zion' as Hodgson termed the clergy who had taken up the battle-cry against him.

The fact is that a subpoena had been issued to be used in arresting the editor, though the defendant's name had not been supplied. In the meantime the opposition was endeavoring to dig up the proper evidence against him. Failing in this procedure other measures were resorted to.

The separate groups which had been aroused against Hodgson in the years of almost constant bickering and fighting now fused into one. The aroused hostility of the abolitionists and those who had been active in the operation of the Underground Railroad, the ire of the "Know-Nothings" and the implacable hatred of the Republicans, headed by John Hickman—all these at last demanded their toll.

Moreover, the general tone of The Jeffersonian, with its open sympathy and admiration for the South, its caustic criticism of Abraham Lincoln, and open defiance to the North, was altogether too much for the patriotic citizens steeped in the atmosphere of war time fervor.

On the night of August 19, 1861, an enraged mob forced its way into the office of the "Jeff" and destroyed everything in sight. We shall let the Republican journal, the Village Record, describe the event.

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28 The Jeffersonian, September 5, 1863.
A PRINTING OFFICE DESTROYED—SACKING OF THE JEFFERSONIAN

The office of The Jeffersonian in West Chester was entered in Monday night last, and the newspaper press broken, the hand press pitched out of the window and the type knocked into a pile and thrown into an adjoining sink. On Tuesday morning the office presented a desolate looking spectacle. Nothing but a few bundles of papers were to be seen either in the first or second stories of the office. Who the perpetrators of this act were we have no knowledge. It is believed they came from the country. The night was moonlight.24

The Village Record's attempt to blame the disastrous affair upon unknown men "who came from the country" was a smoke-screen. While no public revelations were ever made as to the personal identity of any of the members of the mob, the townspeople knew that the participants were connected with a newly formed secret Republican organization in West Chester.25

Apparently no serious efforts were ever made to apprehend the guilty parties. The raid seems to have had the general support of public opinion. The Village Record, in a lengthy editorial, reflected the feeling at the time and practically justified the mob action: "We are not surprised ... the plot is forming ... for uniting our State within the Southern Confederacy—it has its advocates in Chester County ... its presses, and its orators."26

The one public protest came from the Democrats, who, at the next county meeting early in September, went on record as condemning "the destruction of the type, presses, etc. of The Jeffersonian newspaper office ... by a mob as a base and dastardly outrage on constitutional rights, and highly disgraceful to the community in which it was perpetrated."27 So bitter was

24 The Village Record, August 24, 1861.
25 Statement to the writer by Squire Paxson who lived in West Chester at the time.
26 The Village Record, August 24, 1861.
27 The Jeffersonian, October 26, 1861.
the feeling that none of the journals in West Chester would print a word of the resolutions.

However, in less than a week after the dismantling of the party organ of the Democrats something far more serious had transpired. On the 23rd of August, the United States marshal, William Millward, sent his deputies out to close the office and take possession "upon authority of the President of the United States."

With the strong arm of the law, as well as the majority of the people against him, one would conclude that Hodgson gave up the struggle. Far from it. Undaunted, he went to the district attorney, Coffey, who had given the order for the suppression of the newspaper, and demanded that the property be given back. Coffey asked the editor to sign a pledge stating that he "believed the only way to put down the rebellion and restore the Union is by war." To this demand Hodgson replied, "I would rather die than give any pledge to a paper of that kind in order to get the property back."

The case came up for a hearing in the United States Circuit Court in Philadelphia on Monday, October 7th. The attorneys for the defense were William B. Reed and George Biddle. Reed was later counsel for Jefferson Davis in the latter's trial in Richmond, Virginia, June 5, 1865.

It is sufficient to state at this point that the court saw no specific charge in the indictment that The Jeffersonian had been used "to aid and abet the insurrection." Time was given for amended information and after several delays the district attorney dropped the case, whereupon the property was immediately restored by the court to the owners.

But the victorious editor was not content with a mere restoration of property. He instituted suit

28 The Jeffersonian, February 7, 1863.
29 Ibid., October 26, 1861.
against the marshal and his deputies for trespass *vi et armis*.

Although the court had restored the privilege of publication which was resumed with the issue of October 26, 1861, the newspaper found itself confronted with a new difficulty in that the United States Postmaster General Blair denied it the use of the mails.

Protests against this seemingly arbitrary action on the part of the Post Office came forth in abundance. Hodgson accused Blair of being guilty of "petty partizan malice." The Hollidaysburg *Standard* frankly stated, "This is small potatoes to say the least. We have received two issues of that paper [*The Jeffersonian*] and for the life of us can see nothing in its columns that smells half so much of treason as some of the expressions we have recently heard fall from the lips of prominent Republicans because of the removal of Fremont." The Luzerne *Union* had not supported Breckinridge but "thought every man could choose his own candidate." The Columbia *Democrat* deplored the suppression as did likewise the Pottsville *Standard, et al.*

In the midst of the commotion and apparently without any explanation the use of the mails was restored on January 18, 1862.

The question naturally arises, "Who was ultimately responsible for the seizure of the 'Jeff' and its being barred from the mails?" Ample circumstantial evidence pointed to John Hickman. Being a member of Congress, extremely loyal to his party, and an enemy of Hodgson, it was pretty generally believed that he had passed the word on to the proper authorities. For such interference Hickman was branded by his

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80 *The Jeffersonian*, November 2, 1861.
81 Quoted in *The Jeffersonian*, November 16, 1861.
82 *Ibid*.
83 *Ibid*. 
victim as "a political renegade and trickster" engaged in "small and dirty business." Proper respect was also paid to the "Taylors, Pearces, and Capones and other curs and puppies of the abolition kennel.

The Democratic papers, particularly in Pennsylvania, had been watching the progress of events in West Chester with an anxious eye. The Northumberland Democrat rejoiced at the victory of restoration: "Thus ends the only attempt of the government to suppress Democratic papers in Pennsylvania. We hope soon to see The Jeffersonian in full blast again, despite Hickman and his gang of mobbites." The Luzerne Union was thankful to observe that "the reign of terror is passing away as indicated by The Jeffersonian being restored to the mails." The Lancaster Intelligencer, The Reading Gazette, the Easton Sentinel, and others expressed the same sentiments.

The staunch Republican journals, however, kept up the attack. With the removal of the padlock from the doors of the office of the West Chester journal, the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin warned:

Unless we greatly mistake the temper of the people of West Chester, there will not be many numbers of the revived journal printed unless it conforms to the sentiment of the loyal North, and ceases to assail the government in its efforts to put down the most infamous of rebellions.

Such a proclamation, of course, had all the earmarks of an appeal to the citizens of West Chester to resort again to mob law.

Forney's Philadelphia Press had already become re-

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44 The Jeffersonian, December 28, 1861.
46 Ibid., November 9, 1861.
47 Ibid., January 25, 1862.
48 Ibid., November 9, 1861.
49 Ibid., January 25, 1862.
50 Ibid., October 26, 1861.
51 Ibid.
nowned for its anti-Democratic complex. On the morning that the case of The Jeffersonian was heard in Philadelphia before the United States Circuit Court, the Press gave its instructions in an imprecatory psalm. The attorney, Mr. Reed, was labeled "the ablest, most crafty and industrious enemy of the government in this quarter," who was in turn defending John Hodgson, "one of the worst enemies of the government." "No attorney," continued Forney, "should be permitted to appear before any court as the advocate of a known, published traitor to his country—particularly when that attorney is himself believed to be in sympathy with the enemies of his country." Referring to the judiciary, Forney announced: "We trust that if the civil tribunals refuse to crush the enemies of the country the military arm will be invoked to do the work in which they have failed."42

With the aid of such publicity, adverse and otherwise, as soon as the presses of The Jeffersonian renewed their activity the circulation list began to increase in considerable proportions.

The great climax in the adventurous history of the Copperhead newspaper really came on February 3, 1863, when the case of Hodgson vs. Millward et al. was called for trial in Philadelphia before Chief Justice Lowrie.

The defense represented by the skilled Ex-Judge Knox and David Webster, maintained that the suppression of The Jeffersonian had been authorized by Abraham Lincoln. The United States district attorney claimed that he had telegraphed to the government and had received instructions to act at once. The plaintiff in suing for damages was represented by Reed and Biddle, and attempted to show the illegality of the seizure from any point of view. In summing up their side of the case, the lawyers asked,

"The Philadelphia Press, October 21, 1861."
A Pennsylvania jury to show the Federal officials that, while nowhere should they have within the law more thorough support, neither a marshal nor district attorney, nor Secretary of War, nor President, dared, contrary to law, to put his foot on the neck or his hand into the pocket of a citizen of the Commonwealth.\footnote{\textit{The Jeffersonian}, February 7, 1863.}

The New York \textit{World}, which had been closely following the case rejoiced:

Those who remembered the ferocious fanaticism of the year before—the appeals of Forney to the military and the mob to crush the refractory lawyers, listened with gratified astonishment to the bold but perfectly decorous language of those very lawyers \ldots Every man felt, as he listened to this appeal of liberty and law, that the day of lawless tyranny was drawing to a close. The counsel for the defense had the most fervent and elaborate appeals to passion and prejudice.\footnote{Quoted in \textit{The Jeffersonian}, February 21, 1863.}

Considering the excitement of war time, to which even judges are susceptible, the charge of Judge Lowrie to the jury is one of the clearest and most dispassionate on record. The judge informed the jury that,

No one can pretend that our law was changed by the mere fact of the Rebellion, so far as it relates to the rights that now claim to be vindicated by us. \ldots The very purpose of law is to set a rule that may remain fixed and immovable among the disturbances of society, and that shall be the standard of judging them. \ldots If it yielded to excitements it would be judged by them instead of being their judge.

He cautioned them again that all the officers of the land are under the law. The acts of the President himself must be according to law and under the Constitution, though he saw "no sufficient evidence that the President of the United States authorized the seizure complained of." As for the defendants they were "mere trespassers from the beginning to the end."

The jury was instructed that the plaintiff had the right to full compensation for the actual loss sustained by him, but "the damages you may give are of no sort
of importance compared with the decision upon principles that has devolved upon me.""

The twelve good men and true returned a sealed verdict the next morning in which the plaintiff was awarded $512 damages.

The verdict of the jury is rather a striking testimony to the spirit of fair play which characterized the trial, and was looked upon by the Democrats and Copperhead newspapers as a remarkable defense of ancient rights as guaranteed by the Constitution.

The New York World, which itself was soon to feel the clutches of the law, proclaimed:

Honor, then we say, all honor to the Pennsylvania Chief Justice, and the Philadelphia jury. They have unbarred a gate of light upon a long darkened community... Honor to the Philadelphia lawyers who have quietly and resolutely done their duty.

The Philadelphia Mercury declared:

The opinion of Chief Justice Lowrie... makes an interesting point of progress in our political and judicial history... He has plainly told Mr. Lincoln and his officials what the law is, and that they are absolutely bound by it as any private citizen, however humble. And this is just what the administration in Washington and all its blind followers need to be told, plainly and bluntly at this time... We are glad that there was one judicial officer who was bold and conscientious enough to declare the truth, regardless of the consequences...
In him we find the sort of stuff these turbulent and revolutionary times demand.... He has taught us the value of a true man in high office... and the people should heed the lesson.

On a technicality the case was later retried before the United States Circuit Court, October 29, 1864. At that time Chief Justice Grier told the jury there was in the suppression of The Jeffersonian "no evidence of malice but some evidence that the district attorney did this to satisfy some people out of doors" — (that is

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45 The Jeffersonian, February 7, 1863; 3 Grant 406, 412; 5 Philadelphia 243, 302; Hare, J. I. C., American Constitutional Law, II. 1082.
46 Quoted in The Jeffersonian, February 21, 1863.
47 Ibid., February 14, 1863.
John Hickman et al.). The jury after being out for twenty-three hours awarded damages to Hodgson for the amount of $504.33.48

Now lest it might be inferred that after the seizure and during the litigation in the courts that Hodgson changed the tone of his weekly chronicle, the following incidents and comparisons with the contemporary Republican journal like the Village Record will serve to show that the editor did not swerve from his original convictions. In fact, the editor of the Village Record stated, "Had the government listened to the counsels of such presses as The Jeffersonian, Jeff Davis would now occupy the capitol at Washington and the rebel flag would float over the Keystone State."49

This judgment was very true for in many respects The Jeffersonian appeared to have been edited and printed in Richmond, Virginia. All the principle speeches of Jefferson Davis, his messages to the Confederate Congress, proclamations and deliberations were printed in full as often as space and circumstances permitted. The speeches of Vallandigham occupied whole pages. Arguments on behalf of slavery, mainly from Southern preachers, appeared by the wholesale. Negroes were simply "niggers"—and this was a "nigger war to liberate the niggers" and make them the equal of the white man. When the Republican journal, the Chester County Times, went out of existence as a separate publication, January 1, 1863, Hodgson in announcing the obituary, gave the diagnosis. It had "died of nigger on the brain—a prevailing Republican disease."50

As for the progress of the war, the editor was little interested in the North. None of the Northern victories were ever heralded or cheered. After the battle of the Merrimac and the Monitor, the Village Record gave

48 The Jeffersonian, October 29, 1864.
49 The Village Record, February 25, 1862.
50 The Jeffersonian, January 13, 1863.
lengthy accounts in successive issues, including all the details and special articles by the inventor, John Ericsson. *The Jeffersonian* merely gave a brief account of the conflict.

When Lee started for Pennsylvania the news soon reached West Chester that the rebels were just a few miles away. Many of the inhabitants started to bury their valuables and pack up what little could be carried away. The *Village Record* seems to have been about ready to close up, but its Democratic neighbor remained unperturbed.

With Lee’s defeat, the buried silverware was dug up and replaced on the tables. The editor of the *Village Record* thanked God for the deliverance. Hodgson, characteristically, barely mentioned the news, doubted whether the war were nearly over and took occasion to launch an attack on the authorities.

“The deep disgrace of a hostile invasion to which Pennsylvania has been compelled to submit,” wrote he, “humiliates the heart of every true son of her soil. Blame Lincoln and Curtin.” The Governor of the Keystone State was accused of not having done his part to prevent the invasion. Moreover, he was a coward. The evidence on this point consisted in the fact that the Governor had maintained a locomotive under full steam on the track at Harrisburg to enable him to escape should the rebels advance upon the capitol.51

In the same issue that carried the text and account of Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” the readers were informed:

**WHAT ABE COST US**—Lincoln has cost his country three thousand millions of dollars and a million of lives and the end is not yet. What a scourge to humanity that he was ever born. . . . Is Lincoln fit to be President of the United States? Thousands and tens of thousands who voted for him are ready to say he is not fit.52

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51 *The Jeffersonian*, July 25, 1863.
52 *Ibid.*., November 28, 1863.
In December, 1863, Hodgson, agreed with an exchange, the Easton Argus, that,

If ever a man has prostituted his position for personal and political aggrandizement, President Lincoln has. . . If the country needs any additional evidence that Abraham Lincoln has neither the honesty of a patriot nor the ability of a statesman, it has it in the last message.53

In commenting upon the call for 500,000 in another draft, July 23, 1864, Hodgson pronounced it: “The Slaughter Pen—Half a Million More Men for the Shambles—The Want of Brains Must Be Made Up By Numbers.” This was followed with full publicity of the draft riots and derision over the $300 provision for a substitute.54

On July 30, 1864, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania was burned in a “Rebel raid.” Hodgson, while expressing grief, did not in any way blame the Confederates. They were completely justified in such activities inasmuch as the Northerners had been carrying on the same practices in the South. Ample space was given to stories of atrocities perpetrated by Northern soldiers and indignities suffered by Southern women at the hands of the Yankees. These atrocity stories measure up very favorably to those circulated during the World War.

One of the most bitter attacks on Lincoln, whom Hodgson called the “Smutty joker,” appeared in the issue of August 6, 1864. In response to the call by the President for a day of humiliation and prayer, the editor exclaimed:

God’s curse is upon the land. . . . On this day, above all others, as the special appointment of the great Illinois jester and buffoon, does it become us to acknowledge the truth, and pray for forgiveness of God for any and every part we may have taken in upholding the sins and abominations of this wicked administration . . . to put on sack-cloth and retrace our steps. . . . Oh, God, give us Peace! . . . Stop this bloody hell-devised carnage. . . . Give to our rulers wisdom for smutty jokes and to their

53 Quoted in The Jeffersonian, December 26, 1863.
54 The Jeffersonian, July 23, 1864.
councils seriousness for mirth and drunkenness; wipe out from the palaces of the country harlots and unclean beasts that riot upon a nation’s treasury.

When the news of a sex scandal broke out in Washington, Hodgson headed the account with “The History of Lincolnism is Making a Monstrous Record of Gross Licentiousness. Horrible Immoralities Testimony of the Mistresses of Government Officers. Abe Lincoln says, ‘We are making history,’ and this is a part of it.”

Much of the current news was bent to serve the theory that Lincoln and the administration were responsible for the demoralization of the country. Every rape committed by a negro upon a white woman was given the appropriate space and comment, while every negro criminal was duly held up as an example of what might be expected when freedom came to be theirs. The Emancipation Proclamation was adjudged a thoroughgoing program for “miscegenation”—a word which the editor became extremely fond of using. Moreover, judging from the number of white women who eloped with negroes in the pages of The Jeffersonian, racial intermixture was already proceeding at a rapid rate.

The ends to which news was given out to suit the occasion may be further illustrated. It seems that one Eli Haine from the hinterland of Chester County was charged with rape upon the person of a Margaret Johnson. The editor emphasized the fact that the girl was a Republican, came of a Republican family, and had been returning from a Republican meeting on the night of the crime. And, of course, the offending young man was a Republican too for he had been at the meeting. The excuse for relaying these details grew out of the fact that the Village Record, in reporting the case, had

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55 The Jeffersonian, July 16, 1864.
56 Ibid., July 23, 1864.
conveyed the impression that the parties concerned were Democrats.\textsuperscript{57}

When the war finally came to an end and Lee surrendered Hodgson was not displeased since he had always been opposed to "the slaughter," as he called it. It is difficult to determine whether he ever secretly hoped that Lee would win.

Incidents and comments following upon the assassination of Lincoln are of interest in showing the state of mind that existed at that time. At the reception of the news, the editor of the \textit{Village Record}, Henry S. Evans, wrote:

Never within the recollection of our citizens was such a time of sorrow witnessed in West Chester as that of the last week. ... Soldiers who had faced the cannon's mouth, and men, old and young, who never knew what it was to weep, cried when they heard it, and every one's countenance wore an expression of gloom and sadness. They had all lost a dear, very dear friend. Scarcely a smiling face was seen throughout the day.\textsuperscript{58}

Practically every building in West Chester was heavily shrouded in mourning. But Hodgson did not drape either the newspaper or the office. Such a lack of respect did not pass unnoticed. A Philadelphia newspaper directed attention:

It is said that the only newspaper in this State bearing no sign of mourning for the President's death since the murder was perpetrated is the West Chester \textit{Jeffersonian}, an intensely Copperhead sheet.\textsuperscript{59}

The recalcitrant editor explained this apparent lack of respect, saying:

When the news of the death of Mr. Lincoln reached Philadelphia the \textit{Age} hung out a flag at half mast draped with black, which so incensed the abolitionists that they threatened to tear out the office. We were also threatened. Under these circumstances

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{The Jeffersonian}, February 4, 1865.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{The Village Record}, April 22, 1865.

\textsuperscript{59} Quoted in \textit{The Jeffersonian}, May 6, 1865.
as a good law abiding citizen we deemed it prudent to give the abolitionists no cause for offense and therefore published our paper as usual without crape or black lines.60

The Village Record, sorely torn between lament and trying Calvinistically to accept God’s will, finally rationalized the situation. “The name of Lincoln is now immortal,” said Evans and continued,

In this sudden death of President Lincoln we are forced to the conviction that it is the hand of Providence. . . . Abraham Lincoln was but His Instrument. He is now put aside—and another great man—a brave, fearless patriot and statesman, Andrew Johnson, takes up the work yet to be done. We bow in profound humility to this sore Providence, but with an abiding faith that He doeth all things well. So let us rejoice in our sorrows.61

Hodgson, by contrast, far from struggling with any theological or philosophical notions of Providential guidance in the assassination, laid the responsibility for the President’s death to the hands of a “private assassin” and no more.

We adopt the language of the Freeman’s Journal. A fearful and ill omened crime has been perpetrated. President Lincoln has lost his life at the hands of a private assassin. . . .

To the general interest of the people, South and North the prolonged life of Abraham Lincoln had assumed within the fortnight before his assassination, a value that it had lacked up to that period. . . .

Lincoln’s death is a calamity to these States. Four years of rule, in the midst of such carnage and worse was an education for any one. There was hope that Lincoln had profited by it. That hope has been blasted by his taking off. Now we know not what is before us. But, anyway, crime, such as the private assassination of political functionaries, is no cure for our evils.62

The undue emphasis on the “private assassination” was, of course, to show that Booth did the deed on his own account rather than at the prompting or instigation of the Democrats or the Knights of the Golden Circle, as Evans tried to prove was the case. In fact,

60 The Jeffersonian, May 6, 1865.
61 The Village Record, April 18, 1865.
62 The Jeffersonian, April 22, 1865.
the latter went so far as to intimate that this "ungodly" organization had its representatives in the Democratic ranks of West Chester. Reading between the lines, one perceived the clear inference that Hodgson was indirectly responsible for the death of Lincoln. Hence with Booth’s death the Village Record noted ironically:

It is only fair that it should be stated that The Jeffersonian bore no sign of mourning over the fate of Booth, the assassin of the President.63

In the middle of December, 1866, a Reverend Ly-sander Walker of Columbia, Iowa, in the course of a sermon, remarked, "Before Abraham Lincoln was Buchanan, and after Lincoln came Johnson. Christ was crucified between two thieves, so was Lincoln." Hodgson, who had a very low opinion of the clergy anyway, in a lengthy comment on the above quotation, called it nothing short of "blasphemy."64

Hodgson’s final estimate of the significance of the life of Abraham Lincoln appeared in a comment on a news item in January, 1866. A biographer was being sought to do justice to the life of Lincoln. The old Copperhead wrote:

It was a hard job to find an eulogist for the late President. Mr. Stanton was first selected, and for a time the world expected to be electrified with his eloquence. But upon reviewing his ground he refused to stultify himself, having a perfect knowledge of his subject, and declined. Holt also declined; and Sumner wanted pay for his genius. Finally, they found a man "down East," Bancroft, who knows as little about Lincoln’s private life and virtues as most people; he has consented, but they have got to pay him for it. Really, how the mighty has fallen. But what base ingratitude to the late President. His memory so soon flagging and his monument almost forgotten.65

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63 Quoted in The Jeffersonian, May 6, 1865.
64 The Jeffersonian, December 15, 1866.
65 Ibid., January 20, 1866.