

The Diary of Sidney George Fisher

1865

ALTHOUGH 1865 brought the end of the Civil War and much rejoicing, it was in many respects a difficult year for the diarist. Two of his brothers-in-law, leaders of the extreme southern sympathizing faction of Philadelphia's Democratic party, fell into trouble with the law and the mob. More personal difficulties than such family disasters were Fisher's declining state of health, which required him to make another excursion to the watering place of Richfield in New York, and the failure of the peach crop at his farm in Maryland, which necessitated more borrowing and heavier debt. Most interesting in comparison with events of our own times are the diarist's reactions to a presidential assassination and to the movement for full civil rights for the Negro.

April 5, 1865 A long gap in my diary. The last volume closed Nov. 30th. I suffered so much from gout then that I felt no inclination to write or make any exertion. Soon afterwards the pain increased so much that I could not come down stairs. I sent for Dr. Wister.¹ He ordered me to stay in bed, which I did from the 4th of December till the 20th of Jan'y. I had an acute attack of rheumatic gout, chiefly in my right knee, tho there was much swelling & pain in the other. I suffered a good deal for the first week or ten days; afterwards, I was free from pain when I did not move a leg. Slowly I got better & on the 20th I got up & could hobble into my dressing room. On the 23rd I came down stairs & on 27th went to town in the carriage to attend to some business. Since then I have been getting very slowly better, but am far from well. I have a great deal of pain, especially at night, in my knees, shoulders, neck & wrists. I walk with difficulty & perform every little necessary operation with diffi-

¹ Dr. Owen J. Wister, the diarist's physician and friend.

culty & pain, such as dressing, carving, eating, rising from or sitting upon a chair, getting in & out of a carriage &c. In short, I am a cripple, tho not quite helpless yet. My general health has been good, I have a good appetite & generally sleep well. Wister has fed me up & stimulated my system. I drink ale & whisky every day for dinner & take quinine and cod-liver oil. I cannot say that I have spent an unpleasant winter. . . .

Public affairs have been more satisfactory. I think the rebellion is now virtually crushed & that before many days we shall have peace. . . . When Sidney came from school he said that Richmond was taken & that in Germantown bells were ringing & flags flying. At 3½ Jim² stopped here on his pony on his way home. He came to tell us that Richmond was taken & the town (Philada) in a state of wild excitement, Chestnut St. crowded, firemen parading & sounding steam whistles, guns firing & bells ringing. And so it was all over the country. The people feel that the nation has been victorious, that the great rebellion has been put down, that the country & the government have been saved. Truly it is a glorious event & a signal triumph of truth & justice over a foul treason & a wicked cause.

During the winter two men of note have departed. Edw'd Everett and Geo. M. Dallas, neither of them ranking in the highest order of ability, but each eminent in his way. I have met Mr. Everett³ occasionally, but never liked his cold, formal manners. Mr. Dallas I knew very well from the time I was admitted to the bar, & was a frequent visitor at his house. He was very gracious & kind in his manners, had the air & breeding of a gentleman, was handsome, a tall well made figure, pleasing countenance, white hair, was worthy & amiable in all private relations, but he was a Democrat and a demagogue.⁴

In January I received a note from Joshua Fisher announcing the engagement of his daughter Helen to young John Cadwalader, a son of Jno Cadwalader, Judge of the Dist. Court of U.S. It is a very fair match. The young man is very amiable, good looking & gentleman-like, & comes of an old & distinguished family. He is a lawyer & will

² James Logan Fisher, the diarist's nephew.

³ Edward Everett (1794-1865), of Massachusetts, the famous orator.

⁴ George Mifflin Dallas (1792-1865) had held many offices, including those of mayor of Philadelphia, attorney general of Pennsylvania, United States senator, vice-president of the United States, and minister both to Russia and to Great Britain.

have influence to push him forward. Whether he has the talents necessary for success, I do not know. Fisher is more violent & extravagant in his opinions about the war than ever, indeed I really think he is a monomaniac on the subject. He told me the other day that the Middletons are all ruined, that Middleton Place⁵ was burned, that all the gentlemen were reduced to poverty, and mentioned the case of a lady, the wife of a judge, who was selling ground nuts & cakes at the corner of the streets of Savannah to our soldiers, & of a gentleman, whom I knew, who was selling pies. I doubt these stories.

April 6, 1865 Went to town chiefly to try to get one or two men to send down to Severson.⁶ Labor is very scarce & wages high. He wrote me a day or two ago that hands were asking \$20 & \$25 per mo. & that he could find none at that & asked me to send him two. I had heard recently that discharged soldiers of our army and rebel deserters were coming in great numbers North & that they were eagerly sought as laborers by farmers & others & one or two instances were mentioned in which rebel deserters had proved satisfactory. They are anxious to get employment & will accept moderate wages. I went to the Volunteer Refreshment Saloon at the foot of Washington St., where these people are collected. The officer in charge told me that they were getting them everyday in large numbers, & that they were eagerly sought by farmers & immediately got places. I saw one only, a young Virginian, who was engaged, but I did not go at the proper hour.

April 8, 1865 Sam & Mary Fox & Elizth Fisher dined with us.⁷ We invited them some days ago. The Foxes have become rich. Mary has a large interest in the Bloomsburgh Iron Works, which has become very valuable, paying her an income of \$12,000. Sam last summer invested \$200 in an oil co. & soon afterwards sold his shares for \$44,000. The oil of Penna. has added immensely to the wealth of the state, almost as much as coal or iron. It has been discovered in many places west of the mountains, hundreds of companies have

⁵ Middleton Place near Charleston, the home of Eliza Middleton who had married Joshua Francis Fisher, the diarist's cousin.

⁶ The farmer at Mount Harmon.

⁷ Mary R. Fisher, who had married Samuel M. Fox, was the younger sister of Elizabeth R. Fisher of Wakefield.

been formed to make wells, many of which have been successful & some individuals have made enormous fortunes.

April 10, 1865 Drizzling rain all day. Great news this morning. Yesterday Gen'l Lee surrendered himself & his whole army to Gen'l Grant.

April 11, 1865 Read an article on Reconstruction in last number of N. Am. Review. The writer advocates conferring the right of suffrage on the Negroes, North & South. This absurd plan gains supporters. The abolitionists cannot bear to lose so fruitful a theme of excitement as the position of the Negro race, so that now, having emancipated him, they propose going a step further by granting him political power. Already universal suffrage is acknowledged by all thinking men to be the chief source of danger to our government because of the ignorance & recklessness of the mob which is thus brought to bear on our politics, yet these fanatics wish to add the mass of the abject & degraded Negro population to make, what was already bad enough, a great deal worse. The men who are doing this belong to the conservative classes, whilst those who oppose the scheme are the Democrats, each contradicting thus the principles of its own party for the sake of partizan success, the Republicans, because they hope to gain the Negro vote in the South & elsewhere in the next elections, the Democrats, because if they advocated Negro suffrage they would lose the Irish vote. Such motives sway the leaders & managers of parties, & those who care chiefly for party victory, who are a large number, whilst others take sides according to passion, prejudice, & the influence of social position & education.

April 15, 1865 Calamitous news indeed this morning and a sad interruption to the joyful hopes inspired by late events. The national exultation at the prospects of peace & union has been suddenly converted into alarm & grief. Mr. Lincoln & Mr. Seward have been assassinated. Mr. Lincoln is dead & Mr. Seward, it is supposed, mortally wounded. This morning, about 8 o'clock, Sidney knocked at my dressing room door, "Father," he said, "Lincoln is shot." "Nonsense, child, how did you hear that?" "It is true, Cornelius⁸ heard it at the village. He was shot because he tried to shoot Seward." I was bathing. Bet soon came to the door & said that Cornelius had

⁸ Cornelius Shelly, the farmer at Forest Hill.

brought the news from the village that the President had been killed, adding that she thought the story probable enough as he went about everywhere, with the utmost confidence, alone. She had sent to the village for the paper, as ours is not delivered before 11 o'clock. In a little while, when I was half dressed, she brought the paper and read to me, half crying & in a tremulous voice, the sad & terrible story.

I felt for some time a mere dull & stupefied sense of calamity. What disasters, what wide-spread misfortune may not these events produce. A vague feeling of coming ill & real sorrow for Mr. Lincoln, deprived me of the power to think & reason on the subject. I felt as tho I had lost a personal friend, for indeed I have & so has every honest man in the country. Bet said she was as much agitated as if she had lost a relation. Mr. Lincoln's character was so kind, so generous, so noble, that he inspired personal attachment in those who can appreciate such qualities, malignant & bitter hatred, however, in southern people & Democrats, who saw with envy the popularity he acquired, the affectionate respect that was generally expressed for him & his growing fame at home and abroad. He was indeed the great man of the period. On his integrity, constancy, capacity, the hopes of the country rested. He possessed the entire confidence of the people. His perfect uprightness & purity of purpose were beyond all doubt. His ability to comprehend all the questions before the country & to deal with them in an efficient, practical manner, his firmness & purpose & strength of will, were equally well known, whilst his frank, easy, animated manners and conversation, his entire freedom from vanity, or pride, or self seeking or apparent consciousness of his position, except as to its duties, won all hearts. His death is a terrible loss to the country, perhaps even a greater loss to the South than to the North, for Mr. Lincoln's humanity & kindness of heart stood between them and the party of the North who urge measures of vengeance & severity. The southern people have murdered their best friend, as they are likely to find ere long. The feelings of good will & conciliation, which were spreading thro the North at the hopes of speedy peace, will now be checked & converted in the minds of many into resentment & rage.

Dr. Wister came about 3 o'clock. He ordered a new pill for me, but I have but little hope & I fancy he has little. We had a great deal of talk about this deplorable event. He says the people everywhere

seem stunned and overwhelmed, the windows of the houses in Germantown & the city bowed & draped in black, everybody in the streets looking sad & depressed, in striking contrast with the hilarious cheerful expression of all faces a few days ago, or indeed yesterday. Bet, who went up to Germantown to Jack, the dentist,⁹ remarked this when she returned. In the afternoon, I sent Daniel up Germantown for an evening paper. Not one to be had, all sold. He said that he heard that the Mayor had ordered out the police to protect the office of the Age, a Democratic paper from the mob. Very likely. The forbearance of the people has been wonderful. The Democrats in their speeches & their press have denounced the war & its motives & purposes, gloried in every rebel victory, mourned over their defeats, vilified the North, abused every officer of the government and above all Mr. Lincoln, on whom they have lavished every epithet of scorn & contempt; he was a usurper, a tyrant, a blackguard, a ruffian, a buffoon, a gorilla, a kangaroo, & his administration was worse than an eastern despotism. They have been permitted to do this without check or molestation, thus refuting their own charges. At length, Mr. Lincoln has been murdered by a Democrat in the execution of a plot made by Democrats. That a leading Democratic paper or leading demagogue of the party should require at such a moment the protection of the police is not surprising.

April 17, 1865 Drove to town with Bet. Festoons of black cloth hanging from the windows of almost every house, shutters closed, flags in all directions with black streamers, portraits of Lincoln draped in crape in hundreds of windows. The city quiet & has been, except the attempted attack on the Age office, which the police prevented. The windows of the houses of leading Democrats all bowed. The Mayor sent them notice that unless they gave this external mark of respect to the popular sentiment he would not be answerable for the consequences. Joshua Fisher's house bowed among the rest, which must have been a bitter pill for him to swallow.

April 21, 1865 Dr. Wister here in the morning. He prescribed a new remedy as I get no better under the present treatment. He told me that Edward Ingersoll¹⁰ had made in New York another violent speech, a few days ago, against the government, advocating the re-

⁹ Dr. Louis Jack lived at Germantown Avenue and Shoemaker's Lane.

¹⁰ Brother-in-law of the diarist.

pudiation of the national debt. The war he said against the South & slavery was a violation of the Constitution, therefore the debt contracted to sustain the war was unconstitutional. The speech, Wister said, was published today & had excited very strong feeling against him so that he was in danger of being mobbed.

Bet brought out the Evening Bulletin. It contains a short article about Edward's speech, headed "The Ingersoll and Booth doctrine." It then says that on Thursday, the evening before the murder of the President, Edward Ingersoll at a dinner given in New York by the Anti Abolition State Rights Society, made a speech & with many other seditious and traitorous sentiments said: "I yield to no man in sympathy for the people of the South, a gallant people struggling nobly for their liberty against as sordid & vile a tyranny as ever proposed the degradation of our race, nay I go further & with Jefferson, Madison, & Livingston embrace the doctrine of secession as an American doctrine, without which American institutions cannot permanently live." The article significantly adds, "Shall such a *traitor* be allowed to dwell with and among us of Phila." Such an intimation at a moment of profound excitement like the present is ominous of trouble. What indeed can a man expect who has the audacity publicly to utter such sentiments in the midst of civil war. It is in accordance with his usual conversation. Some months ago he made another speech, in which he counselled open resistance to the government. It seems to me that the government ought to put some restraint upon practices which if they could succeed would overturn its authority. Here is a man who is permitted openly to advocate resistance to the laws & the destruction of the national credit, & yet talks of tyranny. I really think that to arrest him would be the best thing for *him* that the government could do. It might save his life.

April 24, 1865 The paper full of accounts of the reception of Mr. Lincoln's remains. Windows closed, 30,000 people at the station when the train arrived, a great procession, appropriate ceremonies at the Hall, guards everywhere to preserve order, and a file of people that reached almost to the Schuylkill going in turn to look at his face. This began at 6 o'clock yesterday & continued till evening, thousands waiting patiently for hours.

April 27, 1865 The catastrophe I have so long dreaded for Edward & Charles Ingersoll has at length occurred. Bet & I drove

to town this morning at 12. I stopped at the office where Hollis¹¹ told me that Edward had been arrested, as H & I supposed by Federal authority. I drove with Bet at once to Charles'.¹² On our way, Wm. Rotch Wister stopped us & said that this morning Edw'd came in by the 9 o'clock train of the Germantown railroad. When it got to the station at 9th & Green, the passengers as they got out began to hoot at Edward & denounce him as a traitor. They followed him in this manner for a short distance when he turned & faced them. A certain Capt'n Withington, of Germantown, officer in a Penna. regiment, then advanced to him & with some abusive epithets demanded an apology to the people for the treasonable sentiments he had uttered. Edward told him to "go to hell." They both had canes & immediately began to exchange blows, the crowd surrounding them, flourishing their sticks & encouraging Withington. Edward very soon stepped back a few paces & drew a pistol. The crowd retreated for a moment &, fortunately, two police officers stepped up, took him in charge & conducted him to a station house. Having heard this story from Wister, we went on to Charles'. I went into his office where I found him with Peter McCall, consulting as to the best course for Edward to take. He was then safe, being in charge of the police, where they wished him to remain for the present. I told them that such was the feeling of indignation he had excited, that his life would be in danger if he appeared in public now, in the street, in a car, on the road near or in Germantown, and that if he returned to his house it would surely be attacked by the mob. I thought therefore that the only thing left for him to do was to go away for a time; that he might go to a farm he had recently bought in Montgy Co. or to Troy¹³ or anywhere, till the excitement subsided, which it would probably do ere long, as new events were constantly occurring to engage public attention. McCall agreed to this. Charles hesitated, evidently anxious that Edward should do nothing unworthy of a gentleman, by yielding to illegal persecution. Edward behaved very well this morning & showed pluck. He confronted the crowd, he fought the bragging

¹¹ P. C. Hollis, an accountant, former confidential clerk to and subsequently executor of the diarist's brother Charles Henry Fisher, had remained on at Charles Henry Fisher's office, 407 Library Street.

¹² Charles Ingersoll, another of the diarist's brothers-in-law, lived at 512 Walnut Street.

¹³ Edward Ingersoll's wife had come from Troy, N. Y.

Capt'n. Withington & got the better of him, as Tom McKean told me, who was present & stood by Edw'd manfully, and when he was taken before the magistrate, who bound him over in \$2,000 on the charge of carrying concealed weapons, more to protect him from the mob than anything else, he told the excited mob in the office, when accused of having a pistol, "Yes, & when I drew it, you ran like sheep," which drew forth a fresh explosion of rage.

Having heard all these facts, Bet determined to go to see Anna,¹⁴ so we drove out to her house. Bet found her quiet, calm, & defiant, not disposed to talk but reserved & cold. We then went over to Mr. McKean's, where we got a lunch, as it was 5 o'clock & we had had no dinner. About 6½ o'clock Mr. Chas. Borie came out. He told us that the police station where Edw'd was had been surrounded all the afternoon by a mob, tho it was so well guarded by a large force that he was in no danger. That just before he left town, Charles Ingersoll came up to the station or near it intending to visit his brother; that he had been recognized by the mob & attacked & terribly beaten & had been taken home covered with blood by three policemen in a carriage. During the day, John T. Montgomery & Manlius Evans, both well known "Copperheads," had gone out to inform Anna of what had happened to Edward. She had sent in by them her son Warren with a carpet bag containing clothes &c for his father. They arrived about the time that the mob attacked Charles. Evans escaped but Montgomery was roughly handled & would have fared worse but for the presence of Warren, for even a ruffianly mob respects a child. Warren came out to Mr. McKean's whilst we were there & so did Anna & her children & spent the night, not feeling entirely safe in her own house, or rather because Mr. and Mrs. McKean wished her to come & said that she must either come to them or they would go to her. When Mr. McKean heard of the attack on Charles, he drove over to Mr. Henry's, the Mayor, who lives on Schoolhouse Lane & who immediately went to town.

April 28, 1865 Drove to town at 12 with Bet. Left her at Charles'. Went down the street on business. Called at Geo. M. Wharton's, who is one of the advisers about Edward's affair, being a leading "Copperhead." He said that Edward would go away for a

¹⁴ Mrs. Edward Ingersoll.

time, where, he would not say as it was thought better that his friends generally should be able to say that they did not know where he was. I told him that I thought so too & would rather not know. Went to Charles'. Saw Mr. Thomas.¹⁵ He said that Charles' appearance was horrible when he was brought home; his face swollen out of all human shape; his shirt & waistcoat drenched in blood. The mob dragged him out of the carriage, beat him over the head & stamped upon him. The policemen allowed them to do it for a time & then, merely to save his life, interfered. They in truth sympathized with the mob. Charles is not dangerously hurt as no vital point is injured. He will probably soon get well, tho erysipelas is feared. Bet saw him & was much shocked at his appearance. His spirits are good & he is not in the least cast down.

April 29, 1865 Edward was released on bail last evening, came out to his house, saw his family, & then drove away to his place of refuge, wherever that is. He was very reluctant to go, seemed much distressed at the brutal treatment that Charles had received, & said that he had been grossly insulted by the police whilst in their custody. Nevertheless, they did protect him from a mob whose passions they shared.

May 3, 1865 The paper says the government has discovered a plot to burn Phila. & other northern cities. It was discovered by means of a letter dropped by a suspected person while pursued by the police. This city was to have been burned on Monday last. It is believed that 800 persons are concerned in the plot and that it originated with rebel refugees in Canada & was approved in the South. This war seems to have developed a devilish spirit that plans crimes on a scale as big as the war itself. Went to town. At the office met Pierce Butler who told me that he dined yesterday with Geo. Cadwalader who said that on Sunday the city government was in a state of great excitement & that he had all the troops under arms on Monday night in consequence of the notice of the plot sent from Washington.¹⁶

On Monday Eliz'th Fisher invited us to go to Wakefield this evening to meet Mr. and Mrs. John Wister, who returned from Europe a few weeks ago. I went at 8 o'clock, Bet going with me to the door,

¹⁵ John Moylan Thomas, one of Charles Ingersoll's sons-in-law.

¹⁶ Gen. George Cadwalader commanded the military forces in Philadelphia.

but drove on to see Anna. Moreover, she did not care to go into company just now. There was quite a party & I had a pleasant evening. . . . Young John Cadwalader, who is to marry Helen Fisher, there. I spoke to him about Fisher, said I thought him morbid about public affairs & that if they continued to prey on his mind, as they have done, he will die. He said that they all felt the importance of diverting Fisher's mind towards other subjects as it was evident that he was unduly excited. He said that Middleton Place had been burned with everything in it, library, pictures, &c, and that the vaults in the family graveyard had been opened & the bones scattered, but that this was done not by our troops but by the Middleton Negroes, a number of whom had been brought up from the plantation at Combahee when Charleston surrendered. There were no doubt some shocking things done by the Negroes on many estates at that time.

May 5, 1865 Yesterday, a bill was brought into the City Councils, offering a reward of \$500 for the discovery of the persons who attacked Chas. Ingersoll. It was lost by a strict party vote, the Democrats, usually the advocates of mob law, voting for it; the Republicans, representing the conservative sentiment of the country, voting against it. This shows, if indeed anything were needed to show, how completely party spirit rules over principle. There was quite a debate in which Charles was spoken of with much severity as having been himself the advocate of mob law & as having outraged the patriotic feelings of the community (both true), and that the government was not bound to protect him and others like him from the consequences of their own folly. These people did not seem capable of rising above the particular case & of seeing that Charles was not of the slightest consequence compared to the general principles involved, & that the mob, when they struck at him, struck at the security of all rights. The conduct of Councils withdraws, so far as they can, the protection of the law from every man & invites the mob to further violence by impliedly sanctioning what they have already done. This vote of the Councils reveals the condition of our society. That we are really & virtually living under mob law, notwithstanding the show of order that is ordinarily represented.

Dr. Wister was here this morning & mentioned a case in point. Pierce Butler is living at the smaller of the two houses on his estate up the York Road near Branchtown. The house stands very near the

road. The windows were not bowed because of Mr. Lincoln's death. He is known to sympathize with the South, but he is also known to be very quiet on the subject, even in private conversation. A number of laboring men, a few days ago, determined to attack his house. Mr. Morris Davis, a noted abolitionist who lives in the neighborhood, happened to hear of it. He went among them & had influence enough to keep them quiet. Dr. Wister says he has just heard of Avon Springs as superior to Richfield. He thinks I must go there or to Richfield for the summer, that it is not a question of choice. This sounds almost like a sentence of death. I *cannot* take Bet & Sidney, because of the expence. To go alone would be a miserable thing for me & for her, separation for three months. It was bad enough last year for four weeks. We seem to have fallen on evil days & to be caught in a net of trouble. Money difficulties, disease, necessary absence from home, Bet's brothers in a position painful to her & the future uncertain both of public & of our little private affairs, present a complication of circumstances such as I have not before encountered.

May 23, 1865 Joshua Fisher here this morning. Much more moderate in his manner & language than heretofore. The logic of recent events has no doubt had its effect on his mind. He says that Middleton Place was burned by their own Negroes indeed, but they were in our army and under the command of white officers, who first plundered the house. Middleton, that is to say Williams, anticipating such an event, had sent his wife & children with a quantity of luggage to a small house he had hired in some small village in the interior. She was met by a party of raiders & robbed of everything. He followed by another route, with luggage also. He was robbed & escaped into a swampy woods, where he remained till half-starved, & what had become of him Fisher did not seem exactly to know.¹⁷ They are all ruined & suffering from actual destitution of the common necessities of life. Harry & his wife are coming here & Fisher expects them at Alverthorpe every day. She is going to her family in England. Harry is to remain here, as he cannot go to her family for a support & he has literally nothing. "I must give him a room in my house," said Fisher, "& make him an allowance." He already supports a son

¹⁷ Williams Middleton, the owner of Middleton Place and brother-in-law of Joshua Francis Fisher, was on this occasion three times condemned to death by his former slaves, but each time escaped hanging by a last minute change in their decision.

of Russell Middleton in the Insane Asylum here, Mrs. Fisher's sister Kitty, also insane, & Mrs. Arthur Middleton in Paris. He must do something for Williams, for he cannot let him & his family starve, so that his generosity will be somewhat exercised. I think he will respond liberally to these calls, at the same time very unwillingly, for Fisher loves money & has a special affection for the "handsome surplus" of income which is necessary for executing his plans. Far more painful than for him to give will be the hard task for them of accepting, gentlemen, as they are, proud of their birth & position & inherited wealth, belonging to the old noblesse of S. Carolina. I feel for Williams especially, an amiable good fellow. It must be very bitter to lose a fine, old, ancestral house like Middleton Place, with library, paintings, plate, &c, and to be driven out homeless & penniless.

June 8, 1865 It seems our fate never to get rid of the Negro question. No sooner have we abolished slavery than a party, which seems [to] be growing in power, proposes Negro suffrage, so that the problem—What shall we do with the Negro?—seems as far from being settled as ever. In fact, it is *incapable* of any solution that will satisfy both North & South, because of the permanent difference of race. No position for the Negro that would please the South would agree with enlightened opinion in the North. But how can the North enforce its views? Only by such an exertion of the power of the general government as would be inconsistent with its plan & theory. The South, moreover, when restoration is fully accomplished, will again hold the balance of power, will make another bargain with a northern party, as they did before, the condition of which will be as before—support in all southern plans for governing the Negro race, and again the South may control the country. I can see no way out of these difficulties consistent with the preservation of the Union & free government.

July 2, 1865 Before I went to town this morning, whilst I was sitting reading the papers in the north piazza, Charley Ingersoll¹⁸ made his appearance. He looked unaltered, except that he was browner. He was a surgeon in the rebel army almost from the beginning of the war and has seen a good deal of hardship which has done

¹⁸ Dr. Charles Ingersoll was a son of John Ingersoll, a brother of the diarist's wife. John Ingersoll, an amiable man consistently unfortunate in business, moved to Mississippi, where he died in 1859, leaving two sons and three daughters.

him no injury apparently as his health is excellent & his manners improved. Peace has not softened his feelings, for he is very bitter against the North. He dined with us. He says that at the plantation the family have not suffered during the war as some 12 or 15 Negroes remained, enough for household servants & to cultivate provision crops, and they had plenty of everything except the luxuries supplied by commerce. Charley in the first year of the war sold Negroes enough to pay \$20,000 of debt, leaving only \$6,000, & they have now a few bales of cotton left, so that for the present they are not in want. The future is the trouble. Charley has come on to discuss with his uncles plans for the property & the family.

July 4, 1865 My "nonsense verses," written some weeks or months (I forget which) ago, about the people in Green Lane have been generally read, as anything personal about people's acquaintances will be, & I am told generally liked. I may as well copy them here as they are descriptive of what forms now part of our surroundings & important influences on our life, fleeting, & soon to change, like all the rest, so that before long few will be left who can understand them.

GREEN LANE

There is a great Duke of Medary,
Of Lincoln he grew very weary,
So he crossed o'er the sea
To enjoy Liberty,
Leaving country & home & Medary.¹⁹

A Duchess there is of Medary,
She is brilliant & gay as a fairy,
When she went away
Her neighbors did say,
Come back very soon to Medary.

And there is Charles Fox, Lord of Champlost,
A prince of good fellows as all know,
They call him a Judge,
But that is all fudge,
He's just honest Charley of Champlost.²⁰

¹⁹ Harry and Sally Ingersoll, whose home on Green Lane was known as Medary, had sailed for Europe in May, 1864.

²⁰ Charles Pemberton Fox (1792-1866), owner of Champlost.

There is Lady Mary of Champlost,
 A nicer old place no one *can* show
 But the charm of the place
 Is the kindness & grace
 Of this excellent ladye of Champlost.

At Warriston lives Mr. Smith.
 For wisdom he's grown quite a myth.
 Greenlaners declare
 That none can compare
 With this wonderful, wise Mr. Smith.²¹

He's blessed with a good wife named Mary;
 Her kindness was ne'er known to vary.
 Such dinners & teas,
 Elsewhere no one sees,
 As those of this house-wifely Mary.

At Brookwood there lives a dear lady,
 Whose years, not whose manners, are shady,
 Her smile is so bright,
 Her eye full of light,
 You cannot but love this dear lady.²²

There is Liedy Fisher of Brookwood.
 They say she both is & doth look good.
 But no one can tell,
 So apart doth she dwell,
 Much about this young Liedy of Brookwood.²³

July 5, 1865 All thought it very wrong in me to go alone to Richfield, that both Bet & I would be so much happier if she & Sidney went too. I said I knew that, but could not afford the expence. Dickinson²⁴ offered to lend me the money till next year's peach crop. Everyone no doubt thinks it very odd that I go alone, & Bet is very anxious to go with me, but on the whole I think it better she should stay at home, for other reasons beside the expence. We have no

²¹ George R. Smith's Warriston adjoined the Medary and Brookwood properties.

²² Mrs. Humphrey Atherton, grandmother of the diarist's Fisher nieces and nephew of Brookwood.

²³ Eliza George Fisher, called Liedy, was the diarist's oldest niece. She was born in 1841, and, as the poem indicates, had developed habits of seclusion which kept her apart from the world. Neither she nor her younger sisters married.

²⁴ Dr. J. Dickinson Logan.

confidential servants with whom to trust the house, or the farm, horses, &c. Bet will be a thousand times more comfortable here, as she hates watering places and travelling. It will be a satisfaction to me to think of her & Sidney in our own house with good servants, which we have now, near Dr. Wister & surrounded by relations & friends, almost as great as it would be to have her at such a place as Richfield, which I know she would not like, where there is no doctor, & to reach & return from which she & Sidney must run all the risks of steamboats & railroads, now not a few, as almost every paper has an account of some accident. Besides all this, is the question of expence, a most serious one to us just now. If all goes right, the tedious two months will come to an end at last.

July 8, 1865 Received this morning from Ticknor & Fields, Boston, publishers of the North American Review, a cheque for \$40 for my article in the number for this month, on Duties on Exports.

July 15, 1865 Called at Lippincott's to order a copy of the Trial of the Constitution sent to "The Nation," a new journal just issued in N. York to be conducted on the plan of the English Saturday Review & Spectator & to be published weekly. It is intended to discuss politics & literature & to be, if possible, of a high character, over \$100,000 of stock having been subscribed to get it up. Some weeks ago Mr. Chas. J. Stillé²⁵ met me in the street & spoke of it to me, saying the editor was in town & wished to see me, to invite me to contribute an article from time to time. I told Mr. Stillé to say to him that most probably I would do so, as I liked occasionally to have my say on public affairs & preferred writing for a magazine than for a newspaper. On the strength of this my name is advertised in the list of contributors. I am in pretty good company.

October 1, 1865 I left home at 10½ o'clock on Monday morning July 17th, drove to the Walnut St. ferry, reached N. York about 4 o'clock, went on board the St. John steamer, where I secured a stateroom, had a comfortable night, got to Albany at 6, breakfasted, left in the cars at 7½ & got to Richfield at about 2 o'clock.

I need not say much about my visit to Richfield, as my life there was nearly a repetition of what it was last year, with a change of the dramatis personae. . . .

²⁵ Charles J. Stillé (1819-1899), historian and, later, provost of the University of Pennsylvania. From 1892 to 1899, he served as president of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

My habits were those of watering place life, when one goes for health & not for pleasure to a quiet resort like Richfield. In the morning I read the newspapers, talked, walked, & bathed. We dined at 2. In the afternoon at 3 I got *always* a letter from Bet, the great event of the day for me. This I answered *always*. Then reading in my pleasant retired cottage, where I could be alone when I pleased, and then a walk. In the evening the drawing room, where we generally had music & sometimes dancing. . . .

My health was not improved so much as I expected. I got gradually better, a good deal better, but not so that I could walk without limping or go up & down stairs, or rise from or sit down on a chair without pain in my knees. I was not as well as I was last year at Richfield. Nevertheless, there was decided improvement which has continued. I left Richfield on Sep. 8, the company at the Spring house being reduced to two or three. I went down the North river in the new steamer, the Dean Richmond, built after the plan of the St. John and very sumptuous & costly as well as comfortable. These boats pay enormous profits. The St. John cost \$750,000 & cleared that sum last year, & I was told the Dean Richmond cost as much & had already paid for herself when I came home in her. I arrived early the next morning at N. York but did not leave my stateroom till 8 o'clock. I then walked up to Delmonico's corner of Chambers St & Broadway & got breakfast. I then thought I would pay a visit to the Editor of the Nation, as he had invited me to write for it. Went to the office, 130 Nassau St. He was up stairs in a comfortable well furnished room. He is a young man, good manners & appearance.²⁶ He received me very courteously, said the paper was succeeding beyond his expectations, would be glad to receive contributions from me, that they paid for *all* contributions. I told him that I should accept the money tho it was not my motive in writing; that I had a great deal of leisure & liked the occupation & was glad of an opportunity such as the Nation afforded of expressing my opinions from time to time on public affairs. I agreed to write, as soon as I got home, an article on the best means of preventing railroad accidents, which for the last three or four months had been so numerous & destructive. Left New York by the 11 o'clock train, reached the

²⁶ Edwin L. Godkin (1831-1902), born in Ireland of English stock, came to America in 1856. He assumed the editorship of the *Nation* on its founding in 1865.

Kensington station at 3, found Daniel²⁷ waiting for me with the carriage and in half an hour was once more at home. It was Sidney's birthday, the 9th, when he was 9 years old & he had a party. Edward Ingersoll's children, Jim & Maud,²⁸ Charley & Sally Smith, Fanny Logan, etc. Geo. Smith & Liedy were here also. How glad I was to see them all & to be at home & how comfortable & pleasant everything looked, & what a delight to see Bet & Sidney & hear their voices need not be told.

The most important event that has happened in our circle during my absence is that Geo. Smith has sold his place in Green Lane. He is so intimately connected with & so important to the people there, to Brookwood, Medary, & Champlost, that it will make a great difference to them. Miss Fox is quite indignant & considers herself wronged and Brookwood is in grief. I regret it very much too. It is a break in our circle of friends, an important influence withdrawn & one house the less to visit at where we were sure of welcome. George's chief reason for selling is no doubt the expence of such a place & of a town house too, now when the cost of living has so greatly increased. An income quite sufficient before the war is inadequate now. He thinks of going abroad in the spring. So everything around us changes.

As to my own affairs, they are bad enough. It is the old story of disappointment. Half the wheat crop destroyed by rust, only half a crop of peaches, or indeed less. I will not enlarge upon it. The result is that I am unable to pay my debts out of income and as I cannot go on forever having my notes renewed at bank, I must get a permanent loan on *mortgage*! A sad result & very painful & mortifying to me, but it must be done.

Last week I wrote an article about railroad accidents & sent it on Friday Sep. 22 to the editor of the Nation. It is entitled The National Highways.

October 8, 1865 On Tuesday received a polite letter from Mr. Edwin L. Godkin, editor of the Nation, saying that my article would appear the following Thursday, which it did, & on Friday I rec'd \$10 for it, which is \$5 per column, liberal pay. I sent the same day I rec'd Mr. Godkin's letter Article No. 2 on the same subject. . . .

²⁷ The gardener at Forest Hill.

²⁸ James Logan Fisher and his sister Maud.

Had some talk with Charles [Ingersoll], who advocated with arguments ludicrously absurd the new movements just set afoot by the working classes in favor of making 8 hours a legal day's work. In "old times" it was 15, then 12, more recently 10, and now the laboring people, stimulated by high wages & the consciousness of power caused by a great demand for labor in all departments, ask 8 hours with the same wages paid for 10. They demand a law to this effect & denounce any one who opposes them as a monarchist & an enemy to Republican Liberty. Their claims have been recognized by the Democratic party & made one of the issues at the next election. Indeed the probability is that the whole scheme was suggested by the demagogues of that party as a partizan measure to bring over the American working classes to their side; the foreigners they have already. . . .

Writers on political economy have generally spoken of the advantages of high wages as a means of elevating the condition of the laboring classes. They never had our experience in the matter, which proves that high wages are generally a curse, not to society merely but to the laborer. Their effect is idleness, dissipation, insolence to employers, riots, & violence. Very few are found to save their earnings & accumulate property, but they spend recklessly and at the end of the year are as poor as ever. That high wages instead of stimulating should diminish production, is a result that few would anticipate.

October 10, 1865 Got a note from Mr. Godkin asking for an article on the 8 hour labor movement. In my letter to him of last Tuesday I asked him if he would like to have an article on that subject. This is election day for mayor, &c. Voted at the Rising Sun. McMichael²⁹ is the candidate for Mayor, Mr. Henry having refused to serve any longer. I doubt much whether McMichael is the right man for such an office in these times. Mr. Henry was eminently fitted for the place, and never before was the city so well governed as during his administration. He was re-elected three times, & would have been again had he not refused the nomination. A committee of the 8 hour labor faction waited on McMichael and S. M. Fox, the Democratic candidate, to know their respective opinions on that subject before the election. Fox promised them his support. McMichael

²⁹ Morton McMichael, publisher of the *North American*.

gave them no definite answer, but expressed in general terms his desires for the elevation of the laboring classes.

October 13, 1865 Went with Bet in the evening to Champlost. Julia Fisher & her daughters there. The old house looked very comfortable with its blazing wood fires, profusion of light & well kept old fashioned furniture. Spent a very pleasant evening, for Julia & Bet were full of animation & talk & one of the girls gave us some music on the piano. Among other things we laughed about was the irritation Geo. Smith showed at my nonsense verses on Green Lane. He did not at all like what I said about himself & his wife. I told them of a verse he had written in retaliation & which he repeated to me at his house last Sunday.

"There was an old man of Mount Harmon,
Who by verse tried to carry a farm on,
But his crops & his verse
Were not worth a curse,
This seedy old man of Mount Harmon."

This was rather coarse. Bet did not like the profanity and for the 4th line substituted

"Put no cash in his purse."

And I wrote the following, which expresses George's idea, at least more poetically, & so they all thought:

"A *Poet* there was of Mount Harmon
Who, dreamingly carried his farm on,
'Twas so dream-like, it seems
All his profits were dreams,
And a dream too will soon be Mount Harmon."

A melancholy prophecy which may perhaps be realized, but not if I can help it.

October 18, 1865 Went to town. Saw Muirheid.³⁰ He has failed to get me the money I wanted, \$10,000 on mortgage of Mount Harmon. No one is willing as a matter of business to invest money on mortgage out of the state. I told him that as the property was ample security & the investment a safe one, I did not wish him to go to any of my acquaintances, who might probably lend the money as

³⁰ Charles H. Muirheid, conveyancer.

a favor to me, & he mentioned several whom he felt sure would do so. Some days ago, George Smith told Stewardson³¹ that he would lend me the money with pleasure. But I was very averse to establishing the relation of debtor & creditor between us. The question now is, however, since I *must* have the money, shall I accept such a favor, for it appears that it *is* a favor, from an old friend who knows all about my affairs & *offers* willingly to do what someone else might do reluctantly. As there can be no doubt on this point, I told Muirheid that he might let Stewardson say as much to George.

November 5, 1865 On the 26th, Muirheid told me that he had made other fruitless efforts to get the money & would that afternoon go out to Geo Smith's & settle the question whether it was to be got from him. He stopped here on his way back & left a note from George enclosing a cheque for \$3,000, promising the balance, \$4,000, in a few days. The next evening, I went up to see him. He was very kind in his rough way. Said he thought my affairs looked unpromising, did not see how I was to get income to live in my present manner, was very willing to lend me the money, would not take a mortgage, my note was enough, and acquiesced in my plan of getting the money on mortgage elsewhere as soon as I could to repay him. Altogether, he behaved very well.

December 4, 1865 Drove up to Wakefield in the carriage at 11 to go to Aunt Sarah's funeral.³² Went up stairs to her room where I had so lately seen her & where the members of the family were assembled. Sat there nearly an hour. According to the custom of Friends, there was some preaching, if it may so be called, by Mrs. Deborah Wharton & Lucretia Mott. The latter is a noted female abolitionist & lives on the York Road, a worthy respectable woman enough & a visitor at Wakefield. I went in a carriage with Joshua Fisher & Mifflin Wistar. There were, of course, no ceremonies at the grave, unless standing around it in solemn silence till it was filled be a ceremony. I think it as impressive as the church service. And so that was the last of Aunt Sarah. . . . Those whom I considered old are now all gone & we have become the old people.

³¹ Dr. Thomas Stewardson, formerly a close friend of the diarist's brother.

³² Mrs. William Logan Fisher died Nov. 30, 1865.