

# SOME HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE OF THADDEUS STEVENS

By T. RICHARD WITMER

**I**N the Library of Congress at Washington there is a fifteen-volume collection of the letters and papers of Thaddeus Stevens. This collection was made by the late Edward McPherson of Gettysburg, editor of "The Independent Whig" of Lancaster from 1851 to 1854, member of the House of Representatives from 1859 to 1863, and clerk of that House from 1863 to 1875,<sup>1</sup> to be used as the basis of a projected biography of Stevens. Mr. McPherson died before he could use the materials which he had gathered together, and to date they have not been more than scratched over by Stevens' biographers. Woodburn's life of Stevens contains a few extracts from this mass of materials, but beyond this no use so far has been made of it at all. The letters published in this paper have, with only one exception, been selected from the first three volumes of the McPherson collection; the exception is one taken from the collection of Lincoln letters in the same Library.

The question of which of these letters should properly be used in a paper of this sort is of some importance. It involves the problem of deciding where local history ends and where national history begins. Without attempting to answer the question finally, we can say that there is a certain field which is properly claimed by both and in which the two overlap. Thus, a Christiana Riot is at once a local and a national event, and a Thaddeus Stevens or a James Buchanan or a Robert Fulton are at once local figures in which we have a particular interest as Lancastrians and national figures whose importance is far greater than that which a merely local importance would give them. In selecting these letters, then, the writer has gone on the assumption that whatever is intimately related to Stevens is of interest to Lancastrians.

For purposes of convenience the material presented here has been divided into three parts: (1) Early letters to and from

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<sup>1</sup> According to the sketch of McPherson given in the "Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1794-1927 . . ." (Washington, Government printing office: 1928).

Stevens; (2) correspondence to him which is interesting in that it reflects his influential position; (3) early Civil war correspondence. We have, throughout this paper, preserved the original punctuation and spelling as far as possible, even where there are obvious errors.

## I.

In volume ten of the proceedings of The Lancaster County Historical Society, appears a letter written by Stevens from Peacham, Vermont, dated January 5, 1814. When this letter was published it was thought to be the earliest letter of Stevens in existence. In the McPherson collection, however, there is another letter which is probably of an earlier date. I quote the greater part of it here:

“Littleton, N.H. March 26th

“Mrs Smith

“Dear Madam; I received your letter of the 12th today. I will go to Peachem and if possible be there when Uncle is there so that I can see him. I came to Littleton a little after I wrote to you and have been studying with the minister of the place. I shall go back to college about the first of May. I have been here nearly 3 months and Mr. Carpenter the man with whom I have been studying has expressed his willingness to give me testimonials of good behaviour at any time. He even offered to write to the faculty of the college and try and get me back at the commencement of the spring term but I told him that I thought it would be of no avail. He has told me several times that my conduct had been perfectly unexceptionable since I had been here. He will give me a recommendation and I shall go back at the commencement of the summer term. I will go to Peachem and fix my things there and try and be there when Uncle arrives there. I am sorry to hear that his health is poor. I will try and see him and let him know how all my affairs stand he knows the worst part of them. I think that they have been made worse than they are. At all events he can ascertain the truth when he comes out . . . . Experience is a good but severe teacher. I have found it so. It had been my intention not to write to you or Uncle again till I had gotten back into college and in case I did not get back to college not to have let you heard [!] from me again. But as you

have been so kind as to write to me I will answer yur [!] letter and will let you know from time to time how I get along. I think that there is no doubt but what I shall get back to college in May. Give my love to Uncle and write to me soon again. In the meantime bleive [!] me to be truly

“Your friend & servt.

“THADDEUS STEVENS”

This letter, it will be noticed, had no year date. Either the collector of these papers or someone at the Library of Congress has supplied the conjectural date 1813. Unfortunately we cannot be certain that this is correct. It is evident, however, that it was written during his college years. I have endeavored to discover from Dartmouth college and the University of Vermont, both of which Stevens attended as a student, whether their records show that he had ever been dismissed or suspended from school. Neither of them, however, has records running that far back, although both were of course in existence at the time, so we cannot check up in that way. None of the biographies of Stevens reports a dismissal from college, hence we can learn nothing from them. In the letter published in our proceedings, to which I have already referred, Stevens spoke of being graduated that spring. That was in 1814. We may assume, therefore, that the present letter was probably written at least a year before that one, and that the date 1813 as supplied by someone is likely correct.

There are included in this collection several letters from Stevens' mother and brother. Several of these contain references to the Antimasonic fight in which Stevens was strongly interested. Here, for instance, is one from his mother dated April 27, 1830:

“My dear Son

“We Received a line from you in September and was very glad to hear from you that your Health was good and that you arrived to your habitation in Safety. I hope you are not unmindful of that God from whome cometh all the comforts of this life and who is able to make you wise unto Savation . . . . My Son we hear that you are ingaged in the anti misonick cause, I think it to be a good cause, but a dangerous won, becaus it creates enmyes the Loard has, I trust, begun to cause Satin kingdom to fall to the ground . . . .

Thaddeus you have been taught the Scriptures from a childe . . . . I understand you are about printing a paper if it is so do send us won<sup>2</sup> write soon and tell us how your health is and how you prosper.”

Included with this letter is another dated May 11, 1830, and signed by H. Stevens, presumably a brother of Thaddeus, since his father was then dead:

“it is now almost a year sence you were here and was you here now you would know the place, for there is nothing altered I have the same old coat and hat the same kind of a frock, begin work the same time of day and let my moderation be known to all men except when upon antimasonry then I go the whole hog. We have the masons now put whare they will stay put out of office . . . be pleased to write us a long letter and lett us know all the politicks.”

In much the same tenor is a letter from Stevens to a committee in Huntingdon county, dated July 2, 1838. Declining an invitation to speak at an Independence day celebration he says:

“That day ought always to be held in reverence; and the principles which inspired the actors in that glorious scene cannot be too often eulogized, or too dearly cherished. A recurrence to them might be especially profitable at this time when a considerable portion of our fellow citizens seem to have forgotten that the blessings of the Act of Independence, and the well regulated Liberty Which followed it can be secured only by Selecting men of integrity, of honor, and of tried honesty to fill the offices of this Republic. It would be particularly pleasant to partake of the preferred hospitality of the intelligent and independent citizens of Huntingdon County who are so nobly and successfully contending against the most reckless and mercenary combination that ever attempted to elevate to the chair of State one who is sworn to prefer the interests of the Fraternity to the Welfare of the Commonwealth . . . .”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Charles McCarthy in “The Antimasonic Party” (Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1902, volume 1), lists no Antimasonic party paper in Adams county. We have been unable to trace the meaning of this reference any further.

<sup>3</sup> The gubernatorial nominees in 1838 were the then Governor Joseph Ritner for the Whigs and Antimasons, and Daniel Rittenhouse Porter, of

Something of interest, too, is reflected in the opening sentence of a letter dated at Harrisburg, May 24, 1839, and addressed to J. B. McPherson: "I have this day been finally excluded from the House, and a new election ordered on the 14th June." The history behind this sentence is that of the contested election of 1838 in the Northern Liberties district of Philadelphia, the attempt on the part of both factions to organize the House of Representatives of the General Assembly, the Buckshot war, the capitulation of some of Stevens' colleagues to the other side and the consequent organization of the House by his enemies, his refusal to recognize the legality of that body or to enter it until some of his constituents urged him to in rather forcible terms, and the resolution of the House declaring his seat vacant and ordering the new election. The end of this story is that Stevens was re-elected and allowed to take his seat.

Along a different line, but along a line which is perhaps even more interesting to us today than it was in 1841, is the following letter:

"Gettysburg Sept. 25, 1841

"Gentlemen

"I have recd. your letter asking me whether if elected to the Legislature I 'would support a bill adapted to remove so much of the evils of taxation and public crime as is inflicted upon the community by the sale & consumption of intoxicating drinks'?"

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Huntingdon, for the Democrats. Porter was an iron manufacturer and a member of the State Senate, 1836-37. (McCarthy, *op. cit.*, 493.) Of this election, McCarthy says: "Never in any election so far considered were there more reckless accusations, blatant falsehoods, obscene poetry, and general bitterness displayed than in that of 1838. Ritner was accused of being the tool of designing politicians for corrupt ends and of being under the thumb of Stevens, whom he had appointed president of the board of canal commissioners. The Gettysburg railroad, pictured in the form of a letter S, nicknamed the 'Tapeworm,' and ending at Stevens's iron works, was exhibited in all the leading Democratic papers; the church people, too, were warned that there was a 'Deist' in the executive chair; in short, every sort of device was used to belittle and degrade him in the eyes of the people.

"But if Ritner was abused, Porter was even more abused . . . Political elections are notorious for such as the above, but the election of 1838 in Pennsylvania will rank as one of the worst in American history in this respect. It is but natural that this boiling caldron of political excitement should have led to the contested election, and the mob law and violence, known as the 'Buckshot War,' the results of which left the Democrats triumphant and the Antimasons as a political party crushed out of existence."

Although I have always been opposed to intermingling the cause of temperance with politics, yet I have no difficulty in saying, that whether in or out of the Legislature I shall be willing to co-operate in any measure which shall seem to me just and effectual in removing *all* the evils of intemperance, and mitigating as far as possible the burthens of taxation.

“With much respect

“Your obt. servant,

“THADDEUS STEVENS

“Messrs. J. Graham Macfarlane

Wm. M. Reynolds

R. S. McCreary

Committee of Total Abstinence Temperance Society.”

Included in this collection of Stevens papers are two letters from James Buchanan to Stevens. These are not among those published in the collected works of Buchanan, edited by John Bassett Moore, hence we include them here. They were written to Stevens during his first term in Congress and quite evidently before the break between the two gentlemen.

“Bedford Springs 31 July 1850

“My dear Sir/

“I address you & *you alone* upon a subject forced upon me, without expecting that you will be able, consistently with the duty which you owe to your political friends, to do any thing for me.

“I have a nephew, by name James B. Henry, who is now well prepared to enter the Sophomore Class at Princeton College. He was born in March 1833, & has his heart fixed upon going to West Point. I should greatly prefer that he would pursue his collegiate education & have for some time been keeping him back, convinced that General Taylor would at any time when he could, have given me an appointment for him. After the death of that excellent & glorious old man I told James, that I had no claims upon Mr. Fillmore, & could not ask a favor from his administration. I was induced, however, to write to General Totten & inquire whether there was any vacancy from this State, in consequence of an ability on the part of those appointed to stand their exam-

ination & he informs me there is one. I have, therefore, resolved to address you on the subject, supposing it might be possible that you had no person to fill it who would be prepared to go there immediately & stand his examination. If he has no chance of obtaining it, I would thank you to write me a few lines to this effect addressed to Lancaster stating the fact distinctly so that I may shew them to him; and this I trust will settle the question in his mind.

"If you should be perfectly free & yet indisposed to act in his favor which I can readily perceive you might be, with perfect propriety, I shall, then, but not otherwise, have his application presented by some other friend.

"Fordney, Hager, Reigart H. M. & myself have been here for some days & have been enjoying ourselves very much. I shall leave here on Monday morning next; but shall pass a couple of days in Franklin County. Should you write, you might address me at Chambersburg.

"Yours very respectfully

"JAMES BUCHANAN

"Hon: Thaddeus Stevens."

"Wheatland 10 August 1850.

"Dear Sir/

"I owe you many thanks for your prompt & kind attention to my request.

"You are mistaken in supposing that had you been in time my nephew would have received the appointment. Have you not yet learned that there is a certain number of families in Washington who always contrive to have their relatives provided for by the Government, whether the administration be Whig or Democratic? Among these the Turnbulls & the Ramseys are not the least conspicuous. The appointment of young Turnbull was I presume hastened by a letter which I wrote to Gen: Totten for information. He answered me on the 26th ultimo & the appointment was made on the 28th.

"I would not ask you to fill the vacancy from Lancaster County with my nephew; because it would be improper for you to grant such a request. Besides, he would then be too old, & I trust I

can now reconcile him to go on with his studies. Should any other vacancy accidentally occur before the adjournment of Congress, this might be obtained for him should no member of the families desire it as among the outsiders I stand well.

“With my kind regards, I remain yours very respectfully,

“JAMES BUCHANAN

“Hon: Thaddeus Stevens.”

## II.

In this second section we have collected some letters from other persons to Stevens, which may show somewhat his standing in national life and affairs.

The Whig National Convention was held at Harrisburg on December 4, 1839, and among the New York newspaper men there to report it was Horace Greeley, then about 28 years old<sup>4</sup>. On December 10, Greeley wrote to Stevens from New York thus:

“I write merely to state that I have fully resolved to go to Harrisburg at the earliest moment, which I hope will not be later than the 1st of January, and maybe earlier. I have written fully to Guyer, respecting the few changes which will be requisite in his paper, including the change of his title. I think ‘*Pennsylvania Democrat*’ would be best if not preoccupied, but ‘*Pennsylvania Chronicle*’ will do. *Harrisburg Chronicle* is entirely too local and narrow for a leading journal. I have made no stipulation with him nor with any one. I presume he will hire me to edit his paper, expecting to receive a more liberal support therefor.

“But at the meeting in your room on Saturday evening (at which you were not present) it was resolved that an additional paper like our *Jeffersonian* should be started. This is a small sheet, printed in Quarto form, with no advertisements, no personalities, and no party string, and offered to every body who can be induced to take it at fifty cents per annum. It will cost something like \$5,000 more than could be collected from it to carry a paper through a year, estimating the edition at 20,000 copies. A greater or less number, however, would hardly vary the expense.

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<sup>4</sup> Don C. Seitz, “Horace Greeley” (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill; 1926), p. 76.



This it was understood Guyer or some one else should publish, under my charge as Editor.

“I think if this plan is carried out with regard to both papers, I think some good might be effected; everything, however, would depend upon the spirit with which the enterprise of circulating the little paper should be entered into by the party generally. To be useful it must be crowded into every gorge of the Alleghanies, and more especially into the dark regions of the North-East. Unless some impression can be made upon that section, I should fear the result of the contest. If light shall be made to penetrate that section, all will be well.

“Yours,

“HORACE GREELEY.

“P. S. The nomination<sup>5</sup> caused terrible swearing here, but it is beginning to wear off. Hundreds who swore furiously for two days, now admit that the very best thing has been done. Even those who still blaspheme admit that the ticket will prevail.

“Yours, H. G.”

The curious question that arises in connection with that letter is what possible connection Stevens could have had with a paper to be called the “Pennsylvania Democrat”, when he was a strong Whig and Antimason. We cannot attempt to answer that question. The “Pennsylvania Chronicle” was started, we might add, but Greeley was not its editor. The tone of this letter, we might also remark, is rather different from that of another written by Stevens to a third party about Greeley which we will have occasion to read later on.

Next in order is a whole series of letters between Stevens and General Winfield Scott, which are all extremely interesting from the standpoint of American history, but which space and time, as well as other considerations, forbid being included here in full. On October 20, 1841, Stevens wrote to General Scott, asking him to write a short autobiography for his campaign for the nomination for the Presidency, which would be published anonymously.

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<sup>5</sup> Of William Henry Harrison for the Presidency of the United States. He was elected at the next election.

In his reply to this letter, dated at Washington, November 1, 1841, General Scott wrote:

“ . . . I see many evidences of your power in many & important quarters. On account of my friends, more than my own, I hope to do nothing that may not be for the best; & in matters not involving high principles, I shall always be found sufficiently docile & practicable.”

There are likewise here two interesting letters concerned with the beginnings of the Liberty Party. The first is from Salmon P. Chase,<sup>6</sup> later Secretary of the Treasury, dated April 8, 1842, at Cincinnati. Representing himself as unknown to Stevens, he wrote—after an explanation of the activities of the Liberty party in Ohio and elsewhere and of its principles—“Can you not bring the old Anti Masonic party of Pennsylvania on to the Liberty Platform?”

Dated the next day and at the same place, Stevens' friend, the Reverend Jonathan Blanchard<sup>7</sup> wrote to him recommending Chase highly and asking Stevens to speak at Cincinnati if requested to. He continued:

“You know that I am very anxious that you should become a christian for the salvation of your own soul—next to this I am anxious that you should employ the extraordinary powers with which God has endowed you for the furtherance of righteousness and justice in this wicked world . . . .

“Another thing I want is that you should help Chase to displace the name of Birney<sup>8</sup> and substitute that of Seward or J. Q.

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<sup>6</sup> Like Stevens, Chase was a graduate of Dartmouth college, class of 1826. He joined the Liberty Party in 1840.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Blanchard was born at Rockingham, Vt., in 1811. He was a strong Antimason and Abolitionist, and a Presbyterian minister. He was graduated from Middlebury college, 1832, and studied at the Andover and Lane theological seminaries. He was President of Knox college, 1845-1857, and of Wheaton college, 1860-82, and died in 1892. See the sketch of him in the “Dictionary of American Biography.” See also the strongly-worded letter Blanchard wrote to Stevens in 1865, quoted in Woodburn, p. 602.

<sup>8</sup> J. G. Birney was nominated for President at the Convention of the Friends of Liberty, held in New York, May, 1841. There is an interesting letter in the collection of Chase letters in the Annual Report of the American Historical Society, 1902, volume 2, pp. 459ff, in which Birney discusses Seward and Adams.

Adams, as Anti-Slavery Candidate for Presidency; and that in a way which will prevent a break between Eastern & Western Abolitionists."

Replying to these letters, we have one from Stevens to Blanchard written from Washington, May 24, 1842. He wrote:

"Friend Blanchard—

"I received your letter, and one from S. P. Chase, Esq., and a pamphlet, about three weeks since or more, after my return from a short journey. I have delayed answering them because I had not determined exactly what answer to give. I need not say to you how entirely my views and wishes accord with your own in the object you have in view. The only question is as to the means most likely to accomplish it. I have believed that could be best done by declining, *as yet*, to organize a distinct political party. I am aware how often we have been cheated by the men of other parties—how few of them prove faithful after elected. And yet I think the cause of Liberty has gained and is gaining more friends by the tyranny of Slaveholders and their abettors than could have been done in the same time by the most strenuous associated party effort by us.

"In thinking of the next President, I know that before Harrison's nomination, Genr'l Smith was in favor of Genl. Scott; and I supposed he would not have been so without good reason. I have corresponded with the General lately and find him in favor of the right of petition, in its largest sense, and a firm & fearless condemner of the proceedings against Mr. Giddings. This is a good deal in these times—enough to make Slaveholders and their adherents hate him. Believing that he can be elected, and will not deceive us, and will do more for our cause *elected*, than can be done by suffering defeat with a still more thorough anti-Slavery man, I have come to the conclusion to support him for the Presidency.

"I admire the Address, & proceedings of your Convention. The author of that address possesses a cool head and deep knowledge of mankind, as well as a right heart, and I beg you to make him my most grateful acknowledgements for the pleasure it has afforded me. Will you consider this letter an answer both to yours and Mr. Chase's, and show him this, as I suppose you are his

neighbor? With the most sincere desire for your prosperity and happiness, I remain

“Your obedient servant

“THADDEUS STEVENS.

“Rev. J. Blanchard,  
“Cincinnati,  
“Ohio.”

The following letter deserves to be included in full; it requires no explanation:

“Washington, Sept. 3, 1848

“Hon: Thaddeus Stevens

“Dear Sir:

“You may possibly remember seeing me at the Philadelphia Convention, introduced to you as the lone whig star of Illinois. Since the adjournment, I have remained here, so long, in the Whig document room. I am now about to start for home, and I desire the undisguised opinion of some experienced and sagacious Pennsylvania politician, as to how the vote of that State, for governor, and president, is likely to go. In casting about for such a man, I have settled upon you; and I shall be much obliged if you will write me at Springfield, Illinois.

“The news we are receiving here now, by letters from all quarters is steadily on the rise; we have none lately of a discouraging character. This is the sum, without giving particulars.

“Yours truly

“A. LINCOLN”

Finally, we may note a letter from Oliver Johnson to Stevens, dated at New York, July 28, 1854, on behalf of the Antislavery Society of New York, asking Stevens to address that Society. Mr. Johnson mentions as others who are on their list for the season, Giddings, Garrison, Clay, Beecher, Greeley, Phillips, Emerson, *et al.*

### III.

In this third section of our paper, we include various letters dating from the early part of the Civil war with a few from the years preceding it. They reflect, many of them, Stevens' political

ambitions and his opinions of various leaders of the day, as nothing else could do. We will arrange them in strictly chronological order. The first two are to McPherson. In the first of these, dated at Lancaster, October 23, 1860, Stevens concludes: "I have some aspirations for the U. States Senate. If you could furnish a paragraph in my favor for each of your papers I would esteem it a favor. Coming from my old home I should greatly prize it." The second, dated December 19, 1860, at Caledonia, closes with the very succinct statement, "Buchanan is a very traitor."

Next we have two to Simon Stevens,<sup>9</sup> which, if only for their mention of another famous Lancastrian, are of interest to us. The first of these was written from Washington, February 4, 1861:

"Genl. Cameron has returned from Springfield, and informed me that he is offered a place in the Cabinet, which is no doubt true.

"Seward will also go in so that some of our friends will be disappointed. There is considerable feeling here, & some remonstrants."

The second of these letters is also dated at Washington, and on February 10, 1861. In it he wrote:

"Genl Cameron has just informed me that he has positively declined. Some of our delegation wish to recommend me. But I have no faith in their success. A word of commendation from New York friends might be grateful. We want no New Jersey statesman for Pennsylvania."

In a letter written from the United States Customs House in Philadelphia on April 13, 1861, Joseph Gibbons said:

"In our German Upper Leacock where they used to throw stones at me & desire to expel me from the township I am invited to speak on the 'State of the nation' on next Saturday the 14th inst.—a famous day you observe, and prior to doing so I am anxious to know one thing from you confidentially if it is your pleasure to inform me. Tis this are you 'in the hands of your

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<sup>9</sup> Simon Stevens was a law partner of Thaddeus'. On September 6, 1848, the following advertisement appeared in the "Examiner and Herald":

"SIMON STEVENS  
"Attorney at Law  
"Office with Thaddeus Stevens, Esq.,  
"South Queen street, Lancaster, Pa."

friends' for next fall's nomination or are you not? Dou [!] you feel as though you could trust to my own discretion any reference to you in any remarks I may have to make? or are there any reasons personal to me, or having reference to the State of politics in our County, which would render it impolitic for me to speak of you as a candidate for nomination next time? It is needless for me to express to you how desirous I [am] that you should continue where you are until we can put you in the Senate or Cabinet and that nothing would give me so much pleasure as to serve you in any and every way in my power. I suppose my feelings which now are as they have been (except stronger if possible) for half a generation are so well known to you that no reference to them can really be necessary.

"I congratulate you upon the termination of the glorious struggle for Freedom in the District of Columbia and the approaching equally glorious termination of this same struggle thro out the nation . . . ."

On November 5, 1861, Stevens wrote to Simon Stevens from Lancaster thus:

"Where are you that you let the hounds run down your friend Fremont? I have not heard from you for so long that I feared you might have gone under at some Ball's Bluff.

"What's gone with Greeley's back-bone? Examine, and let me know if there be still any - - - - - [an undecipherable word] in that region?

"I see by to-day's *Tribune* that he has turned sycophant to Cameron. His somersets are worse than Bennett's. He too tempted!

"Cameron has subsidized the whole press of the country. I suspect Seward must have swapped off or Greeley would not thus have debased himself. When will you be in Washington?"

In two letters, the first to S. Smith, Esq., the second to Simon Stevens, Stevens discusses a resolution he had presented in the House. In the first letter, dated December 14, 1861, at Washington, he wrote: "I have perhaps gone further . . . than you would have deemed prudent. As first printed there were material errors. My resolution as corrected and now on file emancipates all slaves whether of rebel or loyal masters. I can see no other way to estab-

lish a firm Union. Leave Slavery anywhere and it will soon go everywhere in the South." As a postscript he added: "I have no hope — Republicans are cowardly, and Democrats will soon be in power, as pro-Slavery as ever."

A week later he wrote to Simon Stevens: "The Senate refused to pass our resolution."

In this collection of letters, there are two to Stevens reporting alleged spies and Southern sympathizers in the north. One is written from Bainbridge, March 11, 1862, and signed by Theodore Darton; we will not reproduce it here since it deals with such spies in Washington. The second, however, marked "Confidential" was written from Marietta, April 21, 1862. It seems quite proper to reproduce it now, despite its confidentialness, seventy years after it was written:

"Marietta, April 21st, 1862.

"Hon. Thaddeus Stevens.

"Dear Sir—With considerable reluctance, yet impelled by a sense of duty, I trouble you with the following statements. I know not who, else, to address, that would be likely to know enough of me to judge their probably correctness, and yet have influence sufficient to procure attention for them in the proper quarter, should they be deemed worthy of further notice.

"Abm. Melony, formerly of this place, and once a Surgeon's mate on board one of our national ships, is now a Captain's Clerk (or Secretary) on board the Jamestown, off No. Carolina. Before the fall of Sumpter he was here boasting (and the boasts generally believed) of his acquaintance and correspondence with the principal rebels; and was known as an open and hearty secessionist. As soon as the Rebellion commenced he was off to Washington, and readily obtained office in the national service as above-named, to the astonishment of all who knew his Secession opinions, principles, and attachments. Ever since his appointment he has kept up his correspondence with the few men here who are suspected of sympathising with the rebels; and lately (at least) his letters are calculated to give them encouragement and comfort, and furnish them with materials to discourage loyal men. His latest letter (to Edward Trainor) declares that the Capt. of the Jamestown knowingly permitted the Nashville to pass in and out of

harbor, only *pretending* to prepare to prevent her—*pretending* not to know it was the *Nashville* until she got the start of him and, even then, not pursuing her as actively and earnestly as he might have done. Said Melony further says that they are now *pretending* to watch the English vessel 'Bermuda', but that she (the 'Bermuda') will be allowed to slip in and out at her leisure.

"Mr. Melony is artful, talented and unscrupulous—making up for devotion to principle and loyalty to country, by fidelity to *party and its leaders and friends*. He can do much injury to our cause, if entrusted with any secrets of importance to the rebels; and those who know him *best*, believe he *will* do it, when he can. Be this as it may, it seems to me, that if what he says of his Captain be *true*, we have a Commander on the Atlantic Coast who deserves to dangle at his own ship's yard-arm; and if what he says be *false*, that Commander has a *Clerk* who should be made 'walk a plank' very promptly.

"If you, or any Committee, or the Hon. Sec'y. of the Navy, wish to ascertain further the character or doings of this Mr. Melony, you can procure full information from his Correspondents in this place, if you will put them on a Witness Stand. They are—John Crull, Dr. J. Cushman and Edward Trainor—as I am credibly informed. The letter above mentioned specially, was recited to my brother (C. C. P. Grosh) by Mr. Trainor himself—and in what I have stated of Mr. Melony, I give you as derived from my brother and others on whose veracity and judgments I rely confidentially. For myself, I know not the man even by sight, and would have got some one who does know him to write you, but they feel either timid or diffident about undertaking such labor, even in behalf of our country.

"I submit the foregoing to your better judgment; and in *confidence* that you will not use my name, or in any way draw on me the enmity of these men, unless it be absolutely *necessary* to give your informant's name.

"Very respectfully,

"Yours,

"A. B. GROSH"

Referring back to a letter quoted previously, we have one from General J. C. Fremont, dated at Wheeling, Va., April 28, 1862, to



Stevens thanking him for his defense of Fremont in the House. "In my narrow quarters here," he wrote, "I have yet had no opportunity—and could make none—for either attack or defence."

Four letters to Simon Stevens are extant for the latter half of 1862. At this time, Thaddeus Stevens' hope for the outcome of the war was very gloomy. For instance, in a letter of August 10 of that year, he wrote: "It seems that your Committee made little out of the President . . . . It seems to me that we are just as far from the true course as ever. Unless the people speak in their primary assemblies, no good will come, & there seems little chance of that. A change of cabinet is our one hope; but I do not hope for that."

A few days later, September 5, in a letter dated at Lancaster, he wrote: "The symptoms give no promise of good. The removal of Hunter & Butler, and the continued refusal to receive Negro soldiers convince me that the Administration are preparing the people to receive an ignominious surrender to the South. It is plain that nothing approaching the present policy will subdue the rebels. Whether we shall find *anybody* with a sufficient grasp of mind, and sufficient moral courage, to treat this as a radical revolution, and remodel our institutions, I doubt. It would involve the desolation of the South as well as emancipation; and a re:peopling of half the Continent. This ought to be done but it startles most men. Our Convention was very enthusiastic in supporting my views."

Still again, on October 27, he wrote: "Nothing seems to go right. I am almost despairing. Without a new Cabinet, there is no hope. People wont work at the elections who are despairing. I have great fear for New York."

On November 17, he wrote:

"It were a great blessing if Seward could be removed. It would revive hope, now nearly extinct. But I fear it cannot be done.

"But Fesenden is not the man for his successor. He has too much of that vile ingredient, called Conservatism, which is worse than secession. He is not so great as at one time I hoped he would prove.

"Bancroft would be better. But no one will succeed."

Next in order we have a resolution by the Union League Club of Lancaster, signed by A. Slaymaker, recording secretary, requesting Stevens to address them on "the relations which the several states and the people thereof hold to the Federal government and the rights and powers of that government in the suppression of rebellion."

On April 29, 1863, Stevens wrote one of the few recommendatory letters in this collection. It was dated at Lancaster and addressed to McPherson:

"I beg leave to introduce to you my friend Ellwood Griest; He is one of our most intelligent and influential citizens. Any kindness you can show him will be gratefully acknowledged by

"THADDEUS STEVENS"

In another letter to Simon Stevens on May 18, 1863, he wrote: ". . . The story about Hooker's being drunk at Chancellorsville is false. I have seen more than one officer who saw him on the field. They represent him as perfectly cool & collected; and speak highly of his whole conduct."

On June 9, 1863, he wrote to an unknown correspondent: "I learned from the President (who professes still great friendship for Genl Fremont), that he was about to offer to the General the command of the Negro Army, which he hoped would even be 100,000 strong. I hope Fremont may accept it, and beat all the white troops in action, and thereby acquire glory."

Two letters written to Simon Stevens in July, 1863, need to be quoted in full. They refer, of course, to the destruction of his iron foundry at Caledonia by the Southern army:

"Lancaster, July 6, 1863.

"Dear Sir—

"I thank you for the interest in my affairs which your inquiries indicate. My losses have been exaggerated. I have not heard directly from my manager as he has been constantly surrounded by the rebels. According to the most reliable information, my losses are as follows. On Tuesday (week) they took horses, carriages & mules with their gear, almost \$7,000 or \$8,000 worth. On the following Friday or Saturday, they burned down a furnace,

two forges, and a rolling mill nearly new. The buildings cost me about \$65,000. They took a large stock of provisions & some store goods. I suppose my loss to be about \$75,000. But as they were now (for the first time) in profitable operation, I suppose the loss might well be called \$15,000 more.

“The Government does not indemnify for such losses.

“But all this gives me no concern, although it was just about the savings of my life, not the earnings. The rest has been lavished in the payment of other peoples’ debts and otherwise. I have, I think, enough left to pay my debts. As to my personal wants nature will soon take care of them.

“We must all expect to suffer by this wicked war. I have not felt a moment’s trouble for my share of it. If, finally, the government shall be re:established over our whole territory; and not a vestige of Slavery left, I shall deem it a cheap purchase.

“I hope to be able with my remaining strength to sustain myself, until that strength & my temporal wants shall cease altogether.

“With great respect

“THADDEUS STEVENS

“S. Stevens, Esq.”

“Lancaster, July 11, 1863.

“Dear Sir—

“I have just received the first communication from my manager since the rebs visited him, as he has been cooped up. They were led to where our teams were, on Tuesday, by some friend, and took all my horses, mules & harness, even the crippled horses that were running at large. They then seized my bacon (about 4,000 lbs.), molasses and other contents of the store, took about \$1,000 worth of corn in the mills, and a like quantity of other grain. On Friday, they burned the furnace, saw:mill, two forges and rolling mill. They slept in the office and store-room on that night, and burnt them with books & all on Saturday morning.

“They even hauled off my bar iron, being as they said convenient for shoeing horses & wagons—about \$4,000 worth. They destroyed all my fences (I had just built a large quantity of post & rail fence, as I was clearing out a farm.) My grass (about 80

tons) they destroyed; and broke in the windows of the dwelling houses where the workmen lived. They could not have done the job much cleaner. It is rather worse than I expected. All the bellows and bellows houses and my out establishment are gone.

“They finally expressed great regret that they were not so fortunate as to meet the owner, who seems to be very popular with the chivalry. I know not what the poor families will do. I must provide for their present relief.

“THADDEUS STEVENS

“Col. S. Stevens.”

On September 21, 1863, a Treasury department official wrote a note to Stevens, saying, “I was informed the other day by a newspaper man here, that there would be an effort made to dethrone you from the Chairmanship of the Comt. of Ways & Means . . . .” to which Stevens replied the next day: “If they succeed, it will greatly relieve me.”

We close with one of those bitterly sarcastic letters Stevens could write on occasion. Addressed at Washington, January 25, 1863, to the Honorable J. A. Kassan, we read:

“I have been informed by a member of the H. of R. that while the bill was pending in the House increasing the tax on whisky you did by insinuation and direct allegation charge me with being interested in speculations on whisky; stating that as votes were given on the bill I went to the Telegraph office to communicate the information.

“Will you be so good as to inform me whether I have been correctly informed. And if so on what authority you circulate the slander?”

“With proper respect

“Your obt st

“THADDEUS STEVENS”