

Vision of Calhoun.

ELSEWHERE in this edition of THE TRIBUNE are stories of the many premonitions and misgivings which came to Lincoln personally and to his friends and relatives. Herewith follows a story which gained much currency during the early part of the civil war and which reflects the extent to which even the most well tempered men and women of the times were moved by phenomena which otherwise probably would have made no impression upon them. Doubtless Lincoln knew of this story, and there are many testimonials to the effect that dozens of similar stories were conveyed to him throughout the war.

"The other morning, at the breakfast table, when I, an unobserved spectator, happened to be present, Calhoun was observed to gaze frequent at his right hand and brush it with his left in a nervous and hurried manner. He did this so often that it excited attention. At length one of the persons comprising the breakfast party—his name, I think, is Toombs, and he is a member of congress from Georgia—look upon himself to ask the occasion of Mr. Calhoun's disquietude. 'Does your hand pain you?' he asked of Mr. Calhoun. To this Mr. Calhoun replied, in a rather hurried manner, 'Pshaw! It is nothing but a dream I had last night and which makes me see perpetually a large black spot, like an ink blotch upon the back of my right hand; an optical illusion I suppose.' Of course, these words excited the curiosity of the company, but no one ventured to beg the details of this singular dream until Toombs asked quietly: 'What was your dream like? I am not superstitious about dreams, but sometimes they have a great deal of truth in them.' 'But this was such a peculiarly absurd dream' said Mr. Calhoun, again brushing the back of his right hand. 'However, if it does not intrude too much on the time of our friends I will relate it to you.'

"Of course, the company were profuse in their expressions of anxiety to know all about the dream, and Mr. Calhoun related it. 'At a late hour last night, as I was sitting in my room, engaged in writing I was astonished by the entrance of a visitor who, without a word, took a seat opposite me at my table. This surprised me, as I had given particular orders to the servant that I should on no account be disturbed. The manner in which the intruder entered, so self-possessed, taking his seat opposite me without a word, as though my room and all within it belonged to him, excited in me as much surprise as indignation. As I raised my head to look into his features, over the top of my shaded lamp, I discovered that he was wrapped in a thin cloak, which effectually concealed his face and features from my view; and, as I raised my head, he spoke; 'What are you writing, senator from South Carolina?' I did not think of his impertinence at first, but answered him involuntarily,

"I am writing a plan for the dissolution of the American union." (You know, gentlemen, that I am expected to produce a plan of dissolution in the event of certain contingencies.)

"To this the intruder replied in the coolest manner possible, 'Senator from South Carolina, will you allow me to look at your hand, your right hand?' He rose, the cloak fell, and I beheld his face. Gentlemen, the sight of that face struck me like a thunder clap. It was the face of a dead man, whom extraordinary events had called back to life. The features were those of Gen. George Washington. He was dressed in the revolutionary costume, such as you see in the patent office.' Here Mr. Calhoun paused, apparently agitated. His agitation, I need not tell you, was shared by the company. Toombs at length broke the embarrassing pause. 'Well, what was the issue of this scene?' Mr. Calhoun resumed. 'The intruder, as I have said, rose and asked to look at my right hand, as though I had not the power to refuse. I extended it. The truth is, I felt a strange thrill pervade me at this touch; he grasped it and held it near the light, thus affording full time to examine every feature. It was the face of Washington.

"After holding my hand for a moment he looked at me steadily and said in a quiet way: 'And with this right hand, senator from South Carolina, you would sign your name to a paper declaring the union dissolved?' I answered in the affirmative. 'Yes,' I said, 'if a certain contingency arises I will sign my name to the declaration of dissolution.' But at that moment a black blotch appeared on the back of my hand, which I seem to see now. 'What is that?' I said, alarmed, I know not why, at the blotch on my hand. 'That,' said he, dropping my hand, 'is the mark by which Benedict Arnold is known in the next world.' He said no more, gentlemen, but drew from beneath his cloak an object which he laid upon the table—laid upon the very paper on which I was writing. This object, gentlemen, was a skeleton. 'There,' said he, 'there are the bones of Isaac Hayne, who was hung at Charleston by the British. He gave his life in order to establish the union. When you put your name to a declaration of dissolution, why, you may as well have the bones of Isaac Hayne before you—he was a South Carolinian and so are you. But there was no blotch on his right hand.' With these words the intruder left the room.

"I started back from the contract with the dead man's bones and awoke. Overcome by labor, I had fallen asleep, and had been dreaming. Was it not a singular dream? All the company answered in the affirmative, and Toombs muttered, 'Singular, very singular,' and at the same time looking curiously at the back of his right hand, while Mr. Calhoun placed his head between his hands and seemed buried in thought."