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the slave states? Is slavery to be abolished and the slave not destroyed? After the southern states are conquered will they then be obedient loving members of a brotherhood of free men?

See my views in the accompanying slip from the *National Intelligencer*.<sup>3</sup>

J.H.

Mary Henry Copy, Family Correspondence, Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

1. Henry may have had in mind particularly the events of the previous day in Washington. His daughter Mary recorded in her diary for April 26 the arrival of the Seventh Regiment from New York. "They were greeted with enthusiastic applause as they marched up the avenue," she wrote. "They are a fine looking set of men & seem mostly to be gentlemen." Mary Henry Diary, Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

2. From Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, act 2, scene 2. The actual quotation is, "He jests at scars that never felt a wound."

3. Henry may be referring to an editorial in the *National Intelligencer* of April 22 that called for a national convention to decide whether "a peaceful separation might be effected if no terms of re-union could be concerted." Despite the outbreak of war, the editorial was still trying to find a middle way: while it opposed secession, it also opposed the use of force to bring the seceded states back into the union. The editorial agreed with the opinion, attributed by the mayor of Baltimore to Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, that the Southern states should be allowed to "go in peace."

#### 111. TO ASA GRAY

Smithsonian Institution  
April 29<sup>th</sup> 1861

My Dear Dr.

In answer to your letter<sup>1</sup> of the 26<sup>th</sup> just received I write to say that we shall be pleased to obtain the package you mention as soon as the city is again in a proper connection with the north, by means of the express. We can at present transmit small packages at a cost of four times that of the usual charge.

For nearly a week we were in a state of isolation; cut off in every direction from the outside barbarians; with no other intelligence than that of threatened invasions from various quarters.<sup>2</sup> We experienced however no bodily fear although I felt at one time somewhat anxious that Mrs. H. and the girls should leave, but they refused to go without me and therefore remained until they could not get away even had they desired to do so.<sup>3</sup>

The city was at one time in considerable danger of an attack. The secession flags could be seen from the high tower of the Institution waving over the adjacent portions of Virginia while war was waging in Baltimore. But now that there are nearly 20 thousand troops at hand ready for action there is no fear of an invasion for the present.<sup>4</sup> I think it probable however, from all I can learn, that an attack will be made as soon as Davis can

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collect what he may consider a sufficient ↑force↓ unless congress makes some<sup>A</sup> arrangement by which the existence of the southern confederacy is officially acknowledged.

I would like to have a good long talk with you on the present condition of our country and its future prospects. To consider the subject properly it would be necessary for us to elevate ourselves above the excitement of the present hour and view the facts from a scientific and unprejudiced position.

I have come to the conclusion that our union as a whole cannot be permanent, and that it will be far better to separate peacefully than to deluge the country with blood, and then in the end be as far from a harmonious union as we now are. I think the north will be more harmonious and ↑better↓ enabled to amend the constitution ↑when alone↓ than with the south. We have become too large. We have ten times as many people as we had at the beginning of the Government and ten times the number of bad men. We have more than ten times the number of politicians and consequently while the number of the offices of the general government remain comparatively the same the "struggle" for office has become ten times more fierce.

This is one cause of the present disruption and must tend unless checked to farther dismemberment. Three confederacies will give nearly three times as many offices for hungry politicians. There at present 100 thousand applicants for office and but a small part of these will be supplied—the remainder or rather the great majority will turn against the party now in power and endeavor by all means in their power to cripple the administration.<sup>5</sup> I have not time to develop my views but must close with saying that you have not sent me a copy of your defence of Darwin<sup>6</sup> and the request that you will give my kind regards to Mrs Gray.

Yours truly  
Joseph Henry

Dr A. Gray

Historic Letters, Archives of the Gray Herbarium, Harvard University.

1. Not found.
2. The April 19 attack against Massachusetts soldiers in Baltimore had disrupted rail and telegraph lines, leaving Washington temporarily cut off from the North. Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950*, 2 vols. in 1 (1962; Princeton, 1976), 1:241; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, p. 285.
3. On the weekend of April 20, large numbers of women and children had fled the city. Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Symbol, Sword, and Shield: Defending Washington during the Civil War* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, 1991), p. 25; Green, 1:241.
4. The actual number of troops in Washington at the end of April was probably closer to 11,000. Winfield Scott and Joseph K. F. Mansfield, who was placed in charge of the military department of Washington on April 27, were at this time calling for a total of 17,000 to 20,000 troops to defend the capital. Cooling, pp. 31-32; ANB, s.v. "Mansfield, Joseph King Fenno."

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5. Henry here seems to be expressing revulsion toward the way the patronage system worked in an era before civil service reform. Appointments to federal positions were customarily allotted to each state in proportion to its representation in Congress. Competition for vacancies was stiff, and applicants for federal offices had to demonstrate party loyalty and win the backing of influential politicians and well-connected persons (Henry would fit the latter category). The process was messy because, to quote one historian of the civil service, "The number of applicants always exceeded the number of places, and senators and representatives often disagreed over which candidate to support." Cindy Sondik Aron, *Ladies and Gentlemen of the Civil Service: Middle-Class Workers in Victorian America* (New York, 1987), pp. 97-99 (quotation on p. 97); Paul P. Van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service* (Evanston, Illinois, 1958), pp. 50, 56-58; Carl Russell Fish, *The Civil Service and the Patronage* (New York, 1963), pp. 170-171, 174-175.

Although Henry's estimate of applicants cannot be verified, Lincoln's election resulted in substantial turnover as Republican partisans and the national crisis exerted strong pressure for a clean sweep of available offices, many left

vacant by the departure of Southerners. "Never before," according to one historian's calculations, "did so small a proportion of officers remain to carry on the traditions of the civil service." In March, Henry had complained to Bache, "I am overwhelmed with applications for assistance in obtaining office and I am obliged to give as a general answer that I have been requested by the Board of Regents to take no part in political appointments." Carl Russell Fish, "Lincoln and the Patronage," *American Historical Review*, 1902, 8:53-69 (quotation on p. 56); Henry to Alexander Dallas Bache, March 15, 1861, RH 1490, Rhees Collection, Huntington Library.

6. Probably the influential treatment of Darwin's theory by Gray that was published, unsigned, in 1860 as a series of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and reprinted under Gray's name as a pamphlet in early 1861: "Darwin on the Origin of Species," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1860, 6:109-116, 229-239; "Darwin and His Reviewers," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1860, 6:406-425; Asa Gray, *A Free Examination of Darwin's Treatise on the Origin of Species, and of its American Reviewers* (London, 1861). A. Hunter Dupree, *Asa Gray, 1810-1888* (New York, 1968), pp. 299-300.

## 112. TO ARNOLD GUYOT

Smithsonian Inst  
May 4<sup>th</sup> 1861

My Dear Professor

Your letter<sup>1</sup> came just in the nick of time to prevent your communication for Miss Chollet going to the South.

I am glad to learn that the young Lady has arrived safely in Princeton although we are disappointed in n[ot]<sup>A</sup> having the pleasure of a visit from her on her way north.

Had she come to us we would have kept her until the expense of transportation and travelling were reduced to their normal rate.

We are all in good health and in as cheerful a state of mind as the unhappy condition of our country will permit.

We have never felt any bodily fear although at one time we thought it probable the city would be attacked.

Our greatest danger now is from the collection, in this city, of so large a number of men unused to the privations of military life and the restraints of a well regulated army.