

# Dismay and Dishonor

In the chapter titled "Dismay and Dishonor" from "The Demon of Unrest," dated April 8, tensions between Southern commissioners and Secretary of State William Seward are palpable. Seward, writing in the third person, expresses his interpretation of recent revolutionary events, stressing that he does not see them as a legitimate revolution nor as a foundation for an independent nation. Instead, he views them as a transient partisan excitement. He declines the commissioners' request for a meeting with President Lincoln, stating that he does not have the authority to recognize them as diplomatic agents.

This rejection, albeit expected, ignites outrage among the commissioners, who respond with furious accusations, claiming Seward is detached from reality. They express their belief that Seward's refusal to acknowledge the established government is a grave insult to Southern honor. Their letter conveys a dire warning that inevitable bloodshed will be blamed on Lincoln, and they accept the challenge they believe Seward has thrown at them.

Seward's response remains aloof and dismissive, entailing a single-sentence acknowledgment of their letter's receipt while reiterating that he cannot engage with them further. Meanwhile, on the same evening, President Lincoln's messengers, Chew and Talbot, arrive in Charleston with a message for Governor Pickens regarding the resupply of Fort Sumter. The message indicates that provisions will be sent without force unless resisted. Despite this, General Beauregard flatly rejects Captain Talbot's request to proceed to the fort, emphasizing the entrenched positions of both sides.

In a swift reaction, Beauregard informs Confederate War Secretary Walker of Lincoln's intent to send supplies, but Walker immediately orders that no provisions should be allowed into Fort Sumter. Later that night, Beauregard issues a notice to Major Anderson, halting all mail between the fort and Charleston. Anderson, alarmed by this news, attempts to recover important outgoing letters, but Beauregard denies his request, highlighting the escalating stalemate. The chapter effectively showcases the growing estrangement and tensions leading up to the Civil War, underlined by Seward's cold diplomacy and the urgency displayed by military leaders on both sides.