

The Time Will Come

The chapter titled "The Time Will Come" begins with Orville Browning's letter to Abraham Lincoln regarding his inaugural address. Browning, reflecting on Lincoln's speech, voices concern over a passage he finds excessively aggressive, specifically Lincoln's assertion to reclaim public properties and duties, which he fears may antagonize secessionists. Browning emphasizes that the administration should present secessionists as the aggressors in any potential conflict, urging Lincoln to revise his language to avoid inciting irritation from border states. He also prophetically suggests Lincoln will eventually need to proclaim freedom for slaves in the South, a theme that would resonate later in Lincoln's presidency.

Lincoln took Browning's advice to heart, editing his address and noting on his letter's back page that "Americans, all, we are not enemies, but friends," signaling his desire for national unity despite the existing tensions.

As Lincoln journeys towards his inauguration, he encounters enthusiastic crowds at each stop, witnessing the influx of office seekers hoping for positions in his new administration. The narrative highlights Lincoln's travels, where he is greeted by citizens and notable figures like journalist Horace Greeley. An amusing moment occurs when a boy implies that a man giving Lincoln an apple is campaigning for a patronage position.

In Albany, Lincoln witnesses a performance by John Wilkes Booth, an actor whose dramatic fall on stage sparks considerable media attention. Upon reaching New York City on February 19, Lincoln makes a striking entrance that captures the attention of poet Walt Whitman, who vividly describes Lincoln's demeanor and appearance upon disembarking from carriages.

Meanwhile, Kate Warne, a detective, notes Lincoln's pale and fatigued appearance and meets with an aide to share concerns about threats against Lincoln, which are dismissed as just another false alarm. During his time in New York, Lincoln meets showman P. T. Barnum, who promotes Lincoln's departure as a spectacle at his museum, although Lincoln does not attend.

After a night enjoying Verdi's opera, he continues to Philadelphia on February 21, engaging with an expectant crowd and addressing the secession crisis directly. He expresses the need for a firm stance against secessionist actions, prompting a spirited approval from the audience. Upon his arrival in Philadelphia, he faces a massive crowd amid wintry conditions, prompting him to deliver an impromptu, significant speech that sets the tone for the escalating national crisis .