

officiating ministers in Trinity. Most that they say, so far as the people are concerned, might almost as well be said in a Latin tongue. There is scarcely a good reader or speaker in the whole force of Trinity. The utterances are indistinct, and the tone low, as if the reader did not care whether the persons in the house heard or not.

At the opening service the leader of the music comes out of the robing-room dressed in a black gown, followed by about forty or fifty boys and men in surplices. The rector leads, followed by a train of clergy in white robes. On the opening of the vestry door the audience rise, and keep on their feet till the procession move into the chancel and are seated. The priest intones the service after the manner of the Catholic Church. The preacher for the day is escorted from the vestry to the pulpit by the sexton, who waits at the foot of the stairs till the minister is seated. The rector of Trinity is thoroughly High Church. He introduces into the services all the pomp, display, and ritualism that Episcopacy will permit. He models his service in as close imitation of the Catholic worship as the steady Protestantism of New York will bear.

## XXXI.

CONSPIRACY AGAINST PRESIDENT  
LINCOLN.

THE PRESIDENT IN THE CITY.—THE CONSPIRATORS.—FEELING IN WASHINGTON.—PLOT DISCOVERED.—VISIT TO MR. LINCOLN.

## THE PRESIDENT IN THE CITY.

THE attention of the people of New York was called to Mr. Lincoln in 1860. He was announced to deliver a political address in Cooper Institute. The audience was fair, but the room was by no means full. He was a remarkable looking man,—decidedly western, tall, lank, and bony, with an enormous neck, that shot up from a low, turned-down collar, hair apparently uncombed, his dress slouchy and countrified, his oratory uninviting; and the impression he made was not very marked. A gentleman called upon him at his rooms in the Astor, and knocking at the door, received an invitation to "come in." He found Mr. Lincoln just in the act of putting on his shirt. Without the slightest embarrassment, he asked the visitor to be seated, while he continued his work, adding, "We must do this or go dirty." On his way to Washington, after his election to the Presidency, his friends received him with all honor in the city, and escorted him to the Astor House,

where rooms were provided for him. Here he received all comers with affability, and displayed those genial traits of character which made him so humorous and entertaining in the White House. He brought with him, from his western home, his simple and unaffected habits. The cares of state sat easily upon him. He put on no airs. He saw no reason why he should not enjoy himself as President, as he did when he was plain Abraham Lincoln. At the Astor House he waited on himself. If he wanted a thing he went after it. He did the same at Washington. If he wanted to see Mr. Seward or Mr. Stanton, instead of sending for those officials, he put on his hat and ran over to the Department, as he would have run to a brother lawyer's office in Illinois. He went the rounds of the Departments in the evening. If missed from his office, those in the secret could track him from point to point till he was found.

Politicians crowded on him while he was in New York. The man who was fortunate enough to get hold of him was sure of a patient auditor till he closed. It was so during all of his official life. If a case was commended to his attention he would hear it through. Men beset him in his private walks; headed him off while on horseback; hid behind trees, to fall upon him as he passed along, knowing that if they could but speak to him he would give them a patient hearing until they were through.

## THE CONSPIRATORS.

Among the visitors at the White House was a person very notorious in New York, with whom no reputable woman would willingly be seen on Broadway. He had travelled much in Europe; by what means few could tell. Those not acquainted with his inner life could be easily imposed upon by the appearance and conversation of the man. He was very officious in his attention to Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, especially the latter. His frequent visits to Washington, and his receptions at the White House, were noticed by the friends of the President. At all of the receptions of Mrs. Lincoln he was an early and constant visitor. At the informal receptions he was found. No one went so early but this person could be seen cosily seated in a chair as if at home, talking to the ladies of the White House. None called so late but they found him still there. The servants of the White House marked his familiarity, his coming and going. The officials who had the honor of the President's mansion in charge felt keenly the constant inquiries about the visits of this man. More than once, persons from different sections of the country, who were annoyed that they could never enter the White House without encountering this New Yorker, would accost the doorkeeper with questions like these: "Do the ladies receive to-night?" "Yes, sir, at eight o'clock." "Are they in the drawing-room?" "Yes, sir." "Has anybody called?" "I believe a gentleman has." "What is his name?" "He is a gentleman from New York, sir." "Is it Mr. —?" (Reluctantly) "I believe he is in there, sir." "What is he here at

the White House so much for?" (With a shrug of the shoulders) "I can't say, sir."

#### THE FEELING IN WASHINGTON.

The people in Washington are very proud of the chief magistrate's family. The house and the President's grounds are open to all citizens. The receptions, levees, drawing-rooms, to which all respectable persons have access, supply the place of operas, balls, concerts, and lectures. Distinguished persons who visit the capital, the delegations sent from all parts of the country, the public receptions given by the President, bind up the citizens of Washington with the family of the chief magistrate. Anything that touches the honor or the fame of the White House touches the people of the District, as if a shadow had fallen on their own homes. The bad repute of the person referred to was well known in Washington. His constant visits to the mansion were well known, and were the theme of general remark. More than once he had been seen riding in the President's coach, with the ladies, through Pennsylvania Avenue. Frequently he was found lounging in the conservatory, or smoking in the grounds, very much at home, and not at all anxious to hide his presence. The public press began to speak out, and was not at all complimentary to the President's family. Some of the western papers printed articles in relation to this matter that were scandalous. Two of the leading daily papers of New York had articles of a similar import. It was evident that soon the scandal would be public unless something was done to reassure the public conscience.

#### PLOT DISCOVERED.

A few friends of Mr. Lincoln, who believed that the whole of this matter was a scheme to strike him through his household, and so obtain office and preferment, resolved to probe the matter to the bottom. They collected the rumors, reduced the scandal to shape, cut out from the newspapers the various articles in relation to the matter that were going the rounds, and met in a quiet manner to see what could be done. I was present at that first meeting, when it was resolved, in a quiet way, to track these scandals to their source. It was easily done. The person whose presence at Washington created so much scandal was known to be penniless, and in his career must be supported by some parties in New York, who were using him as their tool. Such was found to be the case. Ostensibly a man and woman in the city were his backers. They furnished him with money and instructions. He was to go to Washington, make himself agreeable to the ladies, insinuate himself into the White House, attend levees, show that he had power to come and go, and, if possible, open a correspondence with the ladies of the mansion, no matter how indifferent the subject might be. Having obtained influence and tangible proof of his standing with the ladies of the White House, his backers, in due time, would make such use of his influence as would prove profitable to them. The wretched tool did his work well, and for a time success promised to crown his labors. He sent regular bulletins to New York, stating how well he was succeeding in his dirty work; how he visited the mansion; what was said and

done; what notes were sent to him, with copies of the same; how he visited the library and private apartments of the President, rambled through the conservatory, and outsat all comers at the receptions.

VISIT TO MR. LINCOLN.

It was considered that the President should be made acquainted with this plot against his honor. I was appointed to lay the papers before him. I went to Washington, and, in company with a United States senator, called at the White House at seven o'clock in the evening. The vestibule was crowded with people from all parts of the country, soldiers and officers. The ante-room was crowded with senators and their friends, anxious to be introduced to the President. As we approached the door, the official shook his head, saying, "The President is engaged with the Secretary of State, and you cannot see him at present." The senator belonged to the military department, which at that time took precedence of all others. The door opened, and we passed in. The President was in his office with Mr. Seward and the Secretary of War. The business was evidently not as pressing as the official at the door imagined. The President was lying off, listening with great gusto to a first-class story Mr. Seward was relating. We heard enough of it to join in the hearty laugh at the close. The senator then addressed Mr. Seward, saying, "Governor, you have bored the President long enough. My friend wants to see him on some private business, and I want you to talk to me." The President took me by the hand, led me into the office of his private secretary, whom he drove out, and

locked the door. Taking a seat beside me on the sofa, his first words were, "Now, what do you want of me?" I stated the purpose of my visit, presented him with the extracts cut from the paper reflecting on his family, gave him the names of the conspirators, and the substance of notes that had passed between the miserable tool and his employers, and told him the vagabond was at that moment down stairs entertaining his family. "Give me those papers," said the President, "and sit here till I return." He started out of the room with strides that showed an energy of purpose. Shortly after he returned, grasped me warmly by the hand, and led me back into the room, and in company with the senator I took my leave. The scorpion was driven from the mansion that night, and although he was seen once or twice after in the Presidential grounds, and was said to be loitering round the conservatory, yet he disappeared soon from the mansion, and the plot exploded.