

Massachusetts & S. Carolina as equally fanatical & wrong-headed, & I wish both were out of the Confederacy, so they would leave the rest of us in peace & quiet. I would like right well to have those two States put into one big lock pit, the walls as high & thick as those of ancient Babylon, & there to fight it out until the tragedy of the Kilkenney bats was actually realized, - brought left in the arena to tell the tale of victory but the tip, a solitary tail - black or white, I don't care which - said scandalous extremity to be laid by for the next political Lixote who takes the field in behalf of northern Wind Bags or Southern Black Sheep. It would be an appropriate Banner, with the motto - "Finis coronat Opus."

But now, in more seriousness, let me say to you, our Union is in serious danger, & unless the Northern States recede from their hostile position, & repeal their "personal liberty" laws, the Southern States will secede inevitably. It is not now a question, who has been most wrong, or who is now most in the right. We believe we are, in the main, right; & we know that in some things the North is wrong, has insulted & injured us, & we shall of course act upon our own sense of the matter, whatever be the consequences. We all, too, look upon the election of Lincoln (avowedly upon a sectional issue, & that of hostility to Southern institutions), as an insult & an outrage. In this we are all agreed, even I who am one of the most conservative in this conservative State. Our differences now at the South are derived from a difference of opinion as to the proper time for action. I, say, & those who side with her, & who hate the Union any how, are for walking out of the Confederacy instantly. The other States, who have some lingering love for the Union, wish to defer the dissolution as long as possible, to give a chance to our northern brethren to relax their hostility - to try Lincoln so far as to prove him, &c. &c. But I tell you what, my dear fellow, if the South is to be kept in the Union, we must have some rather softer words than we have been accustomed to from Sumner, Wilson & Co. With their "heels upon our necks," we are obliged to squirm.

This is an unusual sort of discourse from me, but it may serve a purpose in showing you that we are in dead earnest here now, even the most conservative of us.

yours truly,

H. S. Curtis.

Hillsborough, N. H. Dec. 5/60

My Dear Doctor,

I have no use for Wright's bunnies, until all his collection is received. But if you want to get them out of your way, send them on.

Well, "Mimny Bush" let it be. I rather like the ring of the word, & there is a reason in it too, though none but you & I know it.

You will see in my Woody Plants, that I put that white Huckleberry of Hunter's under var: atrococcum.

I find a small cone of my "Abies alba", which I enclose. It can hardly be your A. alba. Mine (mature) are ovate, 1/2 inch long, but more oblong than those of A. nigra. But what is mine? A. var: of A. nigra! It is a tree of smaller leaves, & more delicate spray.

I have but a solitary specimen of Carex Hitchelliana, which has but two spikes. Torrey has one with three spikes (I always gave him

the best specimens in those days,) & Boott had better get his. If the Doctor will not lend his, then Boott shall see mine. But Sovey's is the best, & ought to be the one used.

If *C. baroliniana* I have only *Herbarium specimens*, which I would willingly lend, if need be. Boott is entitled to any favor in my power.

You are quite beside yourself in being "angered" about Bp. Davis's special prayer. The State of S. Carolina is so crazy-headed, that you are suspicious of every thing that comes from her land. I have known that gentleman for 30 years intimately - in fact I made him Bishop of that State - & I can assure you he is not "a traitor or a poltroon." This prayer is just what it should have been, with the exception of the single word "courage", which I wish had been omitted. The action of those clergy who omitted the prayer for the President (if such a thing was done by any of them,) was not a "natural result" of any omission in his special prayer, but the result of foregone conclusions on their part, &

would have been just the same if the Bishop had not issued his. I have no idea that the Bishop expected any such omission generally, & I presume none was made in his own parish church. The omission by any one was premature & foolish, for Buchanan is still President, whom that State helped to elect. - As to, Sir, his prayer had nothing to do with that result, but Massachusetts had a great deal to do in bringing it about. - The Bp. of S. Carolina - as ardent a Unionist as lives - has also published a prayer to be used in public worship in reference to these times of trouble & discord, & not a word in it about the general Government, (which we should all have considered supererogatory if there had been,) & not one of our clergy ever dreamed of omitting the usual prayer for the "President & all in authority", whatever may be their opinions about secession. You would, therefore, do Bp. Davis great injustice, & yourself still more, if you should "tell him to his face that he is either a traitor or a poltroon." - Let me suggest to you, that secession is not treason, while the action of Massachusetts, in nullifying & impeding the execution of a Law of the land, is. - The fact is, I regard



Curtis, M. A. 1860. "Curtis, Moses A. Dec. 5, 1860." *Moses Ashley Curtis letters to Asa Gray*

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