Vocabulary:

Wm. L. Yancy (William L. Yancy)—southern politician who strongly supported slavery and southern secession before the Civil War

Peculiar—strange or weird

idiosyncrasy—strange behavior specific to an individual person

doctrine—a set of beliefs specific to a religion or political party

Followers—people who believe the same thing or support an idea or cause

absurd—unreasonable or ridiculous

preposterous—beyond belief; wildly unreasonable or ridiculous

“Retrospective” excerpt—part 1 of 7

“WE ARE ONE AND UNDIVIDED.”

About twenty years ago, I think it was—I won’t be certain, though—a man whose name, if I remember correctly, was Wm. L. Yancy—I write only from memory, and this was a long time ago—took a strange and peculiar notion that the sun rose in the east and set in the west, and that the compass pointed north and south. Now, everybody knew at the time that it was but the idiosyncreasy of an unbalanced mind, and that the United States of America had no north, no south, no east, no west. Well, he began to preach the strange doctrine of there being such a thing. He began to have followers. As you know, it matters not how absurd, ridiculous and preposterous doctrines may be preached, there will be some followers. Well, one man by the name of (I
Vocabulary:

Rhett (Robert Rhett)—South Carolinian politician who strongly supported southern secession and was known as a “Fire-Eater”

Toombs (Robert Toombs)—Georgian politician who strongly supported southern secession and was the first Secretary of State for the Confederate States of America

s-h-e-e—“shhh” or “shush” (be quiet)

the direction that the water courses run—many of the major rivers of the United States tend to flow into the Mississippi River, meaning that the water runs to the south (because the Mississippi empties into the Gulf of Mexico)

where the water courses started from—if the waters run south, the start running in the north

Gents—short for “gentlemen”; so, it’s like saying “y’all” or “guys”

Mayflower—first ship that transported the first English Puritans to America

axis—the invisible line from the north pole to the south pole that the earth rotates around
Vocabulary:

Pure(i)tans—Puritans; a religious group originally from England that settled in Massachusetts in the 17th century; known for their strictness and intolerance

Spokesman—representative of a group

Horrors Greeley—this is a way of saying “Horace Greeley” while making fun of him; Horace Greeley was a northern politician and newspaperman who was strongly anti-slavery and a member of the Republican party

Charles Sumner—a politician from Massachusetts who was strongly anti-slavery and anti-Confederacy; a member of the Radical Republicans

raised their bristles—behaved in a stubborn manner

coerce—force

gouging—poking a hole in something
Vocabulary:

Jeff Davis (Jefferson Davis)—southern politician and the first president of the Confederate States of America

Aleck Stephens (Alexander Stephens)—Georgian politician and the first vice-president of the Confederate States of America

Smart Aleck—a joke using the name of Alexander Stephens; “smart aleck” means a person who is annoying because he acts like he knows everything

Nancy Hanks—the name of Abraham Lincoln’s mother (before she married Lincoln’s father)

Bob Lincoln—I think Watkins made a mistake here, because Lincoln’s father’s name was Thomas; perhaps he got it confused with Lincoln’s oldest son, Robert, who was known as Bob

Hannibal Hamlin—a Republican politician from Maine and Abraham Lincoln’s first vice-president

Ham, son of Noah—After the Biblical flood, the world was repopulated by the descendants of the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was supposedly cursed by Noah, and went on to be the ancestor of African people (with black skin), according to one interpretation.
VOCABULARY:

Abe’s side—the North / the Republicans / the Union army

cardinal points—the four main directions: north, south, east, and west
VOCABULARY:

Jeff Davis (Jefferson Davis)—southern politician and the first president of the Confederate States of America

fracas—a fight or wild disturbance

Shep—?

cardinal points—the four main directions: north, south, east, and west

to own it—to admit it

absurd—unreasonable or ridiculous

Put into your own words:
Well, reader, let me whisper in your ear. I was in the row, and the following pages will tell what part I took in the little unpleasant misconception of there being such a thing as a north and south.

**VOCABULARY:**

in the row—in the fight (the Civil War)

misconception—an incorrect view based on wrong thinking or wrong evidence

**“Retrospective” excerpt—part 7 of 7**

**PUT INTO YOUR OWN WORDS:**