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Our American Holidays
LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

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A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF LINCOLN AS GIVEN IN THE MOST NOTEWORTHY ESSAYS, ORATIONS AND POEMS, IN FICTION AND IN LINCOLN'S OWN

EDITED BY
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PREFACE

An astounding number of books have been written on Abraham Lincoln. Our Library of Congress contains over one thousand of them in well-nigh every modern language. Yet, incredible as it may seem, no miner has until to-day delved in these vast fields of Lincolniana until he has brought together the most precious of the golden words written of and by the Man of the People. Howe has collected a few of the best poems on Lincoln; Rice, Oldroyd and others, the elder prose tributes and reminiscences. McClure has edited Lincoln's yarns and stories; Nicolay and Hay, his speeches and writings. But each successive twelfth of February has emphasized the growing need for a unification of this scattered material.

The present volume offers, in small compass, the most noteworthy essays, orations, fiction and poems on Lincoln, together with some fiction, with characteristic anecdotes and "yarns" and his most famous speeches and writings. Taken in conjunction with a good biography, it presents the first succinct yet comprehensive view of "the first American." The Introduction gives some account of the celebration of Lincoln's Birthday and of his principal biographers.

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INTRODUCTION

Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States, was born at Nolin Creek, Kentucky, on Feb. 12, 1809. As the following pages contain more than one biographical sketch it is not necessary here to touch on the story of his life. Lincoln's Birthday is now a legal holiday in Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Washington (state) and Wyoming, and is generally observed in the other Northern States.

In its inspirational value to youth Lincoln's Birthday stands among the most important of our American holidays. Its celebration in school and home can not be made too impressive. "Rising as Lincoln did," writes Edward Deems, "from social obscurity through a youth of manual toil and poverty, steadily upward to the highest level of honor in the world, and all this as the fruit of earnest purpose, hard work, humane feeling and integrity of character, he is an example and an inspiration to youth unparalleled in history. At the same time he is the best specimen of the possibilities attainable by genius in our land and under our free institutions."

In arranging exercises for Lincoln's Birthday the teacher and parent should try not so much to teach the bare facts of his career as to give the children a sense of Lincoln's actual personality

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through his own yarns and speeches and such accounts as are given here by Herndon, Bancroft, Mabie, Tarbell, Phillips Brooks and others. He should show them Lincoln's greatest single act—Emancipation—through the eyes of Garfield and Whittier. He should try to reach the children with the thrill of an adoring sorrow-maddened country at the bier of its great preserver; with such a passion of love and patriotism as vibrates in the lines of Whitman, Brownell and Bryant, of Stoddard, Procter, Howe, Holmes, Lowell, and in the throbbing periods of Henry Ward Beecher. His main object should be to make his pupils love Lincoln. He should appeal to their national pride with the foreign tributes to Lincoln's greatness; make them feel how his memory still works through the years upon such contemporary poets as Gilder, Thompson, Markham, Cheney and Dunbar; and finally through the eyes of Harrison, Whitman, Ingersoll, Newman and others, show them our hero set in his proud, rightful place in the long vista of the ages.

In order to use the present volume with the best results it is advisable for teacher and parent to gain a more consecutive view of Lincoln's life than is offered here.

The standard biography of Lincoln is the monumental one in ten large volumes by Nicolay and Hay, the President's private secretaries. This contains considerable material not found elsewhere, but since its publication in 1890 much new matter has been unearthed, especially by [Pg xiii] the enterprise of Miss Ida Tarbell, whose "Life" in two volumes contains the essentials of the larger official work, is well balanced, and written in a simple, vigorous style perfectly adapted to the subject. If only one biography of Lincoln is to be read, Miss Tarbell's will, on the whole, be found most satisfactory.

The older Lives, written by Lincoln's friends and associates, such as Lamon and Herndon, make up in vividness and the intimate personal touch what they necessarily lack in perspective. Arnold's Life deals chiefly with the executive and legislative history of Lincoln's administration. The Life by the novelist J. G. Holland deals popularly with his hero's personality. The memoirs by Barrett, Abbott, Howells, Bartlett, Hanaford and Power were written in the main for political purposes.

Among the later works there stand out Morse's scholarly and serious account (in the American Statesmen series) of Lincoln's public policy; the vivid portrayal of Lincoln's adroitness as a politician by Col. McClure in Abraham Lincoln and Men of War Times; Whitney's Life on the Circuit with Lincoln, with its fund of entertaining anecdotes; Abraham Lincoln, an Essay by Carl Schurz; James Morgan's "short and simple annals" of Abraham Lincoln The Boy and the Man; Frederick Trevor Hill's brilliant account of Lincoln the Lawyer, the result of much recent research; the study of his personal magnetism in Alonzo Rothschild's Lincoln, Master of Men; and The True Abraham Lincoln by Curtis—a collection of sketches portraying Lincoln's character [Pg xiv] from several interesting points of view. Abraham Lincoln The Man of the People by Norman Hapgood is one of most recent and least conventional accounts. It is short, vigorous, vivid, and intensely American.

Among the many popular Lives for young people are: Abraham Lincoln, the Pioneer Boy, by W. M. Thayer; Abraham Lincoln, The Backwoods Boy, by Horatio Alger, Jr.; Abraham Lincoln, by Charles Carleton Coffin; The True Story of Abraham Lincoln The American, by E. S. Brooks; The Boy Lincoln, by W. O. Stoddard; and—most important of all—Nicolay's Boy's Life of Abraham Lincoln.

R. H. S.

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I
A BIRDSEYE VIEW OF LINCOLN

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The following autobiography was written by Mr. Lincoln's own hand at the request of J. W. Fell of Springfield, Ill., December 20, 1859. In the note which accompanied it the writer says: "Herewith is a little sketch, as you requested. There is not much of it, for the reason, I suppose, that there is not much of me."

"I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin Co., Ky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams Co., and others in Mason Co., Ill. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham Co., Va., to Kentucky, about 1781 or 1782, where, a year or two later, he was killed by Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors, who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks Co., Pa. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.

"My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age, and grew up literally without [Pg 4] any education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer Co., Ind., in my eighth year.

We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond 'readin', writin', and cipherin', to the rule of three. If a straggler, supposed to understand Latin, happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

"I was raised to farm work, at which I continued till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, and passed the first year in Macon County. Then I got to New Salem, at that time in Sangamon, now Menard County, where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk War, and I was elected a captain of volunteers—a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went into the campaign, was elected, ran for the Legislature the same year (1832), and was beaten—the only time I have ever been beaten by the people. The [Pg 5] next and three succeeding biennial elections I was elected to the Legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During the legislative period I had studied law, and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was elected to the Lower House of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, both inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral ticket, making active canvasses. I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since then is pretty well known.

"If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said I am in height six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing, on an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes—no other marks or brands recollected.

"Yours very truly,
A. LINCOLN."

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A BRIEF SUMMARY OF LINCOLN'S LIFE

BY OSBORN H. OLDROYD

From "Words of Lincoln"

The sun which rose on the 12th of February, 1809, lighted up a little log cabin on Nolin Creek, Hardin Co., Ky., in which Abraham Lincoln was that day ushered into the world. Although born under the humblest and most unpromising circumstances, he was of honest parentage. In this backwoods hut, surrounded by virgin forests, Abraham's first four years were spent. His parents then moved to a point about six miles from Hodgensville, where he lived until he was seven years of age, when the family again moved, this time to Spencer Co., Ind.

The father first visited the new settlement alone, taking with him his carpenter tools, a few farming implements, and ten barrels of whisky (the latter being the payment received for his little farm) on a flatboat down Salt Creek to the Ohio River. Crossing the river, he left his cargo in care of a friend, and then returned for his family. Packing the bedding and cooking utensils on two horses, the family of four started for their new home. They wended their way through the Kentucky forests to those of Indiana, the mother and daughter (Sarah) taking their turn in riding. [Pg 7]

Fourteen years were spent in the Indiana home. It was from this place that Abraham, in company with young Gentry, made a trip to New Orleans on a flatboat loaded with country produce. During these years Abraham had less than twelve months of schooling, but acquired a large experience in the rough work of pioneer life. In the autumn of 1818 the mother died, and Abraham experienced the first great sorrow of his life. Mrs. Lincoln had possessed a very limited education, but was noted for intellectual force of character.

The year following the death of Abraham's mother his father returned to Kentucky, and brought a new guardian to the two motherless children. Mrs. Sally Johnson, as Mrs. Lincoln, brought into the family three children of her own, a goodly amount of household furniture, and, what proved a blessing above all others, a kind heart. It was not intended that this should be a permanent home; accordingly, in March, 1830, they packed their effects in wagons, drawn by oxen, bade adieu to their old home, and took up a two weeks' march over untraveled roads, across mountains, swamps, and through dense forests, until they reached a spot on the Sangamon River, ten miles from Decatur, Ill., where they built another primitive home. Abraham had now arrived at manhood, and felt at liberty to go out into the world and battle for himself. He did not leave, however, until he saw his parents comfortably fixed in their new home, which he helped build; he also split enough rails to surround the house and ten acres of ground. [Pg 8]

In the fall and winter of 1830, memorable to the early settlers of Illinois as the year of the deep snow, Abraham worked for the farmers who lived in the neighborhood. He made the acquaintance of a man of the name of Offutt, who hired him, together with his stepbrother, John D. Johnson, and his uncle, John Hanks, to take a flatboat loaded with country produce down the Sangamon River to Beardstown, thence down the Illinois and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans. Abraham and his companions assisted in building the boat, which was finally launched and loaded in the spring of 1831, and their trip successfully made. In going over the dam at Rutledge

Mill, New Salem, Ill., the boat struck and remained stationary, and a day passed before it was again started on its voyage. During this delay Lincoln made the acquaintance of New Salem and its people.

On his return from New Orleans, after visiting his parents,—who had made another move, to Goose-Nest Prairie, Ill.,—he settled in the little village of New Salem, then in Sangamon, now Menard County. While living in this place, Mr. Lincoln served in the Black Hawk War, in 1832, as captain and private. His employment in the village was varied; he was at times a clerk, county surveyor, postmaster, and partner in the grocery business under the firm name of Lincoln & Berry. He was defeated for the Illinois Legislature in 1832 by Peter Cartwright, the Methodist pioneer preacher. He was elected to the Legislature in 1834, and for three successive terms thereafter. [Pg 9]

Mr. Lincoln wielded a great influence among the people of New Salem. They respected him for his uprightness and admired him for his genial and social qualities. He had an earnest sympathy for the unfortunate and those in sorrow. All confided in him, honored and loved him. He had an unfailing fund of anecdote, was a sharp, witty talker, and possessed an accommodating spirit, which led him to exert himself for the entertainment of his friends. During the political canvass of 1834, Mr. Lincoln made the acquaintance of Mr. John T. Stuart of Springfield, Ill. Mr. Stuart saw in the young man that which, if properly developed, could not fail to confer distinction on him. He therefore loaned Lincoln such law books as he needed, the latter often walking from New Salem to Springfield, a distance of twenty miles, to obtain them. It was very fortunate for Mr. Lincoln that he finally became associated with Mr. Stuart in the practice of law. He moved from New Salem to Springfield, and was admitted to the bar in 1837.

On the 4th of November, 1842, Mr. Lincoln married Miss Mary Todd of Lexington, Ky., at the residence of Ninian W. Edwards of Springfield, Ill. The fruits of this marriage were four sons; Robert T., born August 1, 1843; Edward Baker, March 10, 1846, died February 1, 1850; William Wallace, December 21, 1850, died at the White House, Washington, February 20, 1862; Thomas ("Tad"), April 4, 1853, died at the Clifton House, Chicago, Ill., July 15, 1871. Mrs. Lincoln died at the house of her sister, Springfield, July 16, 1882. [Pg 10]

In 1846 Mr. Lincoln was elected to Congress, as a Whig, his opponent being Peter Cartwright, who had defeated Mr. Lincoln for the Legislature in 1832.

The most remarkable political canvass witnessed in the country took place between Mr. Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in 1858. They were candidates of their respective parties for the United States Senate. Seven joint debates took place in different parts of the State. The Legislature being of Mr. Douglas' political faith, he was elected.

In 1860 Mr. Lincoln came before the country as the chosen candidate of the Republican party for the Presidency. The campaign was a memorable one, characterized by a novel organization called "Wide Awakes," which had its origin in Hartford, Conn. There were rail fence songs, rail-splitting on wagons in processions, and the building of fences by the torch-light marching clubs.

The triumphant election of Mr. Lincoln took place in November, 1860. On the 11th of February, 1861, he bade farewell to his neighbors, and as the train slowly left the depot his sad face was forever lost to the friends who gathered that morning to bid him God speed. The people along the route flocked at the stations to see him and hear his words. At all points he was greeted as the President of the people, and such he proved to be. Mr. Lincoln reached Washington on the morning of the 23rd of February, and on the 4th of March was inaugurated President. Through four years of terrible war his guiding star was justice and mercy. He was sometimes censured by [Pg 11] officers of the army for granting pardons to deserters and others, but he could not resist an appeal for the life of a soldier. He was the friend of the soldiers, and felt and acted toward them like a father. Even workingmen could write him letters of encouragement and receive appreciative words in reply.

When the immortal Proclamation of Emancipation was issued, the whole world applauded, and slavery received its deathblow. The terrible strain of anxiety and responsibility borne by Mr. Lincoln during the war had worn him away to a marked degree, but that God who was with him throughout the struggle permitted him to live, and by his masterly efforts and unceasing vigilance pilot the ship of state back into the haven of peace.

On the 14th of April, 1865, after a day of unusual cheerfulness in those troublous times, and seeking relaxation from his cares, the President, accompanied by his wife and a few intimate friends, went to Ford's Theater, on Tenth Street, N. W. There the foul assassin, J. Wilkes Booth, awaited his coming and at twenty minutes past ten o'clock, just as the third act of "Our American Cousin" was about to commence, fired the shot that took the life of Abraham Lincoln. The bleeding President was carried to a house across the street, No. 516, where he died at twenty-two minutes past seven the next morning. The body was taken to the White House and, after lying in state in the East Room and at the Capitol, left Washington on the 21st of April, stopping at various places en route, and finally arriving at Springfield on the 3rd of May. On the following [Pg 12] day the funeral ceremonies took place at Oak Ridge Cemetery, and there the remains of the martyr were laid at rest.

Abraham Lincoln needs no marble shaft to perpetuate his name; his *words* are the most enduring monument, and will forever live in the hearts of the people. [Pg 13]

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II
EARLY LIFE

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LINCOLN'S EDUCATION[1]

BY HORACE GREELEY

Let me pause here to consider the surprise often expressed when a citizen of limited schooling is chosen to fill, or is presented for one of the highest civil trusts. Has that argument any foundation in reason, any justification in history?

Of our country's great men, beginning with Ben Franklin, I estimate that a majority had little if anything more than a common-school education, while many had less. Washington, Jefferson, and Madison had rather more; Clay and Jackson somewhat less; Van Buren perhaps a little more; Lincoln decidedly less. How great was his consequent loss? I raise the question; let others decide it. Having seen much of Henry Clay, I confidently assert that not one in ten of those who knew him late in life would have suspected, from aught in his conversation or bearing, that his education had been inferior to that of the college graduates by whom he was surrounded. His knowledge was different from theirs; and the same is true of Lincoln's as well. Had the latter lived to be seventy years old, I judge that whatever of hesitation or rawness was observable in his manner would have vanished, and he would have met and mingled with educated gentlemen and [Pg 16] statesmen on the same easy footing of equality with Henry Clay in his later prime of life. How far his two flatboat voyages to New Orleans are to be classed as educational exercise above or below a freshman's year in college, I will not say; doubtless some freshmen learn more, others less, than those journeys taught him. Reared under the shadow of the primitive woods, which on every side hemmed in the petty clearings of the generally poor, and rarely energetic or diligent, pioneers of the Southern Indiana wilderness, his first introduction to the outside world from the deck of a "broad-horn" must have been wonderfully interesting and suggestive. To one whose utmost experience of civilization had been a county town, consisting of a dozen to twenty houses, mainly log, with a shabby little court-house, including jail, and a shabbier, ruder little church, that must have been a marvelous spectacle which glowed in his face from the banks of the Ohio and the lower Mississippi. Though Cairo was then but a desolate swamp, Memphis a wood-landing, and Vicksburg a timbered ridge with a few stores at its base, even these were in striking contrast to the sombre monotony of the great woods. The rivers were enlivened by countless swift-speeding steamboats, dispensing smoke by day and flame by night; while New Orleans, though scarcely one fourth the city she now is, was the focus of a vast commerce, and of a civilization which (for America) might be deemed antique. I doubt not that our tall and green [Pg 17] young backwoodsman needed only a piece of well-tanned sheepskin suitably (that is, learnedly) inscribed to have rendered those two boat trips memorable as his degrees in capacity to act well his part on that stage which has mankind for its audience.

[1] *By permission of Mr. Joel Benton.*

ABE LINCOLN'S HONESTY

From "Anecdotes of Abraham Lincoln and Lincoln's Stories."

Lincoln could not rest for an instant under the consciousness that he had, even unwittingly, defrauded anybody. On one occasion, while clerking in Offutt's store, at New Salem, Ill., he sold a woman a little bill of goods, amounting in value by the reckoning, to two dollars six and a quarter cents. He received the money, and the woman went away. On adding the items of the bill again, to make sure of its correctness, he found that he had taken six and a quarter cents too much. It was night, and, closing and locking the store, he started out on foot, a distance of two or three miles, for the house of his defrauded customer, and, delivering over to her the sum whose possession had so much troubled him, went home satisfied.

On another occasion, just as he was closing the store for the night, a woman entered, and asked for a half pound of tea. The tea was weighed out and paid for, and the store was left for the [Pg 18] night. The next morning, Lincoln entered to begin the duties of the day, when he discovered a four-ounce weight on the scales. He saw at once that he had made a mistake, and, shutting the store, he took a long walk before breakfast to deliver the remainder of the tea. These are very humble incidents, but they illustrate the man's perfect conscientiousness—his sensitive honesty—better perhaps than they would if they were of greater moment.

THE BOY THAT HUNGERED FOR KNOWLEDGE

From "Anecdotes of Abraham Lincoln and Lincoln's Stories."

In his eagerness to acquire knowledge, young Lincoln had borrowed of Mr. Crawford, a neighboring farmer, a copy of Weems' Life of Washington—the only one known to be in existence in that section of country. Before he had finished reading the book, it had been left, by a not unnatural oversight, in a window. Meantime, a rain storm came on, and the book was so

thoroughly wet as to make it nearly worthless. This mishap caused him much pain; but he went, in all honesty, to Mr. Crawford with the ruined book, explained the calamity that had happened through his neglect, and offered, not having sufficient money, to "work out" the value of the book. [Pg 19]

"Well, Abe," said Mr. Crawford, after due deliberation, "as it's you, I won't be hard on you. Just come over and pull fodder for me for two days, and we will call our accounts even."

The offer was readily accepted, and the engagement literally fulfilled. As a boy, no less than since, Abraham Lincoln had an honorable conscientiousness, integrity, industry, and an ardent love of knowledge.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN[2]

BY FLORENCE EVELYN PRATT

Lincoln, the woodsman, in the clearing stood,
Hemmed by the solemn forest stretching round;
Stalwart, ungainly, honest-eyed and rude,
The genius of that solitude profound.
He clove the way that future millions trod,
He passed, unmoved by worldly fear or pelf;
In all his lusty toil he found not God,
Though in the wilderness he found himself.

Lincoln, the President, in bitter strife,
Best-loved, worst-hated of all living men,
Oft single-handed, for the nation's life
Fought on, nor rested ere he fought again.
With one unerring purpose armed, he clove
Through selfish sin; then overwhelmed with care,
His great heart sank beneath its load of love;
Crushed to his knees, he found his God in prayer.

[2] *From The Youth's Companion.*

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YOUNG LINCOLN'S KINDNESS OF HEART

From "Anecdotes of Abraham Lincoln."

An instance of young Lincoln's practical humanity at an early period of his life is recorded, as follows: One evening, while returning from a "raising" in his wide neighborhood, with a number of companions, he discovered a straying horse, with saddle and bridle upon him. The horse was recognized as belonging to a man who was accustomed to excess in drink, and it was suspected at once that the owner was not far off. A short search only was necessary to confirm the suspicions of the young men.

The poor drunkard was found in a perfectly helpless condition, upon the chilly ground. Abraham's companions urged the cowardly policy of leaving him to his fate, but young Lincoln would not hear to the proposition. At his request, the miserable sot was lifted to his shoulders, and he actually carried him eighty rods to the nearest house. Sending word to his father that he should not be back that night, with the reason for his absence, he attended and nursed the man until the morning, and had the pleasure of believing that he had saved his life. [Pg 21]

A VOICE FROM THE WILDERNESS

BY CHARLES SUMNER

Abraham Lincoln was born, and, until he became President, always lived in a part of the country which, at the period of the Declaration of Independence, was a savage wilderness. Strange but happy Providence, that a voice from that savage wilderness, now fertile in men, was inspired to uphold the pledges and promises of the Declaration! The unity of the republic on the indestructible foundation of liberty and equality was vindicated by the citizen of a community which had no existence when the republic was formed.

A cabin was built in primitive rudeness, and the future President split the rails for the fence to inclose the lot. These rails have become classical in our history, and the name of rail-splitter has been more than the degree of a college. Not that the splitter of rails is especially meritorious, but because the people are proud to trace aspiring talent to humble beginnings, and because they found in this tribute a new opportunity of vindicating the dignity of free labor. [Pg 22]

CHOOSING "ABE" LINCOLN CAPTAIN

When the Black Hawk war broke out in Illinois about 1832, young Abraham Lincoln was living at New Salem, a little village of the class familiarly known out west as "one-horse towns," and located near the capital city of Illinois.

He had just closed his clerkship of a year in a feeble grocery, and was the first to enlist under the call of Governor Reynolds for volunteer forces to go against the Sacs and Foxes, of whom Black Hawk was chief.

By treaty these Indians had been removed west of the Mississippi into Iowa; but, thinking their old hunting-grounds the better, they had recrossed the river with their war paint on, causing some trouble, and a great deal of alarm among the settlers. Such was the origin of the war; and the handful of government troops stationed at Rock Island wanted help. Hence the State call.

Mr. Lincoln was twenty-three years old at that time, nine years older than his adopted State. The country was thinly settled, and a company of ninety men who could be spared from home for military service had to be gathered from a wide district. When full, the company met at the neighboring village of Richland to choose its officers. In those days the militia men were allowed [Pg 23] to select their leaders in their own way; and they had a very peculiar mode of expressing their preference for captains. For then, as now, there were almost always two candidates for one office.

They would meet on the green somewhere, and at the appointed hour, the competitors would step out from the crowds on the opposite sides of the ground, and each would call on all the "boys" who wanted him for captain to fall in behind him. As the line formed, the man next the candidate would put his hands on the candidate's shoulder; the third man also in the same manner to the second man; and so on to the end. And then they would march and cheer for their leader like so many wild men, in order to win over the fellows who didn't seem to have a choice, or whose minds were sure to run after the greater noise. When all had taken sides, the man who led the longer line, would be declared captain.

Mr. Lincoln never outgrew the familiar nickname, "Abe," but at that time he could hardly be said to have any other name than "Abe"; in fact he had emerged from clerking in that little corner grocery as "Honest Abe." He was not only liked, but loved, in the rough fashion of the frontier by all who knew him. He was a good hand at gunning, fishing, racing, wrestling and other games; he had a tall and strong figure; and he seemed to have been as often "reminded of a little story" in '32 as in '62. And the few men not won by these qualities, were won and held by his great [Pg 24] common sense, which restrained him from excesses even in sports, and made him a safe friend.

It is not singular therefore that though a stranger to many of the enlisted men, he should have had his warm friends who at once determined to make him captain.

But Mr. Lincoln hung back with the feeling, he said, that if there was any older and better established citizen whom the "boys" had confidence in, it would be better to make such a one captain. His poverty was even more marked than his modesty; and for his stock of education about that time, he wrote in a letter to a friend twenty-seven years later:

"I did not know much; still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all."

That, however, was up to the average education of the community; and having been clerk in a country grocery he was considered an educated man.

In the company Mr. Lincoln had joined, there was a dapper little chap for whom Mr. Lincoln had labored as a farm hand a year before, and whom he had left on account of ill treatment from him. This man was eager for the captaincy. He put in his days and nights "log-rolling" among his fellow volunteers; said he had already smelt gun-powder in a brush with Indians, thus urging the value of experience; even thought he had a "martial bearing"; and he was very industrious in getting those men to join the company who would probably vote for him to be captain. [Pg 25]

Muster-day came, and the recruits met to organize. About them stood several hundred relatives and other friends.

The little candidate was early on hand and busily bidding for votes. He had felt so confident of the office in advance of muster-day, that he had rummaged through several country tailor-shops and got a new suit of the nearest approach to a captain's uniform that their scant stock could furnish. So there he was, arrayed in jaunty cap, and a swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons. He even wore fine boots, and moreover had them blacked—which was almost a crime among a country crowd of that day.

Young Lincoln took not one step to make himself captain; and not one to prevent it. He simply put himself "in the hands of his friends," as the politicians say. He stood and quietly watched the trouble others were borrowing over the matter as if it were an election of officers they had enlisted for, rather than for fighting Indians. But after all, a good deal depends in war, on getting good officers.

As two o'clock drew near, the hour set for making captain, four or five of young Lincoln's most zealous friends with a big stalwart fellow at the head edged along pretty close to him, yet not in a way to excite suspicion of a "conspiracy." Just a little bit before two, without even letting "Abe"

himself know exactly "what was up," the big fellow stepped directly behind him, clapped his hands on the shoulders before him, and shouted as only prairie giants can, "Hurrah for Captain Abe Lincoln!" and plunged his really astonished candidate forward into a march. [Pg 26]

At the same instant, those in league with him also put hands to the shoulders before them, pushed, and took up the cheer, "Hurrah for Captain Abe Lincoln!" so loudly that there seemed to be several hundred already on their side; and so there were, for the outside crowd was also already cheering for "Abe."

This little "ruse" of the Lincoln "boys" proved a complete success. "Abe" had to march, whether or no, to the music of their cheers; he was truly "in the hands of his friends" then, and couldn't get away; and it must be said he didn't seem to feel very bad over the situation. The storm of cheers and the sight of tall Abraham (six feet and four inches) at the head of the marching column, before the fussy little chap in brass buttons who was quite ready, caused a quick stampede even among the boys who intended to vote for the little fellow. One after another they rushed for a place in "Captain Abe's" line as though to be first to fall in was to win a prize.

A few rods away stood that suit of captain's clothes alone, looking smaller than ever, "the starch all taken out of 'em," their occupant confounded, and themselves for sale. "Abe's" old "boss" said he was "astonished," and so he had good reason to be, but everybody could see it without his saying so. His "style" couldn't win among the true and shrewd, though unpolished "boys" in coarse garments. They saw right through him. [Pg 27]

"Buttons," as he became known from that day, was the last man to fall into "Abe's" line; he said he'd make it unanimous.

But his experience in making "Abe" Captain made himself so sick that he wasn't "able" to move when the company left for the "front," though he soon grew able to move out of the procession.

Thus was "Father Abraham," so young as twenty-three, chosen captain of a militia company over him whose abused, hired-hand he had been. It is little wonder that in '59 after three elections to the State Legislature and one to Congress, Mr. Lincoln should write of his early event as "a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since." The war was soon over with but little field work for the volunteers; but no private was known to complain that "Abe" was not a good captain. [Pg 28]

[Pg 29]

[Pg 30]

III
MATURITY

[Pg 31]

LINCOLN'S MARRIAGE—A PEEP INTO LINCOLN'S SOCIAL LIFE

In 1842, in his thirty-third year, Mr. Lincoln married Miss Mary Todd, a daughter of Hon. Robert S. Todd, of Lexington, Kentucky. The marriage took place in Springfield, where the lady had for several years resided, on the fourth of November of the year mentioned. It is probable that he married as early as the circumstances of his life permitted, for he had always loved the society of women, and possessed a nature that took profound delight in intimate female companionship. A letter written on the eighteenth of May following his marriage, to J. F. Speed, Esq., of Louisville, Kentucky, an early and a life-long personal friend, gives a pleasant glimpse of his domestic arrangements at this time. "We are not keeping house," Mr. Lincoln says in his letter, "but boarding at the Globe Tavern, which is very well kept now by a widow lady of the name of Beck. Our rooms are the same Dr. Wallace occupied there, and boarding only costs four dollars a week.... I most heartily wish you and your Fanny would not fail to come. Just let us know the time, a week in advance, and we will have a room prepared for you, and we'll all be merry together for awhile." He seems to have been in excellent spirits, and to have been very hearty in the enjoyment of his new relation. The private letters of Mr. Lincoln were charmingly natural and sincere. His personal friendships were the sweetest sources of his happiness. [Pg 32]

To a particular friend, he wrote February 25, 1842: "Yours of the sixteenth, announcing that Miss —— and you 'are no longer twain, but one flesh,' reached me this morning. I have no way of telling you how much happiness I wish you both, though I believe you both can conceive it. I feel somewhat jealous of both of you now, for you will be so exclusively concerned for one another that I shall be forgotten entirely. My acquaintance with Miss —— (I call her thus lest you should think I am speaking of your mother), was too short for me to reasonably hope to be long remembered by her; and still I am sure I shall not forget her soon. Try if you can not remind her of that debt she owes me, and be sure you do not interfere to prevent her paying it.

"I regret to learn that you have resolved not to return to Illinois. I shall be very lonesome without you. How miserably things seem to be arranged in this world! If we have no friends we have no pleasure; and if we have them, we are sure to lose them, and be doubly pained by the loss. I did hope she and you would make your home here, yet I own I have no right to insist. You owe obligations to her ten thousand times more sacred than any you can owe to others, and in that light let them be respected and observed. It is natural that she should desire to remain with [Pg 33]

her relations and friends. As to friends, she could not need them anywhere—she would have them in abundance here. Give my kind regards to Mr. —— and his family, particularly to Miss E. Also to your mother, brothers and sisters. Ask little E. D. —— if she will ride to town with me if I come there again. And, finally, give —— a double reciprocation of all the love she sent me. Write me often, and believe me, yours forever,

Lincoln."

HOW LINCOLN AND JUDGE B—— SWAPPED HORSES

From "Anecdotes of Abraham Lincoln."

When Abraham Lincoln was a lawyer in Illinois, he and a certain Judge once got to bantering one another about trading horses; and it was agreed that the next morning at 9 o'clock they should make a trade, the horses to be unseen up to that hour, and no backing out, under a forfeiture of $25.

At the hour appointed the Judge came up, leading the sorriest-looking specimen of a horse ever seen in those parts. In a few minutes Mr. Lincoln was seen approaching with a wooden saw-horse upon his shoulders. Great were the shouts and the laughter of the crowd, and both were greatly increased when Mr. Lincoln, on surveying the Judge's animal, set down his saw-horse, and exclaimed: "Well, Judge, this is the first time I ever got the worst of it in a horse trade." [Pg 34]

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AS A MAN OF LETTERS[3]

BY HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

From "Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature."

Born in 1809 and dying in 1865, Mr. Lincoln was the contemporary of every distinguished man of letters in America to the close of the war; but from none of them does he appear to have received literary impulse or guidance. He might have read, if circumstances had been favorable, a large part of the work of Irving, Bryant, Poe, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell, Whittier, Holmes, Longfellow, and Thoreau, as it came from the press; but he was entirely unfamiliar with it apparently until late in his career and it is doubtful if even at that period he knew it well or cared greatly for it. He was singularly isolated by circumstances and by temperament from those influences which usually determine, within certain limits, the quality and character of a man's style.

And Mr. Lincoln had a style,—a distinctive, individual, characteristic form of expression. In his own way he gained an insight into the structure of English, and a freedom and skill in the selection and combination of words, which not only made him the most convincing speaker of his time, but which have secured for his speeches a permanent place in literature. One of those [Pg 35] speeches is already known wherever the English language is spoken; it is a classic by virtue not only of its unique condensation of the sentiment of a tremendous struggle into the narrow compass of a few brief paragraphs, but by virtue of that instinctive felicity of style which gives to the largest thought the beauty of perfect simplicity. The two Inaugural Addresses are touched by the same deep feeling, the same large vision, the same clear, expressive and persuasive eloquence; and these qualities are found in a great number of speeches, from Mr. Lincoln's first appearance in public life. In his earliest expressions of his political views there is less range; but there is the structural order, clearness, sense of proportion, ease, and simplicity which give classic quality to the later utterances. Few speeches have so little of what is commonly regarded as oratorial quality; few have approached so constantly the standards and character of literature. While a group of men of gift and opportunity in the East were giving American literature its earliest direction, and putting the stamp of a high idealism on its thought and a rare refinement of spirit on its form, this lonely, untrained man on the old frontier was slowly working his way through the hardest and rudest conditions to perhaps the foremost place in American history, and forming at the same time a style of singular and persuasive charm.

There is, however, no possible excellence without adequate education; no possible mastery of any art without thorough training. Mr. Lincoln has sometimes been called an accident, and his [Pg 36] literary gift an unaccountable play of nature; but few men have ever more definitely and persistently worked out what was in them by clear intelligence than Mr. Lincoln, and no speaker or writer of our time has, according to his opportunities, trained himself more thoroughly in the use of English prose. Of educational opportunity in the scholastic sense, the future orator had only the slightest. He went to school "by littles," and these "littles" put together aggregated less than a year; but he discerned very early the practical uses of knowledge, and set himself to acquire it. This pursuit soon became a passion, and this deep and irresistible yearning did more for him perhaps than richer opportunities would have done. It made him a constant student, and it taught him the value of fragments of time. "He was always at the head of his class," writes one of his schoolmates, "and passed us rapidly in his studies. He lost no time at home, and when he was not at work was at his books. He kept up his studies on Sunday, and carried his books with him to work, so that he might read when he rested from labor." "I induced my husband to permit Abe to read and study at home as well as at school," writes his stepmother. "At first he was not easily reconciled to it, but finally he too seemed willing to encourage him to a certain extent. Abe

was a dutiful son to me always, and we took particular care when he was reading not to disturb him,—would let him read on and on until he quit of his own accord." [Pg 37]

The books within his reach were few, but they were among the best. First and foremost was that collection of literature in prose and verse, the Bible: a library of sixty-six volumes, presenting nearly every literary form, and translated at the fortunate moment when the English language had received the recent impress of its greatest masters of the speech of the imagination. This literature Mr. Lincoln knew intimately, familiarly, fruitfully; as Shakespeare knew it in an earlier version, and as Tennyson knew it and was deeply influenced by it in the form in which it entered into and trained Lincoln's imagination. Then there was that wise and very human text-book of the knowledge of character and life, "Æsop's Fables"; that masterpiece of clear presentation, "Robinson Crusoe"; and that classic of pure English, "The Pilgrim's Progress." These four books—in the hands of a meditative boy, who read until the last ember went out on the hearth, began again when the earliest light reached his bed in the loft of the log cabin, who perched himself on a stump, book in hand, at the end of every furrow in the plowing season—contained the elements of a movable university.

To these must be added many volumes borrowed from more fortunate neighbors; for he had "read through every book he had heard of in that country, for a circuit of fifty miles." A history of the United States and a copy of Weems's "Life of Washington" laid the foundations of his political [Pg 38] education. That he read with his imagination as well as with his eyes is clear from certain words spoken in the Senate Chamber at Trenton in 1861. "May I be pardoned," said Mr. Lincoln, "if on this occasion I mention that way back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, such a one as few of the members have ever seen,—Weems's 'Life of Washington.' I remember all the accounts there given of the battle-fields and struggles for the liberties of the country; and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton, New Jersey. The crossing of the river, the contest with the Hessians, the great hardships endured at that time,—all fixed themselves on my memory more than any single Revolutionary event; and you all know, for you have all been boys, how those early impressions last longer than any others."

"When Abe and I returned to the house from work," writes John Hanks, "he would go to the cupboard, snatch a piece of corn bread, sit down, take a book, cock his legs up as high as his head, and read. We grubbed, plowed, weeded, and worked together barefooted in the field. Whenever Abe had a chance in the field while at work, or at the house, he would stop and read." And this habit was kept up until Mr. Lincoln had found both his life work and his individual expression. Later he devoured Shakespeare and Burns; and the poetry of these masters of the dramatic and lyric form, sprung like himself from the common soil, and like him self-trained and [Pg 39] directed, furnished a kind of running accompaniment to his work and his play. What he read he not only held tenaciously, but took into his imagination and incorporated into himself. His familiar talk was enriched with frequent and striking illustrations from the Bible and "Æsop's Fables."

This passion for knowledge and for companionship with the great writers would have gone for nothing, so far as the boy's training in expression was concerned, if he had contented himself with acquisition; but he turned everything to account. He was as eager for expression as for the material of expression; more eager to write and to talk than to read. Bits of paper, stray sheets, even boards served his purpose. He was continually transcribing with his own hand thoughts or phrases which had impressed him. Everything within reach bore evidence of his passion for reading, and for writing as well. The flat sides of logs, the surface of the broad wooden shovel, everything in his vicinity which could receive a legible mark, was covered with his figures and letters. He was studying expression quite as intelligently as he was searching for thought. Years afterwards, when asked how he had attained such extraordinary clearness of style, he recalled his early habit of retaining in his memory words or phrases overheard in ordinary conversation or met in books and newspapers, until night, meditating on them until he got at their meaning, and then translating them into his own simpler speech. This habit, kept up for years, was the best [Pg 40] possible training for the writing of such English as one finds in the Bible and in "The Pilgrim's Progress." His self-education in the art of expression soon bore fruit in a local reputation both as a talker and a writer. His facility in rhyme and essay-writing was not only greatly admired by his fellows, but awakened great astonishment, because these arts were not taught in the neighboring schools.

In speech too he was already disclosing that command of the primary and universal elements of interest in human intercourse which was to make him, later, one of the most entertaining men of his time. His power of analyzing a subject so as to be able to present it to others with complete clearness was already disclosing itself. No matter how complex a question might be, he did not rest until he had reduced it to its simplest terms. When he had done this he was not only eager to make it clear to others, but to give his presentation freshness, variety, attractiveness. He had, in a word, the literary sense. "When he appeared in company," writes one of his early companions, "the boys would gather and cluster around him to hear him talk. Mr. Lincoln was figurative in his speech, talks and conversation. He argued much from analogy, and explained things hard for us to understand by stories, maxims, tales and figures. He would almost always point his lesson or idea by some story that was plain and near to us, that we might instantly see the force and bearing of what he said." [Pg 41]

In that phrase lies the secret of the closeness of Mr. Lincoln's words to his theme and to his listeners,—one of the qualities of genuine, original expression. He fed himself with thought, and

he trained himself in expression; but his supreme interest was in the men and women about him, and later, in the great questions which agitated them. He was in his early manhood when society was profoundly moved by searching which could neither be silenced nor evaded; and his lot was cast in a section where, as a rule, people read little and talked much. Public speech was the chief instrumentality of political education and the most potent means of persuasion; but behind the platform, upon which Mr. Lincoln was to become a commanding figure, were countless private debates carried on at street corners, in hotel rooms, by the country road, in every place where men met even in the most casual way. In these wayside schools Mr. Lincoln practiced the art of putting things until he became a past-master in debate, both formal and informal.

If all these circumstances, habits and conditions are studied in their entirety, it will be seen that Mr. Lincoln's style, so far as its formal qualities are concerned, is in no sense accidental or even surprising. He was all his early life in the way of doing precisely what he did in his later life with a skill which had become instinct. He was educated, in a very unusual way, to speak for his time and to his time with perfect sincerity and simplicity; to feel the moral bearing of the questions which were before the country; to discern the principles involved; and to so apply the [Pg 42]
principles to the questions as to clarify and illuminate them. There is little difficulty in accounting for the lucidity, simplicity, flexibility, and compass of Mr. Lincoln's style; it is not until we turn to its temperamental and spiritual qualities, to the soul of it, that we find ourselves perplexed and baffled.

But Mr. Lincoln's possession of certain rare qualities is in no way more surprising than their possession by Shakespeare, Burns, and Whitman. We are constantly tempted to look for the sources of a man's power in his educational opportunities instead of in his temperament and inheritance. The springs of genius are purified and directed in their flow by the processes of training, but they are fed from deeper sources. The man of obscure ancestry and rude surroundings is often in closer touch with nature, and with those universal experiences which are the very stuff of literature, than the man who is born on the upper reaches of social position and opportunity. Mr. Lincoln's ancestry for at least two generations were pioneers and frontiersmen, who knew hardship and privation, and were immersed in that great wave of energy and life which fertilized and humanized the central West. They were in touch with those original experiences out of which the higher evolution of civilization slowly rises; they knew the soil and the sky at first hand; they wrested a meagre subsistence out of the stubborn earth by constant toil; they shared to the full the vicissitudes and weariness of humanity at its elemental tasks. [Pg 43]

It was to this nearness to the heart of a new country, perhaps, that Mr. Lincoln owed his intimate knowledge of his people and his deep and beautiful sympathy with them. There was nothing sinuous or secondary in his processes of thought: they were broad, simple, and homely in the old sense of the word. He had rare gifts, but he was rooted deep in the soil of the life about him, and so completely in touch with it that he divined its secrets and used its speech. This vital sympathy gave his nature a beautiful gentleness, and suffused his thought with a tenderness born of deep compassion and love. He carried the sorrows of his country as truly as he bore its burdens; and when he came to speak on the second immortal day at Gettysburg, he condensed into a few sentences the innermost meaning of the struggle and the victory in the life of the nation. It was this deep heart of pity and love in him which carried him far beyond the reaches of statesmanship or oratory, and gave his words that finality of expression which marks the noblest art.

That there was a deep vein of poetry in Mr. Lincoln's nature is clear to one who reads the story of his early life; and this innate idealism, set in surroundings so harsh and rude, had something to do with his melancholy. The sadness which was mixed with his whole life was, however, largely due to his temperament; in which the final tragedy seemed always to be predicted. In that temperament too is hidden the secret of the rare quality of nature and mind which suffused his public speech and turned so much of it into literature. There was humor in it, there was deep [Pg 44]
human sympathy, there was clear mastery of words for the use to which he put them; but there was something deeper and more pervasive,—there was the quality of his temperament; and temperament is a large part of genius. The inner forces of his nature played through his thought; and when great occasions touched him to the quick, his whole nature shaped his speech and gave it clear intelligence, deep feeling, and that beauty which is distilled out of the depths of the sorrows and hopes of the world. He was as unlike Burke and Webster, those masters of the eloquence of statesmanship, as Burns was unlike Milton and Tennyson. Like Burns, he held the key of the life of his people; and through him, as through Burns, that life found a voice, vibrating, pathetic, and persuasive.

[3] *By permission of R. S. Peale and J. A. Hill Co.*

LINCOLN'S PRESENCE OF BODY

From "Abe Lincoln's Yarns and Stories"

On one occasion, Colonel Baker was speaking in a court-house, which had been a storehouse, and, on making some remarks that were offensive to certain political rowdies in the crowd, they cried: "Take him off the stand!" Immediate confusion followed, and there was an attempt to carry the demand into execution. Directly over the speaker's head was an old skylight, at which it appeared Mr. Lincoln had been listening to the speech. In an instant, Mr. Lincoln's feet came [Pg 45]
through the skylight, followed by his tall and sinewy frame, and he was standing by Colonel

Baker's side. He raised his hand, and the assembly subsided into silence. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Lincoln, "let us not disgrace the age and country in which we live. This is a land where freedom of speech is guaranteed. Mr. Baker has a right to speak, and ought to be permitted to do so. I am here to protect him, and no man shall take him from this stand if I can prevent it."

The suddenness of his appearance, his perfect calmness and fairness, and the knowledge that he would do what he had promised to do, quieted all disturbance, and the speaker concluded his remarks without difficulty.

HOW LINCOLN BECAME A NATIONAL FIGURE

BY IDA M. TARBELL

From "The Life of Abraham Lincoln."[4]

"The greatest speech ever made in Illinois, and it puts Lincoln on the track for the Presidency," was the comment made by enthusiastic Republicans on Lincoln's speech before the Bloomington Convention. Conscious that it was he who had put the breath of life into their organization, the [Pg 46] party instinctively turned to him as its leader. The effect of this local recognition was at once perceptible in the national organization. Less than three weeks after the delivery of the Bloomington speech, the national convention of the Republican party met in Philadelphia, June 17, to nominate candidates for the Presidency and Vice-presidency. Lincoln's name was the second proposed for the latter office, and on the first ballot he received one hundred and ten votes. The news reached him at Urbana, Ill., where he was attending court, one of his companions reading from a daily paper just received from Chicago, the result of the ballot. The simple name Lincoln was given, without the name of the man's State. Lincoln said indifferently that he did not suppose it could be himself; and added that there was "another great man" of the name, a man from Massachusetts. The next day, however, he knew that it was himself to whom the convention had given so strong an endorsement. He knew also that the ticket chosen was Frémont and Dayton.

The campaign of the following summer and fall was one of intense activity for Lincoln. In Illinois and the neighboring States he made over fifty speeches, only fragments of which have been preserved. One of the first important ones was delivered on July 4, 1856, at a great mass meeting at Princeton, the home of the Lovejoys and the Bryants. The people were still irritated by the outrages in Kansas and by the attack on Sumner in the Senate, and the temptation to deliver [Pg 47] a stirring and indignant oration must have been strong. Lincoln's speech was, however, a fine example of political wisdom, an historical argument admirably calculated to convince his auditors that they were right in their opposition to slavery extension, but so controlled and sane that it would stir no impulsive radical to violence. There probably was not uttered in the United States on that critical 4th of July, 1856, when the very foundation of the government was in dispute and the day itself seemed a mockery, a cooler, more logical speech than this by the man who, a month before, had driven a convention so nearly mad that the very reporters had forgotten to make notes. And the temper of this Princeton speech Lincoln kept throughout the campaign.

In spite of the valiant struggle of the Republicans, Buchanan was elected; but Lincoln was in no way discouraged. The Republicans had polled 1,341,264 votes in the country. In Illinois, they had given Frémont nearly 100,000 votes, and they had elected their candidate for governor, General Bissell. Lincoln turned from arguments to encouragement and good counsel.

"All of us," he said at a Republican banquet in Chicago, a few weeks after the election, "who did not vote for Mr. Buchanan, taken together, are a majority of four hundred thousand. But in the late contest we were divided between Frémont and Fillmore. Can we not come together for the future? Let every one who really believes and is resolved that free society is not and shall not be [Pg 48] a failure, and who can conscientiously declare that in the last contest he had done what he thought best—let every such one have charity to believe that every other one can say as much. Thus let bygones be bygones; let past differences as nothing be; and with steady eye on the real issue let us reinaugurate the good old 'central idea' of the republic. We can do it. The human heart is with us; God is with us. We shall again be able, not to declare that 'all States as States are equal,' nor yet that 'all citizens as citizens are equal,' but to renew the broader, better declaration, including both these and much more, that 'all men are created equal.'"

The spring of 1857 gave Lincoln a new line of argument. Buchanan was scarcely in the Presidential chair before the Supreme Court, in the decision of the Dred Scott case, declared that a negro could not sue in the United States courts and that Congress could not prohibit slavery in the Territories. This decision was such an evident advance of the slave power that there was a violent uproar in the North. Douglas went at once to Illinois to calm his constituents. "What," he cried, "oppose the Supreme Court! is it not sacred? To resist it is anarchy."

Lincoln met him fairly on the issue in a speech at Springfield in June, 1857.

"We believe as much as Judge Douglas (perhaps more) in obedience to and respect for the judicial department of government.... But we think the Dred Scott decision is erroneous. We [Pg 49] know the court that made it has often overruled its own decisions, and we shall do what we can to have it overrule this. We offer no resistance to it.... If this important decision had been made by the unanimous concurrence of the judges, and without any apparent partisan bias, and in

accordance with legal public expectation and with the steady practice of the departments throughout our history, and had been in no part based on assumed historical facts which are not really true; or if, wanting in some of these, it had been before the court more than once, and had there been affirmed and reaffirmed through a course of years, it then might be, perhaps would be, factious, nay, even revolutionary, not to acquiesce in it as a precedent. But when, as is true, we find it wanting in all these claims to the public confidence, it is not resistance, it is not factious, it is not even disrespectful, to treat it as not having yet quite established a settled doctrine for the country."

Let Douglas cry "awful," "anarchy," "revolution," as much as he would, Lincoln's arguments against the Dred Scott decision appealed to common sense and won him commendation all over the country. Even the radical leaders of the party in the East—Seward, Sumner, Theodore Parker—began to notice him, to read his speeches, to consider his arguments.

With every month of 1857 Lincoln grew stronger, and his election in Illinois as United States senatorial candidate in 1858 against Douglas would have been insured if Douglas had not [Pg 50] suddenly broken with Buchanan and his party in a way which won him the hearty sympathy and respect of a large part of the Republicans of the North. By a flagrantly unfair vote the pro-slavery leaders of Kansas had secured the adoption of the Lecompton Constitution allowing slavery in the State. President Buchanan urged Congress to admit Kansas with her bogus Constitution. Douglas, who would not sanction so base an injustice, opposed the measure, voting with the Republicans steadily against the admission. The Buchananists, outraged at what they called "Douglas's apostasy," broke with him. Then it was that a part of the Republican party, notably Horace Greeley at the head of the New York "Tribune," struck by the boldness and nobility of Douglas's opposition, began to hope to win him over from the Democrats to the Republicans. Their first step was to counsel the leaders of their party in Illinois to put up no candidate against Douglas for the United States senatorship in 1858.

Lincoln saw this change on the part of the Republican leaders with dismay. "Greeley is not doing me right," he said. "... I am a true Republican, and have been tried already in the hottest part of the anti-slavery fight; and yet I find him taking up Douglas, a veritable dodger,—once a tool of the South, now its enemy,—and pushing him to the front." He grew so restless over the returning popularity of Douglas among the Republicans that Herndon, his law-partner, determined to go East to find out the real feeling of the Eastern leaders towards Lincoln. [Pg 51] Herndon had, for a long time, been in correspondence with the leading abolitionists and had no difficulty in getting interviews. The returns he brought back from his canvass were not altogether reassuring. Seward, Sumner, Phillips, Garrison, Beecher, Theodore Parker, all spoke favorably of Lincoln and Seward sent him word that the Republicans would never take up so slippery a quantity as Douglas had proved himself. But Greeley—the all-important Greeley—was lukewarm. "The Republican standard is too high," he told Herndon. "We want something practical.... Douglas is a brave man. Forget the past and sustain the righteous." "Good God, righteous, eh!" groaned Herndon in his letter to Lincoln.

But though the encouragement which came to Lincoln from the East in the spring of 1858 was meagre, that which came from Illinois was abundant. There the Republicans supported him in whole-hearted devotion. In June, the State convention, meeting in Springfield to nominate its candidate for Senator, declared that Abraham Lincoln was its first and only choice as the successor of Stephen A. Douglas. The press was jubilant. "Unanimity is a weak word," wrote the editor of the Bloomington "Pantagraph," "to express the universal and intense feeling of the convention. *Lincoln!* LINCOLN!! LINCOLN!!! was the cry everywhere, whenever the senatorship was alluded to. Delegates from Chicago and from Cairo, from the Wabash and the Illinois, from the north, the center, and the south, were alike fierce with enthusiasm, whenever that loved [Pg 52] name was breathed. Enemies at home and misjudging friends abroad, who have looked for dissension among us on the question of the senatorship, will please take notice that our nomination is a unanimous one; and that, in the event of a Republican majority in the next Legislature, no other name than Lincoln's will be mentioned, or thought of, by a solitary Republican legislator. One little incident in the convention was a pleasing illustration of the universality of the Lincoln sentiment. Cook County had brought a banner into the assemblage inscribed, 'Cook County for Abraham Lincoln.' During a pause in the proceedings, a delegate from another county rose and proposed, with the consent of the Cook County delegation, 'to amend the banner by substituting for "Cook County" the word which I hold in my hand,' at the same time unrolling a scroll, and revealing the word 'Illinois' in huge capitals. The Cook delegation promptly accepted the amendment, and amidst a perfect hurricane of hurrahs, the banner was duly altered to express the sentiment of the whole Republican party of the State, thus: 'Illinois for Abraham Lincoln.'"

On the evening of the day of his nomination, Lincoln addressed his constituents. The first paragraph of his speech gave the key to the campaign he proposed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one [Pg 53] thing or all the other."

Then followed the famous charge of conspiracy against the slavery advocates, the charge that Pierce, Buchanan, Chief Justice Taney, and Douglas had been making a concerted effort to legalize the institution of slavery "in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South." He marshaled one after another of the measures that the pro-slavery leaders had secured in the past four years, and clinched the argument by one of his inimitable illustrations.

"When we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out of different times and places and by different workmen,—Stephen, Franklin, Roger and James,[A] for instance,—and we see these timbers joined together, and see they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill, all the tenons and mortises exactly fitting, and all the lengths and proportions of the different pieces exactly adapted to their respective places, and not a piece too many or too few, not omitting even the scaffolding—or, if a single piece be lacking, we see the place in the frame exactly fitted and prepared yet to bring such a piece in—in such a case we find it impossible not to believe that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft, drawn up before the first blow was struck." [Pg 54]

The speech was severely criticised by Lincoln's friends. It was too radical. It was sectional. He heard the complaints unmoved. "If I had to draw a pen across my record," he said, one day, "and erase my whole life from sight, and I had one poor gift of choice left as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerased."

The speech, was, in fact, one of great political adroitness. It forced Douglas to do exactly what he did not want to do in Illinois; explain his own record during the past four years; explain the true meaning of the Kansas-Nebraska bill; discuss the Dred Scott decision; say whether or not he thought slavery so good a thing that the country could afford to extend it instead of confining it where it would be in course of gradual extinction. Douglas wanted the Republicans of Illinois to follow Greeley's advice: "Forgive the past." He wanted to make the most among them of his really noble revolt against the attempt of his party to fasten an unjust constitution on Kansas. Lincoln would not allow him to bask for an instant in the sun of that revolt. He crowded him step by step through his party's record, and compelled him to face what he called the "profound central truth" of the Republican party, "slavery is wrong and ought to be dealt with as wrong."

But it was at once evident that Douglas did not mean to meet the issue squarely. He called the doctrine of Lincoln's "house-divided-against-itself" speech "sectionalism"; his charge of conspiracy "false"; his talk of the wrong of slavery extension "abolitionism." This went on for a month. Then Lincoln resolved to force Douglas to meet his arguments, and challenged him to a series of joint debates. Douglas was not pleased. His reply to the challenge was irritable, even slightly insolent. To those of his friends who talked with him privately of the contest, he said: "I do not feel, between you and me, that I want to go into this debate. The whole country knows me, and has me measured. Lincoln, as regards myself, is comparatively unknown, and if he gets the best of this debate,—and I want to say he is the ablest man the Republicans have got,—I shall lose everything and Lincoln will gain everything. Should I win, I shall gain but little. I do not want to go into a debate with Abe." Publicly, however, he carried off the prospect confidently, even jauntily. "Mr. Lincoln," he said patronizingly, "is a kind, amiable, intelligent gentleman." In the meantime his constituents boasted loudly of the fine spectacle they were going to give the State —"the Little Giant chawing up Old Abe!" [Pg 55]

Many of Lincoln's friends looked forward to the encounter with foreboding. Often, in spite of their best intentions, they showed anxiety. "Shortly before the first debate came off at Ottawa," says Judge H. W. Beckwith of Danville, Ill., "I passed the Chenery House, then the principal hotel in Springfield. The lobby was crowded with partisan leaders from various sections of the State, and Mr. Lincoln, from his greater height, was seen above the surging mass that clung about him like a swarm of bees to their ruler. He looked careworn, but he met the crowd patiently and kindly, shaking hands, answering questions, and receiving assurances of support. The day was warm, and at the first chance he broke away and came out for a little fresh air, wiping the sweat from his face. [Pg 56]

"As he passed the door he saw me, and, taking my hand, inquired for the health and views of his 'friends over in Vermilion County.' He was assured they were wide awake, and further told that they looked forward to the debate between him and Senator Douglas with deep concern. From the shadow that went quickly over his face, the pained look that came to give quickly way to a blaze of eyes and quiver of lips, I felt that Mr. Lincoln had gone beneath my mere words and caught my inner and current fears as to the result. And then, in a forgiving, jocular way peculiar to him, he said, 'Sit down; I have a moment to spare and will tell you a story.' Having been on his feet for some time, he sat on the end of the stone steps leading into the hotel door, while I stood closely fronting him.

"'You have,' he continued, 'seen two men about to fight?'

"'Yes, many times.'

"'Well, one of them brags about what he means to do. He jumps high in the air, cracking his heels together, smites his fists, and wastes his breath trying to scare everybody. You see the other fellow, he says not a word,'—here Mr. Lincoln's voice and manner changed to great earnestness, and repeating—'you see the other man says not a word. His arms are at his side, his fists are closely doubled up, his head is drawn to the shoulder, and his teeth are set firm together. He is saving his wind for the fight, and as sure as it comes off he will win it, or die a-trying.' [Pg 57]

"He made no other comment, but arose, bade me good-by, and left me to apply that illustration."

It was inevitable that Douglas's friends should be sanguine, Lincoln's doubtful. The contrast

between the two candidates was almost pathetic. Senator Douglas was the most brilliant figure in the political life of the day. Winning in personality, fearless as an advocate, magnetic in eloquence, shrewd in political manœuvring, he had every quality to captivate the public. His resources had never failed him. From his entrance into Illinois politics in 1834, he had been the recipient of every political honor his party had to bestow. For the past eleven years he had been a member of the United States Senate, where he had influenced all the important legislation of the day and met in debate every strong speaker of North and South. In 1852, and again in 1856, he had been a strongly supported, though unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination. In 1858 he was put at or near the head of every list of possible Presidential candidates made up for 1860.

How barren Lincoln's public career in comparison! Three terms in the lower house of the State Assembly, one term in Congress, then a failure which drove him from public life. Now he returns as a bolter from his party, a leader in a new organization which the conservatives are denouncing as "visionary," "impractical," "revolutionary." [Pg 58]

No one recognized more clearly than Lincoln the difference between himself and his opponent. "With me," he said, sadly, in comparing the careers of himself and Douglas, "the race of ambition has been a failure—a flat failure. With him it has been one of splendid success." He warned his party at the outset that, with himself as a standard-bearer, the battle must be fought on principle alone, without any of the external aids which Douglas's brilliant career gave. "Senator Douglas is of world-wide renown," he said; "All the anxious politicians of his party, or who have been of his party for years past, have been looking upon him as certain, at no distant day, to be the President of the United States. They have seen in his round, jolly, fruitful face, post-offices, land-offices, marshal-ships, and cabinet appointments, chargéships and foreign missions, bursting and sprouting out in wonderful exuberance, ready to be laid hold of by their greedy hands. And as they have been gazing upon this attractive picture so long, they cannot, in the little distraction that has taken place in the party, bring themselves to give up the charming hope; but with greedier anxiety they rush about him, sustain him, and give him marches, triumphal entries, and receptions beyond what even in the days of his highest prosperity they could have brought about [Pg 59] in his favor. On the contrary, nobody has ever expected me to be President. In my poor, lean, lank face, nobody has ever seen that any cabbages were sprouting out. These are disadvantages, all taken together, that the Republicans labor under. We have to fight this battle upon principle, and upon principle alone."

If one will take a map of Illinois and locate the points of the Lincoln and Douglas debates held between August 21 and October 15, 1858, he will see that the whole State was traversed in the contest. The first took place at Ottawa, about seventy-five miles southwest of Chicago, on August 21; the second at Freeport, near the Wisconsin boundary, on August 27. The third was in the extreme southern part of the State, at Jonesboro, on September 15. Three days later the contestants met one hundred and fifty miles northeast of Jonesboro, at Charleston. The fifth, sixth, and seventh debates were held in the western part of the State; at Galesburg, October 7; Quincy, October 13; and Alton, October 15.

Constant exposure and fatigue were unavoidable in meeting these engagements. Both contestants spoke almost every day through the intervals between the joint debates; and as railroad communication in Illinois in 1858 was still very incomplete, they were often obliged to resort to horse, carriage, or steamer, to reach the desired points. Judge Douglas succeeded, however, in making this difficult journey something of a triumphal procession. He was accompanied throughout the campaign by his wife—a beautiful and brilliant woman—and by a [Pg 60] number of distinguished Democrats.

On the Illinois Central Railroad he had always a special car, sometimes a special train. Frequently he swept by Lincoln, side-tracked in an accommodation or freight train. "The gentleman in that car evidently smelt no royalty on our carriage," laughed Lincoln one day, as he watched from the caboose of a laid-up freight train the decorated special of Douglas flying by.

It was only when Lincoln left the railroad and crossed the prairie at some isolated town, that he went in state. The attentions he received were often very trying to him. He detested what he called "fizzlegigs and fireworks," and would squirm in disgust when his friends gave him a genuine prairie ovation. Usually, when he was going to a point distant from the railway, a "distinguished citizen" met him at the station nearest the place with a carriage. When they were come within two or three miles of the town, a long procession with banners and band would appear winding across the prairie to meet the speaker. A speech of greeting was made, and then the ladies of the entertainment committee would present Lincoln with flowers, sometimes even winding a garland about his head and lanky figure. His embarrassment at these attentions was thoroughly appreciated by his friends. At the Ottawa debate the enthusiasm of his supporters was so great that they insisted on carrying him from the platform to the house where he was to be entertained. Powerless to escape from the clutches of his admirers, he could only cry, "Don't, [Pg 61] boys; let me down; come now, don't." But the "boys" persisted, and they tell to-day proudly of their exploit and of the cordial hand-shake Lincoln, all embarrassed as he was, gave each when at last he was free.

On arrival at the towns where the joint debates were held, Douglas was always met by a brass band and a salute of thirty-two guns (the Union was composed of thirty-two States in 1858), and was escorted to the hotel in the finest equipage to be had. Lincoln's supporters took delight in showing their contempt of Douglas's elegance by affecting a Republican simplicity, often carrying

their candidate through the streets on a high and unadorned hay-rack drawn by farm horses. The scenes in the towns on the occasion of the debates were perhaps never equalled at any other of the hustings of this country. No distance seemed too great for the people to go; no vehicle too slow or fatiguing. At Charleston there was a great delegation of men, women and children present which had come in a long procession from Indiana by farm wagons, afoot, on horseback, and in carriages. The crowds at three or four of the debates were for that day immense. There were estimated to be from eight thousand to fourteen thousand people at Quincy, some six thousand at Alton, from ten thousand to fifteen thousand at Charleston, some twenty thousand at Ottawa. Many of those at Ottawa came the night before. "It was a matter of but a short time," says Mr. George Beatty of Ottawa, "until the few hotels, the livery stables, and private houses [Pg 62] were crowded, and there were no accommodations left. Then the campaigners spread out about the town, and camped in whatever spot was most convenient. They went along the bluff and on the bottom-lands, and that night, the camp-fires, spread up and down the valley for a mile, made it look as if an army was gathered about us."

When the crowd was massed at the place of the debate, the scene was one of the greatest hubbub and confusion. On the corners of the squares, and scattered around the outskirts of the crowd, were fakirs of every description, selling painkillers and ague cures, watermelons and lemonade; jugglers and beggars plied their trades, and the brass bands of all the four corners within twenty-five miles tooted and pounded at "Hail Columbia, Happy Land," or "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean."

Conspicuous in the processions at all the points was what Lincoln called the "Basket of Flowers," thirty-two young girls in a resplendent car, representing the Union. At Charleston, a thirty-third young woman rode behind the car, representing Kansas. She carried a banner inscribed: "I will be free"; a motto which brought out from nearly all the newspaper reporters the comment that she was too fair to be long free.

The mottoes at the different meetings epitomized the popular conception of the issues and the candidates. Among the Lincoln sentiments were: [Pg 63]

Illinois born under the Ordinance of '87.

Free Territories and Free Men,
Free Pulpits and Free Preachers,
Free Press and a Free Pen,
Free Schools and Free Teachers.

"Westward the star of empire takes its way;
The girls link on to Lincoln, their mothers were for Clay."

Abe the Giant-Killer.

Edgar County for the Tall Sucker.

A striking feature of the crowds was the number of women they included. The intelligent and lively interest they took in the debates caused much comment. No doubt Mrs. Douglas's presence had something to do with this. They were particularly active in receiving the speakers, and at Quincy, Lincoln, on being presented with what the local press described as a "beautiful and elegant bouquet," took pains to express his gratification at the part women everywhere took in the contest.

While this helter-skelter outpouring of prairiedom had the appearance of being little more than a great jollification, a lawless country fair, in reality it was with the majority of the people a profoundly serious matter. With every discussion it became more vital. Indeed, in the first debate, which was opened and closed by Douglas, the relation of the two speakers became dramatic. It was here that Douglas hoping to fasten on Lincoln the stigma of "abolitionist," charged him with [Pg 64] having undertaken to abolitionize the old Whig party, and having been in 1854 a subscriber to a radical platform proclaimed at Springfield. This platform Douglas read. Lincoln, when he replied, could only say he was never at the convention—knew nothing of the resolutions; but the impression prevailed that he was cornered. The next issue of the Chicago "Press and Tribune" dispelled it. That paper had employed to report the debates the first shorthand reporter of Chicago, Mr. Robert L. Hitt—now a Member of Congress and the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Mr. Hitt, when Douglas began to read the resolutions, took an opportunity to rest, supposing he could get the original from the speaker. He took down only the first line of each resolution. He missed Douglas after the debate, but on reaching Chicago, where he wrote out his report, he sent an assistant to the files to find the platform adopted at the Springfield Convention. It was brought, but when Mr. Hitt began to transcribe it he saw at once that it was widely different from the one Douglas had read. There was great excitement in the office, and the staff, ardently Republican, went to work to discover where the resolutions had come from. It was found that they originated at a meeting of radical abolitionists with whom Lincoln had never been associated.

The "Press and Tribune" announced the "forgery," as it was called in a caustic editorial, "The Little Dodger Cornered and Caught." Within a week even the remote school-districts of Illinois [Pg 65] were discussing Douglas's action, and many of the most important papers of the nation had made it a subject of editorial comment.

Almost without exception Douglas was condemned. No amount of explanation on his part helped him. "The particularity of Douglas's charge," said the Louisville "Journal," "precludes the idea that he was simply and innocently mistaken." Lovers of fair play were disgusted, and those of Douglas's own party who would have applauded a trick too clever to be discovered could not forgive him for one which had been found out. Greeley came out bitterly against him, and before long wrote to Lincoln and Herndon that Douglas was "like the man's boy who (he said) didn't weigh so much as he expected and he always knew he wouldn't."

Douglas's error became a sharp-edged sword in Lincoln's hand. Without directly referring to it, he called his hearers' attention to the forgery every time he quoted a document by his elaborate explanation that he believed, unless there was some mistake on the part of those with whom the matter originated and which he had been unable to detect, that this was correct. Once when Douglas brought forward a document, Lincoln blandly remarked that he could scarcely be blamed for doubting its genuineness since the introduction of the Springfield resolutions at Ottawa.

It was in the second debate, at Freeport, that Lincoln made the boldest stroke of the contest. Soon after the Ottawa debate, in discussing his plan for the next encounter, with a number of his [Pg 66] political friends,—Washburne, Cook, Judd, and others,—he told them he proposed to ask Douglas four questions, which he read. One and all cried halt at the second question. Under no condition, they said, must he put it. If it were put, Douglas would answer it in such a way as to win the senatorship. The morning of the debate, while on the way to Freeport, Lincoln read the same questions to Mr. Joseph Medill. "I do not like this second question, Mr. Lincoln," said Mr. Medill. The two men argued to their journey's end, but Lincoln was still unconvinced. Even after he reached Freeport several Republican leaders came to him pleading, "Do not ask that question." He was obdurate; and he went on the platform with a higher head, a haughtier step than his friends had noted in him before. Lincoln was going to ruin himself, the committee said despondently; one would think he did not want the senatorship.

The mooted question ran in Lincoln's notes: "Can the people of a United States territory in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution?" Lincoln had seen the irreconcilableness of Douglas's own measure of popular sovereignty, which declared that the people of a territory should be left to regulate their domestic concerns in their own way subject only to the Constitution, and the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case that slaves, being property, could not under the Constitution be excluded from a territory. He knew that if Douglas [Pg 67] said no to this question, his Illinois constituents would never return him to the Senate. He believed that if he said yes, the people of the South would never vote for him for President of the United States. He was willing himself to lose the senatorship in order to defeat Douglas for the Presidency in 1860. "I am after larger game; the battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this," he said confidently.

The question was put, and Douglas answered it with rare artfulness. "It matters not," he cried, "what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a territory under the Constitution; the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery, they will elect representatives to that body who will, by unfriendly legislation, effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst. If, on the contrary, they are for it, their legislature will favor its extension."

His democratic constituents went wild over the clever way in which Douglas had escaped Lincoln's trap. He now practically had his election. The Republicans shook their heads. Lincoln only was serene. He alone knew what he had done. The Freeport debate had no sooner reached the pro-slavery press than a storm of protest went up. Douglas had betrayed the South. He had [Pg 68] repudiated the Supreme Court decision. He had declared that slavery could be kept out of the territories by other legislation than a State Constitution. "The Freeport doctrine," or "the theory of unfriendly legislation," as it became known, spread month by month, and slowly but surely made Douglas an impossible candidate in the South. The force of the question was not realized in full by Lincoln's friends until the Democratic party met in Charleston, S. C., in 1860, and the Southern delegates refused to support Douglas because of the answer he gave to Lincoln's question in the Freeport debate of 1858.

"Do you recollect the argument we had on the way up to Freeport two years ago over the question I was going to ask Judge Douglas?" Lincoln asked Mr. Joseph Medill, when the latter went to Springfield a few days after the election of 1860.

"Yes," said Medill, "I recollect it very well."

"Don't you think I was right now?"

"We were both right. The question hurt Douglas for the Presidency, but it lost you the senatorship."

"Yes, and I have won the place he was playing for."

From the beginning of the campaign Lincoln supplemented the strength of his arguments by inexhaustible good humor. Douglas, physically worn, harassed by the trend which Lincoln had given the discussions, irritated that his adroitness and eloquence could not so cover the [Pg 69]

fundamental truth of the Republican position but that it would up again, often grew angry, even abusive. Lincoln answered him with most effective raillery. At Havana, where he spoke the day after Douglas, he said:

"I am informed that my distinguished friend yesterday became a little excited—nervous, perhaps—and he said something about fighting, as though referring to a pugilistic encounter between him and myself. Did anybody in this audience hear him use such language? (Cries of "Yes.") I am informed further, that somebody in his audience, rather more excited and nervous than himself, took off his coat, and offered to take the job off Judge Douglas's hands, and fight Lincoln himself. Did anybody here witness that war-like proceeding? (Laughter and cries of "Yes.") Well, I merely desire to say that I shall fight neither Judge Douglas nor his second. I shall not do this for two reasons, which I will now explain. In the first place, a fight would prove nothing which is in issue in this contest. It might establish that Judge Douglas is a more muscular man than myself, or it might demonstrate that I am a more muscular man than Judge Douglas. But this question is not referred to in the Cincinnati platform, nor in either of the Springfield platforms. Neither result would prove him right nor me wrong; and so of the gentleman who volunteered to do this fighting for him. If my fighting Judge Douglas would not prove anything, it would certainly prove nothing for me to fight his bottle-holder.

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"My second reason for not having a personal encounter with the judge is, that I don't believe he wants it himself. He and I are about the best friends in the world, and when we get together he would no more think of fighting me than of fighting his wife. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, when the judge talked about fighting, he was not giving vent to any ill feeling of his own, but merely trying to excite—well, enthusiasm against me on the part of his audience. And as I find he was tolerably successful, we will call it quits."

More difficult for Lincoln to take good-naturedly than threats and hard names was the irrelevant matters which Douglas dragged into the debates to turn attention from the vital arguments. Thus Douglas insisted repeatedly on taunting Lincoln because his zealous friends had carried him off the platform at Ottawa. "Lincoln was so frightened by the questions put to him," said Douglas, "that he could not walk." He tried to arouse the prejudice of the audience by absurd charges of abolitionism. Lincoln wanted to give negroes social equality; he wanted a negro wife; he was willing to allow Fred Douglass to make speeches for him. Again he took up a good deal of Lincoln's time by forcing him to answer to a charge of refusing to vote supplies for the soldiers in the Mexican War. Lincoln denied and explained, until at last, at Charleston, he turned suddenly to Douglas's supporters, dragging one of the strongest of them—the Hon. O. B. Ficklin, with whom he had been in Congress in 1848—to the platform.

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"I do not mean to do anything with Mr. Ficklin," he said, "except to present his face and tell you that he personally knows it to be a lie." And Mr. Ficklin had to acknowledge that Lincoln was right.

"Judge Douglas," said Lincoln in speaking of this policy, "is playing cuttlefish—a small species of fish that has no mode of defending himself when pursued except by throwing out a black fluid which makes the water so dark the enemy cannot see it, and thus it escapes."

The question at stake was too serious in Lincoln's judgment, for platform jugglery. Every moment of his time which Douglas forced him to spend answering irrelevant charges he gave begrudgingly. He struggled constantly to keep his speeches on the line of solid argument. Slowly but surely those who followed the debates began to understand this. It was Douglas who drew the great masses to the debates in the first place; it was because of him that the public men and the newspapers of the East, as well as of the West, watched the discussions. But as the days went on it was not Douglas who made the impression.

During the hours of the speeches the two men seemed well mated. "I can recall only one fact of the debates," says Mrs. William Crotty, of Seneca, Illinois, "that I felt so sorry for Lincoln when Douglas was speaking, and then to my surprise I felt so sorry for Douglas when Lincoln replied."

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The disinterested to whom it was an intellectual game, felt the power and charm of both men. Partisans had each reason enough to cheer. It was afterwards, as the debates were talked over by auditors as they lingered at the country store or were grouped on the fence in the evening, or when they were read in the generous reports which the newspapers of Illinois and even of other States gave, that the thoroughness of Lincoln's argument was understood. Even the first debate at Ottawa had a surprising effect. "I tell you," says Mr. George Beatty of Ottawa, "that debate set people thinking on these important questions in a way they hadn't dreamed of. I heard any number of men say: 'This thing is an awfully serious question, and I have about concluded Lincoln has got it right.' My father, a thoughtful, God-fearing man, said to me, as we went home to supper, 'George, you are young, and don't see what this thing means, as I do. Douglas's speeches of "squatter sovereignty" please you younger men, but I tell you that with us older men it's a great question that faces us. We've either got to keep slavery back or it's going to spread all over the country. That's the real question that's behind all this. Lincoln is right.' And that was the feeling that prevailed, I think, among the majority, after the debate was over. People went home talking about the danger of slavery getting a hold in the North. This territory had been Democratic; La Salle County, the morning of the day of the debate, was Democratic; but when the next day came around, hundreds of Democrats had been made Republicans, owing to the light in which Lincoln had brought forward the fact that slavery threatened."

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It was among Lincoln's own friends, however, that his speeches produced the deepest impression. They had believed him to be strong, but probably there was no one of them who had

not felt dubious about his ability to meet Douglas. Many even feared a fiasco. Gradually it began to be clear to them that Lincoln was the stronger. Could it be that Lincoln really was a great man? The young Republican journalists of the "Press and Tribune"—Scripps, Hitt, Medill—began to ask themselves the question. One evening as they talked over Lincoln's argument a letter was received. It came from a prominent Eastern statesman. "Who is this man that is replying to Douglas in your State?" he asked. "Do you realize that no greater speeches have been made on public questions in the history of our country; that his knowledge of the subject is profound, his logical unanswerable, his style inimitable?" Similar letters kept coming from various parts of the country. Before the campaign was over Lincoln's friends were exultant. Their favorite was a great man, "a full-grown man," as one of them wrote in his paper.

The country at large watched Lincoln with astonishment. When the debates began there were Republicans in Illinois of wider national reputation. Judge Lyman Trumbull, then Senator; was better known. He was an able debater, and a speech which he made in August against Douglas's [Pg 74] record called from the New York "Evening Post" the remark: "This is the heaviest blow struck at Senator Douglas since he took the field in Illinois; it is unanswerable, and we suspect that it will be fatal." Trumbull's speech the "Post" afterwards published in pamphlet form. Besides Trumbull, Owen Lovejoy, Oglesby, and Palmer were all speaking. That Lincoln should not only have so far outstripped men of his own party, but should have out-argued Douglas, was the cause of comment everywhere. "No man of this generation," said the "Evening Post" editorially, at the close of the debate, "has grown more rapidly before the country than Lincoln in this canvass." As a matter of fact, Lincoln had attracted the attention of all the thinking men of the country. "The first thing that really awakened my interest in him," says Henry Ward Beecher, "was his speech parallel with Douglas in Illinois, and indeed it was that manifestation of ability that secured his nomination to the Presidency."

But able as were Lincoln's arguments, deep as was the impression he had made, he was not elected to the senatorship. Douglas won fairly enough; though it is well to note that if the Republicans did not elect a senator they gained a substantial number of votes over those polled in 1856.

Lincoln accepted the result with a serenity inexplicable to his supporters. To him the contest was but one battle in a "durable" struggle. Little matter who won now, if in the end the right triumphed. From the first he had looked at the final result—not at the senatorship. "I do not [Pg 75] claim, gentlemen, to be unselfish," he said at Chicago in July. "I do not pretend that I would not like to go to the United States Senate; I make no such hypocritical pretense; but I do say to you that in this mighty issue, it is nothing to you, nothing to the mass of the people of the nation, whether or not Judge Douglas or myself shall ever be heard of after this night; it may be a trifle to either of us, but in connection with this mighty question, upon which hang the destinies of the nation perhaps, it is absolutely nothing."

The intense heat and fury of the debates, the defeat in November, did not alter a jot this high view. "I am glad I made the late race," he wrote Dr. A. H. Henry. "It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age which I would have had in no other way; and though I now sink out of view and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone."

At that date perhaps no one appreciated the value of what Lincoln had done as well as he did himself. He was absolutely sure he was right and that in the end people would see it. Though he might not rise, he knew his cause would.

"Douglas had the ingenuity to be supported in the late contest both as the best means to break down and to uphold the slave interest," he wrote. "No ingenuity can keep these antagonistic elements in harmony long. Another explosion will soon occur." His whole attention was given to [Pg 76] conserving what the Republicans had gained—"We have some one hundred and twenty thousand clear Republican votes. That pile is worth keeping together;" to consoling his friends—"You are feeling badly," he wrote to N. B. Judd, Chairman of the Republican Committee, "and this too shall pass away, never fear"; to rallying for another effort,—"The cause of civil liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one or even one hundred defeats."

If Lincoln had at times a fear that his defeat would cause him to be set aside, it soon was dispelled. The interest awakened in him was genuine, and it spread with the wider reading and discussion of his arguments. He was besieged by letters from all parts of the Union, congratulations, encouragements, criticisms. Invitations for lectures poured in upon him, and he became the first choice of his entire party for political speeches.

The greater number of these invitations he declined. He had given so much time to politics since 1854 that his law practice had been neglected and he was feeling poor; but there were certain of the calls which could not be resisted. Douglas spoke several times for the Democrats of Ohio in the 1859 campaign for governor and Lincoln naturally was asked to reply. He made but two speeches, one at Columbus on September 16 and the other at Cincinnati on September 17, but he had great audiences on both occasions. The Columbus speech was devoted almost entirely to answering an essay by Douglas which had been published in the September number of [Pg 77] "Harper's Magazine," and which began by asserting that—"Under our complex system of government it is the first duty of American statesmen to mark distinctly the dividing-line between Federal and Local authority." It was an elaborate argument for "popular sovereignty" and attracted national attention. Indeed, at the moment it was the talk of the country. Lincoln literally tore it to bits.

"What is Judge Douglas's popular sovereignty?" he asked. "It is, as a principle, no other than that if one man chooses to make a slave of another man, neither that other man nor anybody else has a right to object. Applied in government, as he seeks to apply it, it is this: If, in a new territory into which a few people are beginning to enter for the purpose of making their homes, they choose to either exclude from their limits or to establish it there, however one or the other may affect the persons to be enslaved, or the infinitely greater number of persons who are afterward to inhabit that territory, or the other members of the families, or communities, of which they are but an incipient member, or the general head of the family of States as parent of all—however their action may affect one or the other of these, there is no power or right to interfere. That is Douglas's popular sovereignty applied."

It was in this address that Lincoln uttered the oft-quoted paragraphs:

"I suppose the institution of slavery really looks small to him. He is so put up by nature that a [Pg 78]
lash upon his back would hurt him, but a lash upon anybody else's back does not hurt him. That is the build of the man, and consequently he looks upon the matter of slavery in this unimportant light.

"Judge Douglas ought to remember, when he is endeavoring to force this policy upon the American people, that while he is put up in that way, a good many are not. He ought to remember that there was once in this country a man by the name of Thomas Jefferson, supposed to be a Democrat—a man whose principles and policy are not very prevalent amongst Democrats to-day, it is true; but that man did not exactly take this view of the insignificance of the element of slavery which our friend Judge Douglas does. In contemplation of this thing, we all know he was led to exclaim, 'I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just!' We know how he looked upon it when he thus expressed himself. There was danger to this country, danger of the avenging justice of God, in that little unimportant popular sovereignty question of Judge Douglas. He supposed there was a question of God's eternal justice wrapped up in the enslaving of any race of men, or any man, and that those who did so braved the arm of Jehovah—that when a nation thus dared the Almighty, every friend of that nation had cause to dread his wrath. Choose ye between Jefferson and Douglas as to what is the true view of this element among us." [Pg 79]

One interesting point about the Columbus address is that in it appears the germ of the Cooper Institute speech delivered five months later in New York City.

Lincoln made so deep an impression in Ohio by his speeches that the State Republican Committee asked permission to publish them together with the Lincoln-Douglas Debates as campaign documents in the Presidential election of the next year.

In December he yielded to the persuasion of his Kansas political friends and delivered five lectures in that State, only fragments of which have been preserved.

Unquestionably the most effective piece of work he did that winter was the address at Cooper Institute, New York, on February 27. He had received an invitation in the fall of 1859 to lecture at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. To his friends it was evident that he was greatly pleased by the compliment, but that he feared that he was not equal to an Eastern audience. After some hesitation he accepted, provided they would take a political speech if he could find time to get up no other. When he reached New York he found that he was to speak there instead of Brooklyn, and that he was certain to have a distinguished audience. Fearful lest he was not as well prepared as he ought to be, conscious, too, no doubt, that he had a great opportunity before him, he spent nearly all of the two days and a half before his lecture in revising his matter and in familiarizing himself with it. In order that he might be sure that he was heard he arranged with [Pg 80]
his friend, Mason Brayman, who had come on to New York with him, to sit in the back of the hall and in case he did not speak loud enough to raise his high hat on a cane.

Mr. Lincoln's audience was a notable one even for New York. It included William Cullen Bryant, who introduced him; Horace Greeley, David Dudley Field, and many more well known men of the day. It is doubtful if there were any persons present, even his best friends, who expected that Lincoln would do more than interest his hearers by his sound arguments. Many have confessed since that they feared his queer manner and quaint speeches would amuse people so much that they would fail to catch the weight of his logic. But to the surprise of everybody Lincoln impressed his audience from the start by his dignity and his seriousness. "His manner was, to a New York audience, a very strange one, but it was captivating," wrote an auditor. "He held the vast meeting spellbound, and as one by one his oddly expressed but trenchant and convincing arguments confirmed the soundness of his political conclusions, the house broke out in wild and prolonged enthusiasm. I think I never saw an audience more thoroughly carried away by an orator."

The Cooper Union speech was founded on a sentence from one of Douglas's Ohio speeches: —"Our fathers when they framed the government under which we live understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now." Douglas claimed that the "fathers" held that the [Pg 81]
Constitution forbade the Federal government controlling slavery in the Territories. Lincoln with infinite care had investigated the opinions and votes of each of the "fathers"—whom he took to be the thirty-nine men who signed the Constitution—and showed conclusively that a majority of them "certainly understood that no proper division of local from Federal authority nor any part of the Constitution forbade the Federal government to control slavery in the Federal Territories." Not only did he show this of the thirty-nine framers of the original Constitution, but he defied

anybody to show that one of the seventy-six members of the Congress which framed the amendments to the Constitution ever held any such view.

"Let us," he said, "who believe that 'our fathers who framed the government under which we live understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now,' speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask—all Republicans desire—in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those fathers gave it be not grudgingly, but fully and fairly, maintained. For this Republicans contend, and with this, so far as I know or believe, they will be content."

One after another he took up and replied to the charges the South was making against the North at the moment:—Sectionalism, radicalism, giving undue prominence to the slave question, [Pg 82] stirring up insurrection among slaves, refusing to allow constitutional rights, and to each he had an unimpassioned answer inpregnable with facts.

The discourse was ended with what Lincoln felt to be a precise statement of the opinion of the question on both sides, and of the duty of the Republican party under the circumstances. This portion of his address is one of the finest early examples of that simple and convincing style in which most of his later public documents were written.

"If slavery is right," he said, "all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension—its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition as being right; but thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their views, and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this?

"Wrong, as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes [Pg 83] will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored—contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between right and wrong: vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of 'don't care' on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and calling, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said and undo what Washington did.

"Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

From New York Lincoln went to New Hampshire to visit his son Robert, then at Phillips Exeter Academy. His coming was known only a short time before he arrived and hurried arrangements were made for him to speak at Concord, Manchester, Exeter and Dover. At Concord the address was made in the afternoon on only a few hours' notice; nevertheless, he had a great audience, so [Pg 84] eager were men at the time to hear anybody who had serious arguments on the slavery question. Something of the impression Lincoln made in New Hampshire may be gathered from the following article, "Mr. Lincoln in New Hampshire," which appeared in the Boston "Atlas and Bee" for March 5:

The Concord "Statesman" says that notwithstanding the rain of Thursday, rendering travelling very inconvenient, the largest hall in that city was crowded to hear Mr. Lincoln. The editor says it was one of the most powerful, logical and compacted speeches to which it was ever our fortune to listen; an argument against the system of slavery, and in defence of the position of the Republican party, from the deductions of which no reasonable man could possibly escape. He fortified every position assumed, by proofs which it is impossible to gainsay; and while his speech was at intervals enlivened by remarks which elicited applause at the expense of the Democratic party, there was, nevertheless, not a single word which tended to impair the dignity of the speaker, or weaken the force of the great truths he uttered.

The "Statesman" adds that the address "was perfect and was closed by a peroration which brought his audience to their feet. We are not extravagant in the remark, that a political speech of greater power has rarely if ever been uttered in the Capital of New Hampshire. At its conclusion nine roof-raising cheers were given; three for the speaker, three for the Republicans [Pg 85] of Illinois, and three for the Republicans of New Hampshire."

On the same evening Mr. Lincoln spoke at Manchester, to an immense gathering in Smyth's Hall. The "Mirror," a neutral paper, gives the following enthusiastic notice of his speech: "The audience was a flattering one to the reputation of the speaker. It was composed of persons of all sorts of political notions, earnest to hear one whose fame was so great, and we think most of

them went away thinking better of him than they anticipated they should. He spoke an hour and a half with great fairness, great apparent candor, and with wonderful interest. He did not abuse the South, the Administration, or the Democrats, or indulge in any personalities, with the solitary exception of a few hits at Douglas's notions. He is far from prepossessing in personal appearance, and his voice is disagreeable, and yet he wins your attention and good will from the start.

"He indulges in no flowers of rhetoric, no eloquent passages; he is not a wit, a humorist or a clown; yet, so great a vein of pleasantry and good nature pervades what he says, gliding over a deep current of practical argument, he keeps his hearers in a smiling good mood with their mouths open ready to swallow all he says. His sense of the ludicrous is very keen, and an exhibition of that is the clincher of all his arguments; not the ludicrous acts of persons, but ludicrous ideas. Hence he is never offensive, and steals away willingly into his train of belief, [Pg 86] persons who are opposed to him. For the first half hour his opponents would agree with every word he uttered, and from that point he began to lead them off, little by little, cunningly, till it seemed as if he had got them all into his fold. He displays more shrewdness, more knowledge of the masses of mankind than any public speaker we have heard since long Jim Wilson left for California."

From New Hampshire Lincoln went to Connecticut, where on March 5 he spoke at Hartford, on March 6 at New Haven, on March 8 at Woonsocket, on March 9 at Norwich. There are no reports of the New Hampshire speeches, but two of the Connecticut speeches were published in part and one in full. Their effect was very similar, according to the newspapers of the day, to that in New Hampshire, described by the "Atlas and Bee."

By his debates with Douglas and the speeches in Ohio, Kansas, New York and New England, Lincoln had become a national figure in the minds of all the political leaders of the country, and of the thinking men of the North. Never in the history of the United States had a man become prominent in a more logical and intelligent way. At the beginning of the struggle against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854, Abraham Lincoln was scarcely known outside of his own State. Even most of the men whom he had met in his brief term in Congress had forgotten him. Yet in four years he had become one of the central figures of his party; and now, by worsting [Pg 87] the greatest orator and politician of his time, he had drawn the eyes of the nation to him.

It had been a long road he had travelled to make himself a national figure. Twenty-eight years before he had deliberately entered politics. He had been beaten, but had persisted; he had succeeded and failed; he had abandoned the struggle and returned to his profession. His outraged sense of justice had driven him back, and for six years he had travelled up and down Illinois trying to prove to men that slavery extension was wrong. It was by no one speech, by no one argument that he had wrought. Every day his ceaseless study and pondering gave him new matter, and every speech he made was fresh. He could not repeat an old speech, he said, because the subject enlarged and widened so in his mind as he went on that it was "easier to make a new one than an old one." He had never yielded in his campaign to tricks of oratory—never played on emotions. He had been so strong in his convictions of the right of his case that his speeches had been arguments pure and simple. Their elegance was that of a demonstration in Euclid. They persuaded because they proved. He had never for a moment counted personal ambition before the cause. To insure an ardent opponent of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in the United States Senate, he had at one time given up his chance for the senatorship. To show the fallacy of Douglas's argument, he had asked a question which his party pleaded with him to pass by, assuring him [Pg 88] that it would lose him the election. In every step of this six years he had been disinterested, calm, unyielding, and courageous. He knew he was right, and could afford to wait. "The result is not doubtful," he told his friends. "We shall not fail—if we stand firm. We shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate or mistakes delay it; but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come."

The country, amazed at the rare moral and intellectual character of Lincoln, began to ask questions about him, and then his history came out; a pioneer home, little schooling, few books, hard labor at all the many trades of the frontiersman, a profession mastered o' nights by the light of a friendly cooper's fire, an early entry into politics and law—and then twenty-five years of incessant poverty and struggle.

The homely story gave a touch of mystery to the figure which loomed so large. Men felt a sudden reverence for a mind and heart developed to these noble proportions in so unfriendly a habitat. They turned instinctively to one so familiar with strife for help in solving the desperate problem with which the nation had grappled. And thus it was that, at fifty years of age, Lincoln became a national figure. [Pg 89]

[4] *By special permission of the McClure Company.*

[A] *Stephen* A. Douglas, *Franklin* Pierce, *Roger* Taney, *James* Buchanan.

LINCOLN'S LOVE FOR THE LITTLE ONES

Soon after his election as President and while visiting Chicago, one evening at a social gathering Mr. Lincoln saw a little girl timidly approaching him. He at once called her to him, and asked the little girl what she wished.

She replied that she wanted his name.

Mr. Lincoln looked back into the room and said: "But here are other little girls—they would feel badly if I should give my name only to you."

The little girl replied that there were eight of them in all.

"Then," said Mr. Lincoln, "get me eight sheets of paper, and a pen and ink, and I will see what I can do for you."

The paper was brought, and Mr. Lincoln sat down in the crowded drawing-room, and wrote a sentence upon each sheet, appending his name; and thus every little girl carried off her souvenir.

During the same visit and while giving a reception at one of the hotels, a fond father took in a little boy by the hand who was anxious to see the new President. The moment the child entered the parlor door he, of his own accord and quite to the surprise of his father, took off his hat, and, giving it a swing, cried: "Hurrah for Lincoln!" There was a crowd, but as soon as Mr. Lincoln could get hold of the little fellow, he lifted him in his hands, and, tossing him towards the ceiling, laughingly shouted: "Hurrah for you!" [Pg 90]

It was evidently a refreshing incident to Lincoln in the dreary work of hand-shaking.

HOW LINCOLN TOOK HIS ALTITUDE

Soon after Mr. Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency, the Executive Chamber, a large fine room in the State House at Springfield, was set apart for him, where he met the public until after his election.

As illustrative of the nature of many of his calls, the following brace of incidents were related to Mr. Holland by an eye witness: "Mr. Lincoln, being seated in conversation with a gentleman one day, two raw, plainly-dressed young 'Suckers' entered the room, and bashfully lingered near the door. As soon as he observed them, and apprehended their embarrassment, he rose and walked to them, saying, 'How do you do, my good fellows? What can I do for you? Will you sit down?' The spokesman of the pair, the shorter of the two, declined to sit, and explained the object of the call thus: he had had a talk about the relative height of Mr. Lincoln and his companion, and had asserted his belief that they were of exactly the same height. He had come in to verify his judgment. Mr. Lincoln smiled, went and got his cane, and, placing the end of it upon the wall, said: [Pg 91]

"'Here, young man, come under here.'

"The young man came under the cane, as Mr. Lincoln held it, and when it was perfectly adjusted to his height, Mr. Lincoln said:

"'Now, come out, and hold up the cane.'

"This he did while Mr. Lincoln stepped under. Rubbing his head back and forth to see that it worked easily under the measurement, he stepped out, and declared to the sagacious fellow who was curiously looking on, that he had guessed with remarkable accuracy—that he and the young man were exactly the same height. Then he shook hands with them and sent them on their way. Mr. Lincoln would just as soon have thought of cutting off his right hand as he would have thought of turning those boys away with the impression that they had in any way insulted his dignity." [Pg 92]

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IV
IN THE WHITE HOUSE

[Pg 95]

HOW LINCOLN WAS ABUSED

With the possible exception of President Washington, whose political opponents did not hesitate to rob the vocabulary of vulgarity and wickedness whenever they desired to vilify the Chief Magistrate, Lincoln was the most and "best" abused man who ever held office in the United States. During the first half of his initial term there was no epithet which was not applied to him.

One newspaper in New York habitually characterized him as "that hideous baboon at the other end of the avenue," and declared that "Barnum should buy and exhibit him as a zoological curiosity."

Although the President did not, to all appearances, exhibit annoyance because of the various diatribes printed and spoken, yet the fact is that his life was so cruelly embittered by these and other expressions quite as virulent, that he often declared to those most intimate with him, "I would rather be dead than, as President, be thus abused in the house of my friends." [Pg 96]

SONNET IN 1862

BY JOHN JAMES PIATT[5]

Stern be the Pilot in the dreadful hour
When a great nation, like a ship at sea
With the wroth breakers whitening at her lee,
Feels her last shudder if her Helmsman cower;
A godlike manhood be his mighty dower!
Such and so gifted, Lincoln, may'st thou be
With thy high wisdom's low simplicity
And awful tenderness of voted power:
From our hot records then thy name shall stand
On Time's calm ledger out of passionate days—
With the pure debt of gratitude begun,
And only paid in never-ending praise—
One of the many of a mighty Land,
Made by God's providence the Anointed One.

[5] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

LINCOLN THE PRESIDENT

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

From the Essay in "My Study Windows"

Never did a President enter upon office with less means at his command, outside his own strength of heart and steadiness of understanding, for inspiring confidence in the people, and so [Pg 97] winning it for himself, than Mr. Lincoln. All that was known to him was that he was a good stump-speaker, nominated for his availability—that is, because he had no history—and chosen by a party with whose more extreme opinions he was not in sympathy. It might well be feared that a man past fifty, against whom the ingenuity of hostile partisans could rake up no accusation, must be lacking in manliness of character, in decision of principle, in strength of will; that a man who was at best only the representative of a party, and who yet did not fairly represent even that, would fail of political, much more of popular, support. And certainly no one ever entered upon office with so few resources of power in the past, and so many materials of weakness in the present, as Mr. Lincoln. Even in that half of the Union which acknowledged him as President, there was a large, and at that time dangerous minority, that hardly admitted his claim to the office, and even in the party that elected him there was also a large minority that suspected him of being secretly a communicant with the church of Laodicea. All that he did was sure to be virulently attacked as ultra by one side; all that he left undone, to be stigmatized as proof of lukewarmness and backsliding by the other. Meanwhile he was to carry on a truly colossal war by means of both; he was to disengage the country from diplomatic entanglements of unprecedented peril undisturbed by the help or the hindrance of either, and to win from the crowning dangers of his administration, in the confidence of the people, the means of his safety and their own. He has [Pg 98] contrived to do it, and perhaps none of our Presidents since Washington has stood so firm in the confidence of the people as he does after three years of stormy administration.

Mr. Lincoln's policy was a tentative one, and rightly so. He laid down no programme which must compel him to be either inconsistent or unwise, no cast-iron theorem to which circumstances must be fitted as they rose, or else be useless to his ends. He seemed to have chosen Mazarin's motto, *Le temps et moi*. The *moi*, to be sure, was not very prominent at first; but it has grown more and more so, till the world is beginning to be persuaded that it stands for a character of marked individuality and capacity for affairs. Time was his prime-minister, and, we began to think, at one period, his general-in-chief also. At first he was so slow that he tired out all those who see no evidence of progress but in blowing up the engine; then he was so fast, that he took the breath away from those who think there is no getting on safely while there is a spark of fire under the boilers. God is the only being who has time enough; but a prudent man, who knows how to seize occasion, can commonly make a shift to find as much as he needs. Mr. Lincoln, as it seems to us in reviewing his career, though we have sometimes in our impatience thought otherwise, has always waited, as a wise man should, till the right moment brought up all his [Pg 99] reserves. *Semper nocuit differre paratis*, is a sound axiom, but the really efficacious man will also be sure to know when he is not ready, and be firm against all persuasion and reproach till he is.

One would be apt to think, from some of the criticisms made on Mr. Lincoln's course by those who mainly agree with him in principle, that the chief object of a statesman should be rather to proclaim his adhesion to certain doctrines, than to achieve their triumph by quietly accomplishing his ends. In our opinion, there is no more unsafe politician than a conscientiously rigid doctrinaire, nothing more sure to end in disaster than a theoretic scheme of policy that admits of no pliability for contingencies. True, there is a popular image of an impossible He, in whose plastic hands the submissive destinies of mankind become as wax, and to whose commanding necessity the toughest facts yield with the graceful pliancy of fiction; but in real life we commonly find that the men who control circumstances, as it is called, are those who have learned to allow for the influence of their eddies, and have the nerve to turn them to account at

the happy instant. Mr. Lincoln's perilous task has been to carry a rather shaky raft through the rapids, making fast the unrulier logs as he could snatch opportunity, and the country is to be congratulated that he did not think it his duty to run straight at all hazards, but cautiously to assure himself with his setting-pole where the main current was, and keep steadily to that. He is [Pg 100] still in wild water, but we have faith that his skill and sureness of eye will bring him out right at last.

A curious, and, as we think, not inapt parallel, might be drawn between Mr. Lincoln and one of the most striking figures in modern history—Henry IV. of France. The career of the latter may be more picturesque, as that of a daring captain always is; but in all its vicissitudes there is nothing more romantic than that sudden change, as by a rub of Aladdin's lamp, from the attorney's office in a country town of Illinois to the helm of a great nation in times like these. The analogy between the characters and circumstances of the two men is in many respects singularly close. Succeeding to a rebellion rather than a crown, Henry's chief material dependence was the Huguenot party, whose doctrines sat upon him with a looseness distasteful certainly, if not suspicious, to the more fanatical among them. King only in name over the greater part of France, and with his capital barred against him, it yet gradually became clear to the more far-seeing even of the Catholic party that he was the only center of order and legitimate authority round which France could reorganize itself. While preachers who held the divine right of kings made the churches of Paris ring with declamations in favor of democracy rather than submit to the heretic dog of a Béarnois—much as our *soi-disant* Democrats have lately been preaching the divine right of slavery, and denouncing the heresies of the Declaration of Independence—Henry bore both [Pg 101] parties in hand till he was convinced that only one course of action could possibly combine his own interests and those of France. Meanwhile the Protestants believed somewhat doubtfully that he was theirs, the Catholics hoped somewhat doubtfully that he would be theirs, and Henry himself turned aside remonstrance, advice, and curiosity alike with a jest or a proverb (if a little high, he liked them none the worse), joking continually as his manner was. We have seen Mr. Lincoln contemptuously compared to Sancho Panza by persons incapable of appreciating one of the deepest pieces of wisdom in the profoundest romance ever written; namely, that, while Don Quixote was incomparable in theoretic and ideal statesmanship, Sancho, with his stock of proverbs, the ready money of human experience, made the best possible practical governor. Henry IV. was as full of wise saws and modern instances as Mr. Lincoln, but beneath all this was the thoughtful, practical, humane, and thoroughly earnest man, around whom the fragments of France were to gather themselves till she took her place again as a planet of the first magnitude in the European system. In one respect Mr. Lincoln was more fortunate than Henry. However some may think him wanting in zeal, the most fanatical can find no taint of apostasy in any measure of his, nor can the most bitter charge him with being influenced by motives of personal interest. The leading distinction between the policies of the two is one of circumstances. Henry went over to the nation; Mr. Lincoln has steadily drawn the nation over to him. One left a united [Pg 102] France; the other, we hope and believe, will leave a reunited America. We leave our readers to trace the further points of difference and resemblance for themselves, merely suggesting a general similarity which has often occurred to us. One only point of melancholy interest we will allow ourselves to touch upon. That Mr. Lincoln is not handsome nor elegant, we learn from certain English tourists who would consider similar revelations in regard to Queen Victoria as thoroughly American in their want of *bienséance*. It is no concern of ours, nor does it affect his fitness for the high place he so worthily occupies; but he is certainly as fortunate as Henry in the matter of good looks, if we may trust contemporary evidence. Mr. Lincoln has also been reproached with Americanism by some not unfriendly British critics; but, with all deference, we cannot say that we like him any the worse for it, or see in it any reason why he should govern Americans the less wisely.

People of more sensitive organizations may be shocked, but we are glad that in this our true war of independence, which is to free us forever from the Old World, we have had at the head of our affairs a man whom America made as God made Adam, out of the very earth, unancestried, unprivileged, unknown, to show us how much truth, how much magnanimity, and how much statecraft await the call of opportunity in simple manhood when it believes in the justice of God and the worth of man. Conventionalities are all very well in their proper place, but they shrivel at [Pg 103] the touch of nature like stubble in the fire. The genius that sways a nation by its arbitrary will seems less august to us than that which multiplies and reinforces itself in the instincts and convictions of an entire people. Autocracy may have something in it more melodramatic than this, but falls far short of it in human value and interest.

Experience would have bred in us a rooted distrust of improvised statesmanship, even if we did not believe politics to be a science, which, if it cannot always command men of special aptitude and great powers, at least demands the long and steady application of the best powers of such men as it can command to master even its first principles. It is curious, that, in a country which boasts of its intelligence, the theory should be so generally held that the most complicated of human contrivances, and one which every day becomes more complicated, can be worked at sight by any man able to talk for an hour or two without stopping to think.

Mr. Lincoln is sometimes claimed as an example of a ready-made ruler. But no case could well be less in point; for, besides that he was a man of such fair-mindedness as is always the raw material of wisdom, he had in his profession a training precisely the opposite of that to which a partisan is subjected. His experience as a lawyer compelled him not only to see that there is a principle underlying every phenomenon in human affairs, but that there are always two sides to every question, both of which must be fully understood in order to understand either, and that it [Pg 104]

is of greater advantage to an advocate to appreciate the strength than the weakness of his antagonist's position. Nothing is more remarkable than the unerring tact with which, in his debate with Mr. Douglas, he went straight to the reason of the question; nor have we ever had a more striking lesson in political tactics than the fact, that, opposed to a man exceptionally adroit in using popular prejudice and bigotry to his purpose, exceptionally unscrupulous in appealing to those baser motives that turn a meeting of citizens into a mob of barbarians, he should yet have won his case before a jury of the people. Mr. Lincoln was as far as possible from an impromptu politician. His wisdom was made up of a knowledge of things as well as of men; his sagacity resulted from a clear perception and honest acknowledgment of difficulties, which enabled him to see that the only durable triumph of political opinion is based, not on any abstract right, but upon so much of justice, the highest attainable at any given moment in human affairs, as may be had in the balance of mutual concession. Doubtless he had an ideal, but it was the ideal of a practical statesman—to aim at the best, and to take the next best, if he is lucky enough to get even that. His slow, but singularly masculine intelligence taught him that precedent is only another name for embodied experience, and that it counts for even more in the guidance of communities of men than in that of the individual life. He was not a man who held it good public economy to pull down [Pg 105] on the mere chance of rebuilding better. Mr. Lincoln's faith in God was qualified by a very well-founded distrust of the wisdom of man. Perhaps it was his want of self-confidence that more than anything else won him the unlimited confidence of the people, for they felt that there would be no need of retreat from any position he had deliberately taken. The cautious, but steady, advance of his policy during the war was like that of a Roman army. He left behind him a firm road on which public confidence could follow; he took America with him where he went; what he gained he occupied, and his advanced posts became colonies. The very homeliness of his genius was its distinction. His kingship was conspicuous by its work-day homespun. Never was ruler so absolute as he, nor so little conscious of it; for he was the incarnate common-sense of the people. With all that tenderness of nature whose sweet sadness touched whoever saw him with something of its own pathos, there was no trace of sentimentalism in his speech or action. He seems to have had but one rule of conduct, always that of practical and successful politics, to let himself be guided by events, when they were sure to bring him out where he wished to go, though by what seemed to unpractical minds, which let go the possible to grasp at the desirable, a longer road.

No higher compliment was ever paid to a nation than the simple confidence, the fireside plainness, with which Mr. Lincoln always addresses himself to the reason of the American people. [Pg 106] This was, indeed, a true democrat, who grounded himself on the assumption that a democracy can think. "Come, let us reason together about this matter," has been the tone of all his addresses to the people; and accordingly we have never had a chief magistrate who so won to himself the love and at the same time the judgment of his countrymen. To us, that simple confidence of his in the right-mindedness of his fellow-men is very touching, and its success is as strong an argument as we have ever seen in favor of the theory that men can govern themselves. He never appeals to any vulgar sentiment, he never alludes to the humbleness of his origin; it probably never occurred to him, indeed that there was anything higher to start from than manhood; and he put himself on a level with those he addressed, not by going down to them, but only by taking it for granted that they had brains and would come up to a common ground of reason. In an article lately printed in "The Nation," Mr. Bayard Taylor mentions the striking fact, that in the foulest dens of the Five Points he found the portrait of Lincoln. The wretched population that makes its hive there threw all its votes and more against him, and yet paid this instinctive tribute to the sweet humanity of his nature. Their ignorance sold its vote and took its money, but all that was left of manhood in them recognized its saint and martyr.

Mr. Lincoln is not in the habit of saying, "This is my opinion, or my theory," but, "This is the [Pg 107] conclusion to which, in my judgment, the time has come, and to which, accordingly the sooner we come the better for us." His policy has been the policy of public opinion based on adequate discussion and on a timely recognition of the influence of passing events in shaping the features of events to come.

One secret of Mr. Lincoln's remarkable success in captivating the popular mind is undoubtedly an unconsciousness of self which enables him, though under the necessity of constantly using the capital I, to do it without any suggestion of egotism. There is no single vowel which men's mouths can pronounce with such difference of effect. That which one shall hide away, as it were, behind the substance of his discourse, or, if he bring it to the front, shall use merely to give an agreeable accent of individuality to what he says, another shall make an offensive challenge to the self-satisfaction of all his hearers, and an unwarranted intrusion upon each man's sense of personal importance, irritating every pore of his vanity, like a dry northeast wind, to a goose-flesh of opposition and hostility. Mr. Lincoln has never studied Quintilian; but he has, in the earnest simplicity and unaffected Americanism of his own character, one art of oratory worth all the rest. He forgets himself so entirely in his object as to give his I the sympathetic and persuasive effect of We with the great body of his countrymen. Homely, dispassionate, showing all the rough-edged process of his thought as it goes along, yet arriving at his conclusions with an honest kind of [Pg 108] every-day logic, he is so eminently our representative man, that, when he speaks, it seems as if the people were listening to their own thinking aloud. The dignity of his thought owes nothing to any ceremonial garb of words, but to the manly movement that comes of settled purpose and an energy of reason that knows not what rhetoric means. There has been nothing of Cleon, still less of Strepsiades striving to underbid him in demagogism, to be found in the public utterances of Mr. Lincoln. He has always addressed the intelligence of men, never their prejudice, their passion, or their ignorance.

On the day of his death, this simple Western attorney, who according to one party was a vulgar joker, and whom the doctrinaires among his own supporters accused of wanting every element of statesmanship, was the most absolute ruler in Christendom, and this solely by the hold his good-humored sagacity had laid on the hearts and understandings of his countrymen. Nor was this all, for it appeared that he had drawn the great majority, not only of his fellow-citizens, but of mankind, also, to his side. So strong and so persuasive is honest manliness without a single quality of romance or unreal sentiment to help it! A civilian during times of the most captivating military achievement, awkward, with no skill in the lower technicalities of manners, he left behind him a fame beyond that of any conqueror, the memory of a grace higher than that of [Pg 109] outward person, and of gentlemanliness deeper than mere breeding. Never before that startled April morning did such multitudes of men shed tears for the death of one they had never seen, as if with him a friendly presence had been taken away from their lives, leaving them colder and darker. Never was funeral panegyric so eloquent as the silent look of sympathy which strangers exchanged when they met on that day. Their common manhood had lost a kinsman.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

January First, Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-Three

BY FRANK MOORE

Stand like an anvil, when 'tis beaten
With the full vigor of the smith's right arm!
Stand like the noble oak-tree, when 'tis eaten
By the Saperda and his ravenous swarm!
For many smiths will strike the ringing blows
Ere the red drama now enacting close;
And human insects, gnawing at thy fame,
Conspire to bring thy honored head to shame.

Stand like the firmament, upholden
By an invisible but Almighty hand!
He whomsoever JUSTICE doth embolden,
Unshaken, unseduced, unawed shall stand.
Invisible support is mightier far, [Pg 110]
With noble aims, than walls of granite are;
And simple consciousness of justice gives
Strength to a purpose while that purpose lives.

Stand like the rock that looks defiant
Far o'er the surging seas that lash its form!
Composed, determined, watchful, self-reliant,
Be master of thyself, and rule the storm!
And thou shalt soon behold the bow of peace
Span the broad heavens, and the wild tumult cease;
And see the billows, with the clouds that meet,
Subdued and calm, come crouching to thy feet.

THE PROCLAMATION[6]

BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Saint Patrick, slave to Milcho of the herds
Of Ballymena, sleeping, heard these words:
"Arise, and flee
Out from the land of bondage, and be free!"

Glad as a soul in pain, who hears from heaven
The angels singing of his sins forgiven,
And, wondering, sees
His prison opening to their golden keys,
He rose a Man who laid him down a Slave,
Shook from his locks the ashes of the grave,
And onward trod [Pg 111]
Into the glorious liberty of God.

He cast the symbols of his shame away;
And passing where the sleeping Milcho lay,
Though back and limb
Smarted with wrong, he prayed, "God pardon him!"

So went he forth: but in God's time he came

To light on Uilline's hills a holy flame;
And, dying, gave
The land a Saint that lost him as a Slave.

O, dark, sad millions, patiently and dumb
Waiting for God, your hour, at last, has come,
And Freedom's song
Breaks the long silence of your night of wrong!

Arise, and flee! shake off the vile restraint
Of ages! but, like Ballymena's saint,
The oppressor spare,
Heap only on his head the coals of prayer.

Go forth, like him! like him return again,
To bless the land whereon, in bitter pain,
Ye toiled at first,
And heal with Freedom what your Slavery cursed.

[6] *By special permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

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THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

From the address delivered before Congress on February 12, 1878, presenting to the re-United States, on behalf of Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, Carpenter's painting—The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before the Cabinet.

BY JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

Let us pause to consider the actors in that scene. In force of character, in thoroughness and breadth of culture, in experience of public affairs, and in national reputation, the Cabinet that sat around that council-board has had no superior, perhaps no equal in our history. Seward, the finished scholar, the consummate orator, the great leader of the Senate, had come to crown his career with those achievements which placed him in the first rank of modern diplomatists. Chase, with a culture and a fame of massive grandeur, stood as the rock and pillar of the public credit, the noble embodiment of the public faith. Stanton was there, a very Titan of strength, the great organizer of victory. Eminent lawyers, men of business, leaders of states and leaders of men, completed the group.

But the man who presided over that council, who inspired and guided its deliberations, was a character so unique that he stood alone, without a model in history or a parallel among men. Born on this day, sixty-nine years ago, to an inheritance of extremest poverty; surrounded by the rude forces of the wilderness; wholly unaided by parents; only one year in any school; never, for a day, master of his own time until he reached his majority; making his way to the profession of the law by the hardest and roughest road;—yet by force of unconquerable will and persistent, patient work he attained a foremost place in his profession,

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"And, moving up from high to higher,
Became on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire."

At first, it was the prevailing belief that he would be only the nominal head of his administration,—that its policy would be directed by the eminent statesmen he had called to his council. How erroneous this opinion was may be seen from a single incident.

Among the earliest, most difficult, and most delicate duties of his administration was the adjustment of our relations with Great Britain. Serious complications, even hostilities, were apprehended. On the 21st of May, 1861, the Secretary of State presented to the President his draught of a letter of instructions to Minister Adams, in which the position of the United States and the attitude of Great Britain were set forth with the clearness and force which long experience and great ability had placed at the command of the Secretary. Upon almost every page of that original draught are erasures, additions, and marginal notes in the handwriting of Abraham Lincoln, which exhibit a sagacity, a breadth of wisdom, and a comprehension of the whole subject, impossible to be found except in a man of the very first order. And these modifications of a great state paper were made by a man who but three months before had entered for the first time the wide theatre of Executive action.

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Gifted with an insight and a foresight which the ancients would have called divination, he saw, in the midst of darkness and obscurity, the logic of events, and forecast the result. From the first, in his own quaint, original way, without ostentation or offense to his associates, he was pilot and commander of his administration. He was one of the few great rulers whose wisdom increased with his power, and whose spirit grew gentler and tenderer as his triumphs were multiplied.

This was the man, and these his associates, who look down upon us from the canvas.

The present is not a fitting occasion to examine, with any completeness, the causes that led to

the Proclamation of Emancipation; but the peculiar relation of that act to the character of Abraham Lincoln cannot be understood, without considering one remarkable fact in his history. His earlier years were passed in a region remote from the centers of political thought, and without access to the great world of books. But the few books that came within his reach he devoured with the divine hunger of genius. One paper, above all others, led him captive, and [Pg 115] filled his spirit with the majesty of its truth and the sublimity of its eloquence. It was the Declaration of American Independence. The author and the signers of that instrument became, in his early youth, the heroes of his political worship. I doubt if history affords any example of a life so early, so deeply, and so permanently influenced by a single political truth, as was Abraham Lincoln's by the central doctrine of the Declaration,—the liberty and equality of all men. Long before his fame had become national he said, "That is the electric cord in the Declaration, that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together, and that will link such hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world."

That truth runs, like a thread of gold, through the whole web of his political life. It was the spear-point of his logic in his debates with Douglas. It was the inspiring theme of his remarkable speech at the Cooper Institute, New York, in 1860, which gave him the nomination to the Presidency. It filled him with reverent awe when on his way to the capital to enter the shadows of the terrible conflict then impending, he uttered, in Independence Hall, at Philadelphia, these remarkable words, which were prophecy then but are history now:—

"I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here, and framed and adopted that Declaration of Independence. I have [Pg 116] pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of the separation of the Colonies from the mother land, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that, in due time, the weight would be lifted from the shoulders of all men. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Now, my friends, can this country be saved upon that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say, I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it."

Deep and strong was his devotion to liberty; yet deeper and stronger still was his devotion to the Union; for he believed that without the Union permanent liberty for either race on this continent would be impossible. And because of this belief, he was reluctant, perhaps more reluctant than most of his associates, to strike slavery with the sword. For many months, the passionate appeals of millions of his associates seemed not to move him. He listened to all the phases of the discussion, and stated, in language clearer and stronger than any opponent had [Pg 117] used, the dangers, the difficulties, and the possible futility of the act. In reference to its practical wisdom, Congress, the Cabinet and the country were divided. Several of his generals had proclaimed the freedom of slaves within the limits of their commands. The President revoked their proclamations. His first Secretary of War had inserted a paragraph in his annual report advocating a similar policy. The President suppressed it.

On the 19th of August, 1862, Horace Greeley published a letter, addressed to the President, entitled "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," in which he said, "On the face of this wide earth, Mr. President, there is not one disinterested, determined, intelligent champion of the Union cause who does not feel that all attempts to put down the rebellion and at the same time uphold its inciting cause are preposterous and futile."

To this the President responded in that ever-memorable reply of August 22, in which he said:—

"If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them.

"If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them.

"My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or to destroy slavery.

"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it. If I could save it by freeing [Pg 118] all the slaves, I would do it,—and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

"What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe that what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I believe doing more will help the cause."

Thus, against all importunities on the one hand and remonstrances on the other, he took the mighty question to his own heart, and, during the long months of that terrible battle-summer, wrestled with it alone. But at length he realized the saving truth, that great, unsettled questions have no pity for the repose of nations. On the 22nd of September, he summoned his Cabinet to announce his conclusion. It was my good fortune, on that same day, and a few hours after the meeting, to hear, from the lips of one who participated, the story of the scene. As the chiefs of the

Executive Departments came in, one by one, they found the President reading a favorite chapter from a popular humorist. He was lightening the weight of the great burden which rested upon his spirit. He finished the chapter, reading it aloud. And here I quote, from the published Journal of the late Chief Justice, an entry, written immediately after the meeting, and bearing unmistakable evidence that it is almost a literal transcript of Lincoln's words.

"The President then took a graver tone, and said: 'Gentlemen, I have, as you are aware, thought [Pg 119] a great deal about the relation of this war to slavery; and you all remember that, several weeks ago, I read to you an order I had prepared upon the subject, which, on account of objections made by some of you, was not issued. Ever since then my mind has been much occupied with this subject, and I have thought all along that the time for acting on it might probably come. I think the time has come now. I wish it was a better time. I wish that we were in a better condition. The action of the army against the rebels has not been quite what I should have best liked. But they have been driven out of Maryland, and Pennsylvania is no longer in danger of invasion. When the rebel army was at Frederick, I determined as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland to issue a proclamation of emancipation, such as I thought most likely to be useful. I said nothing to any one, but I made a promise to myself and (hesitating a little) to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfil that promise. I have got you together to hear what I have written down. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This I say without intending anything but respect for any one of you. But I already know the views of each on this question. They have been heretofore expressed, and I have considered them as thoroughly and carefully as I can. What I have written is that which my reflections have determined me to say. If there is anything in the expressions I use, or in any minor matter which [Pg 120] any one of you thinks had best be changed, I shall be glad to receive your suggestions. One other observation I will make. I know very well that many others might, in this matter as in others, do better than I can; and if I was satisfied that the public confidence was more fully possessed by any one of them than by me, and knew of any constitutional way in which he could be put in my place, he should have it. I would gladly yield it to him. But though I believe I have not so much of the confidence of the people as I had some time since, I do not know that, all things considered, any other person has more; and, however this may be, there is no way in which I can have any other man put where I am. I must do the best I can and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take.'

"The President then proceeded to read his Emancipation Proclamation, making remarks on the several parts as he went on, and showing that he had fully considered the subject in all the lights under which it had been presented to him."

The Proclamation was amended in a few matters of detail. It was signed and published that day. The world knows the rest, and will not forget it till "the last syllable of recorded time." [Pg 121]

THE EMANCIPATION GROUP[7]

BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Moses Kimball, a citizen of Boston, presented to the city a duplicate of the Freedman's Memorial Statue erected in Lincoln Square, Washington, after a design by Thomas Ball. The group, which stands in Park Square, represents the figure of a slave, from whose limbs the broken fetters have fallen, kneeling in gratitude at the feet of Lincoln. The verses which follow were written for the unveiling of the statue, December 9, 1879.

Amidst thy sacred effigies
If old renown give place,
O city, Freedom-loved! to his
Whose hand unchained a race

Take the worn frame, that rested not
Save in a martyr's grave;
The care-lined face, that none forgot,
Bent to the kneeling slave.

Let man be free! The mighty word
He spake was not his own;
An impulse from the Highest stirred
These chiselled lips alone.

The cloudy sign, the fiery guide,
Along his pathway ran,
And Nature, through his voice, denied [Pg 122]
The ownership of man.

We rest in peace where these sad eyes
Saw peril, strife, and pain;
His was the nation's sacrifice,
And ours the priceless gain.

O symbol of God's will on earth

As it is done above!
Bear witness to the cost and worth
Of justice and of love.

Stand in thy place and testify
To coming ages long,
That truth is stronger than a lie,
And righteousness than wrong.

[7] *By special permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S CHRISTMAS GIFT[8]

BY NORA PERRY

'Twas in eighteen hundred and sixty-four,
That terrible year when the shock and roar
Of the nation's battles shook the land,
And the fire leapt up into fury fanned,

The passionate, patriotic fire,
With its throbbing pulse and its wild desire
To conquer and win, or conquer and die,
In the thick of the fight when hearts beat high

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With the hero's thrill to do and to dare,
'Twixt the bullet's rush and the muttered prayer.
In the North, and the East and the great Northwest,
Men waited and watched with eager zest

For news of the desperate, terrible strife,—
For a nation's death or a nation's life;
While over the wires there flying sped
News of the wounded, the dying and dead.

"Defeat and defeat! Ah! what was the fault
Of the grand old army's sturdy assault
At Richmond's gates?" in a querulous key
Men questioned at last impatiently,

As the hours crept by, and day by day
They watched the Potomac Army at bay.
Defeat and defeat! It was here, just here,
In the very height of the fret and fear,

Click, click! across the electric wire
Came suddenly flashing words of fire,
And a great shout broke from city and town
At the news of Sherman's marching down,—

Marching down on his way to the sea
Through the Georgia swamps to victory.
Faster and faster the great news came,
Flashing along like tongues of flame,—

McAllister ours! And then, ah! then,
To that patientest, tenderest, noblest of men,
This message from Sherman came flying swift,—
"I send you Savannah for a Christmas gift!"

[8] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

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V
DEATH OF LINCOLN

[Pg 127]

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN![9]

BY WALT WHITMAN

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done, [Pg 128]
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

[9] *By permission of David McKay.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S DEATH—A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENE AT FORD'S THEATRE[10]

WALT WHITMAN

The day (April 14, 1865) seems to have been a pleasant one throughout the whole land—the moral atmosphere pleasant, too—the long storm, so dark, so fratricidal, full of blood and doubt and gloom, over and ended at last by the sunrise of such an absolute National victory, and utter breaking down of secessionism—we almost doubted our senses! Lee had capitulated beneath the apple tree at Appomattox. The other armies, the flanges of the revolt, swiftly followed.

And could it really be, then? Out of all the affairs of this world of woe and passion, of failure and disorder and dismay, was there really come the confirmed, unerring sign of peace, like a [Pg 129] shaft of pure light—of rightful rule—of God?

But I must not dwell on accessories. The deed hastens. The popular afternoon paper, the little Evening Star, had scattered all over its third page, divided among the advertisements in a sensational manner in a hundred different places: "The President and his lady will be at the theatre this evening." Lincoln was fond of the theatre. I have myself seen him there several times. I remember thinking how funny it was that he, in some respects the leading actor in the greatest and stormiest drama known to real history's stage through centuries, should sit there and be so completely interested in those human jack-straws, moving about with their silly little gestures, foreign spirit, and flatulent text.

So the day, as I say, was propitious. Early herbage, early flowers, were out. I remembered where I was stopping at the time, the season being advanced, there were many lilacs in full bloom. By one of those caprices that enter and give tinge to events without being at all a part of them, I find myself always reminded of the great tragedy of that day by the sight and odor of these blossoms. It never fails.

On this occasion the theatre was crowded, many ladies in rich and gay costumes, officers in their uniforms, many well-known citizens, young folks, the usual clusters of gas-lights, the usual magnetism of so many people, cheerful, with perfumes, music of violins and flutes—and over all, and saturating, that vast, vague wonder, Victory, the Nation's victory, the triumph of the Union, [Pg 130] filling the air, the thought, the sense, with exhilaration more than all perfumes.

The President came betimes and, with his wife, witnessed the play, from the large stage boxes of the second tier, two thrown into one, and profusely draped with the National flag. The acts and scenes of the piece—one of those singularly witless compositions which have at least the merit of giving entire relief to an audience engaged in mental action or business excitements and cares during the day, as it makes not the slightest call on either the moral, emotional, esthetic or spiritual nature—a piece ("Our American Cousin") in which, among other characters so called, a Yankee, certainly such a one as was never seen, or at least ever seen in North America, is introduced in England, with a varied fol-de-rol of talk, plot, scenery, and such phantasmagoria as goes to make up a modern popular drama—had progressed through perhaps a couple of its acts, when in the midst of this comedy, or tragedy, or non-such, or whatever it is to be called, and to offset it, or finish it out, as if in Nature's and the Great Muse's mockery of these poor mimics,

come interpolated that scene, not really or exactly to be described at all (for on the many hundreds who were there it seems to this hour to have left little but a passing blur, a dream, a blotch)—and yet partially to be described as I now proceed to give it:

There is a scene in the play representing the modern parlor, in which two unprecedented [Pg 131] English ladies are informed by the unprecedented and impossible Yankee that he is not a man of fortune, and therefore undesirable for marriage catching purposes; after which, the comments being finished, the dramatic trio make exit, leaving the stage clear for a moment. There was a pause, a hush, as it were. At this period came the murder of Abraham Lincoln. Great as that was, with all its manifold train circling around it, and stretching into the future for many a century, in the politics, history, art, etc., of the New World, in point of fact, the main thing, the actual murder, transpired with the quiet and simplicity of any commonest occurrence—the bursting of a bud or pod in the growth of vegetation, for instance.

Through the general hum following the stage pause, with the change of positions, etc., came the muffled sound of a pistol shot, which not one-hundredth part of the audience heard at the time—and yet a moment's hush—somehow, surely a vague, startled thrill—and then, through the ornamented, draperied, starred, and striped space-way of the President's box, a sudden figure, a man, raises himself with hands and feet, stands a moment on the railing, leaps below to the stage (a distance of perhaps 14 or 15 feet), falls out of position, catching his boot heel in the copious drapery (the American flag), falls on one knee, quickly recovers himself, rises as if nothing had happened (he really sprains his ankle, but unfelt then)—and the figure, Booth, the murderer, dressed in plain black broadcloth, bare-headed, with a full head of glossy, raven hair, and his [Pg 132] eyes, like some mad animal's flashing with light and resolution, yet with a certain strange calmness, holds aloft in one hand a large knife—walks along not much back of the foot-lights—turns fully towards the audience his face of statuesque beauty, lit by those basilisk eyes, flashing with desperation, perhaps insanity—launches out in a firm and steady voice the words *Sic Semper Tyrannis*—and then walks with neither slow nor very rapid pace diagonally across to the back of the stage, and disappears. (Had not all this terrible scene—making the mimic ones preposterous—had it not all been rehearsed, in blank, by Booth, beforehand?)

A moment's hush, incredulous—a scream—the cry of murder—Mrs. Lincoln leaning out of the box, with ashy cheeks and lips, with involuntary cry, pointing to the retreating figure, "He has killed the President." And still a moment's strange, incredulous suspense—and then the deluge!—then that mixture of horror, noises, uncertainty—(the sound, somewhere back, of a horse's hoofs clattering with speed) the people burst through chairs and railings, and break them up—that noise adds to the queerness of the scene—there is extricable confusion and terror—women faint—quite feeble persons fall, and are trampled on—many cries of agony are heard—the broad stage suddenly fills to suffocation with a dense and motley crowd, like some horrible carnival—the audience rush generally upon it—at least the strong men do—the actors and actresses are there [Pg 133] in their play costumes and painted faces, with moral fright showing through the rouge—some trembling, some in tears, the screams and calls, confused talk—redoubled, trebled—two or three manage to pass up water from the stage to the President's box—others try to clamber up—etc., etc.

In the midst of all this the soldiers of the President's Guard, with others, suddenly drawn to the scene, burst in—some 200 altogether—they storm the house, through all the tiers, especially the upper ones—inflamed with fury, literally charging the audience with fixed bayonets, muskets and pistols, shouting "Clear out! clear out!..." Such the wild scene, or a suggestion of it, rather, inside the play house that night.

Outside, too, in the atmosphere of shock and craze, crowds of people filled with frenzy, ready to seize any outlet for it, came near committing murder several times on innocent individuals. One such case was especially exciting. The infuriated crowd, through some chance, got started against one man, either for words he uttered, or perhaps without any cause at all, and were proceeding at once to hang him on a neighboring lamp-post, when he was rescued by a few heroic policemen, who placed him in their midst and fought their way slowly and amid great peril toward the station house. It was a fitting episode of the whole affair. The crowd rushing and eddying to and fro, the night, the yells, the pale faces, many frightened people trying in vain to [Pg 134] extricate themselves, the attacked man, not yet freed from the jaws of death, looking like a corpse, the silent, resolute half dozen policemen, with no weapons but their little clubs, yet stern and steady through all those eddying swarms—made indeed a fitting side scene to the grand tragedy of the murder. They gained the station house with the protected man, whom they placed in security for the night and discharged in the morning.

And in the midst of that night pandemonium of senseless hate, infuriated soldiers, the audience and the crowd—the stage, and all its actors and actresses, its paint pots, spangles and gaslight—the life blood from those veins, the best and sweetest of the land, drips slowly down....

Such, hurriedly sketched, were the accompaniments of the death of President Lincoln. So suddenly, and in murder and horror unsurpassed, he was taken from us. But his death was painless.

[10] *By permission of David McKay.*

HUSH'D BE THE CAMPS TO-DAY[11]

(May 4, 1865)

BY WALT WHITMAN

Hush'd be the camps to-day,
And soldiers, let us drape our war-worn weapons,
And each with musing soul retire to celebrate
Our dear commander's death.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts, [Pg 135]
Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark events,
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

But sing, poet, in our name.
Sing of the love we bore him—because you, dweller in camps, know it truly.

As they invault the coffin there,
Sing—as they close the doors of earth upon him—one verse,
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.

[11] *By permission of David McKay.*

TO THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

(1865)

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

O, slow to smite and swift to spare,
Gentle and merciful and just!
Who, in the fear of God, didst bear
The sword of power—a nation's trust.

In sorrow by thy bier we stand,
Amid the awe that hushes all,
And speak the anguish of a land
That shook with horror at thy fall.

Thy task is done—the bond are free;
We bear thee to an honored grave,
Whose noblest monument shall be
The broken fetters of the slave.

[Pg 136]

Pure was thy life; its bloody close
Hath placed thee with the sons of light,
Among the noble host of those
cause of right.

CROWN HIS BLOODSTAINED PILLOW

BY JULIA WARD HOWE

Crown his blood-stained pillow
With a victor's palm;
Life's receding billow
Leaves eternal calm.

At the feet Almighty
Lay this gift sincere;
Of a purpose weighty,
And a record clear.

With deliverance freighted
Was this passive hand,
And this heart, high-fated,
Would with love command.

Let him rest serenely
In a Nation's care,
Where her waters queenly
Make the West more fair.

In the greenest meadow
That the prairies show,
Let his marble's shadow

Give all men to know:

[Pg 137]

"Our First Hero, living,
Made his country free;
Heed the Second's giving,
Death for Liberty."

THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN[12]

BY WALT WHITMAN

Thus ended the attempted secession of these States; thus the four years' war. But the main things come subtly and invisibly afterward, perhaps long afterward—neither military, political, nor (great as those are), historical. I say, certain secondary and indirect results, out of the tragedy of this death, are, in my opinion, greatest. Not the event of the murder itself. Not that Mr. Lincoln strings the principal points and personages of the period, like beads, upon the single string of his career. Not that his idiosyncrasy, in its sudden appearance and disappearance, stamps this Republic with a stamp more mark'd and enduring than any yet given by any one man —(more even than Washington's)—but, join'd with these, the immeasurable value and meaning of that whole tragedy lies, to me, in senses finally dearest to a nation (and here all our own)—the imaginative and artistic senses—the literary and dramatic ones. Not in any common or low meaning of those terms, but a meaning precious to the race, and to every age. A long and varied [Pg 138] series of contradictory events arrives at last at its highest poetic, single, central, pictorial denouement. The whole involved, baffling, multiform whirl of the secession period comes to a head, and is gather'd in one brief flash of lightning-illumination—one simple, fierce deed. Its sharp culmination, and as it were solution, of so many bloody and angry problems, illustrates those climax-moments on the stage of universal Time, where the historic Muse at one entrance, and the tragic Muse at the other, suddenly ringing down the curtain, close an immense act in the long drama of creative thought, and give it radiation, tableau, stranger than fiction. Fit radiation —fit close! How the imagination—how the student loves these things! America, too, is to have them. For not in all great deaths, nor far or near—not Cæsar in the Roman senate-house, nor Napoleon passing away in the wild night-storm at St. Helena—not Paleologus, falling, desperately fighting, piled over dozens deep with Grecian corpses—not calm old Socrates, drinking the hemlock—outvies that terminus of the secession war, in one man's life, here in our midst, in our own time—that seal of the emancipation of three million slaves—that parturition and delivery of our at last really free Republic, born again, henceforth to commence its career of genuine homogeneous Union, compact, consistent with itself.

[12] *By permission of David McKay.*

[Pg 139]

OUR SUN HATH GONE DOWN[13]

BY PHŒBE CARY

Our sun hath gone down at the noonday,
The heavens are black;
And over the morning the shadows
Of night-time are back.

Stop the proud boasting mouth of the cannon,
Hush the mirth and the shout;—
God is God! and the ways of Jehovah
Are past finding out.

Lo! the beautiful feet on the mountains,
That yesterday stood;
The white feet that came with glad tidings,
Are dabbled in blood.

The Nation that firmly was settling
The crown on her head,
Sits, like Rizpah, in sackcloth and ashes,
And watches her dead.

Who is dead? who, unmoved by our wailing,
Is lying so low?
O, my Land, stricken dumb in your anguish,
Do you feel, do you know,

[Pg 140]

That the hand which reached out of the darkness
Hath taken the whole?
Yea, the arm and the head of the people—
The heart and the soul!

And that heart, o'er whose dread awful silence
A nation has wept;
Was the truest, and gentlest, and sweetest,
A man ever kept!

Once this good man, we mourn, overwearied,
Worn, anxious, oppressed,
Was going out from his audience chamber
For a season to rest;

Unheeding the thousands who waited
To honor and greet,
When the cry of a child smote upon him,
And turned back his feet.

"Three days hath a woman been waiting,"
Said they, "patient and meek."
And he answered, "Whatever her errand,
Let me hear; let her speak!"

So she came, and stood trembling before him,
And pleaded her cause;
Told him all; how her child's erring father
Had broken the laws.

Humbly spake she: "I mourn for his folly,
His weakness, his fall";
Proudly spake she: "he is not a TRAITOR,
And I love him through all!"

[Pg 141]

Then the great man, whose heart had been shaken
By a little babe's cry;
Answered soft, taking counsel of mercy,
"This man shall not die!"

Why, he heard from the dungeons, the rice-fields,
The dark holds of ships;
Every faint, feeble cry which oppression
Smothered down on men's lips.

In her furnace, the centuries had welded
Their fetter and chain;
And like withes, in the hands of his purpose,
He snapped them in twain.

Who can be what he was to the people;
What he was to the State?
Shall the ages bring to us another
As good, and as great?

Our hearts with their anguish are broken,
Our wet eyes are dim;
For us is the loss and the sorrow,
The triumph for him!

For, ere this, face to face with his Father
Our Martyr hath stood;
Giving unto his hand the white record,
With its great seal of blood!

[13] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

[Pg 142]

TOLLING[14]

(April 15, 1865)

BY LUCY LARCOM

Tolling, tolling, tolling!
All the bells of the land!
Lo, the patriot martyr
Taketh his journey grand!
Travels into the ages,
Bearing a hope how dear!
Into life's unknown vistas,
Liberty's great pioneer.

Tolling, tolling, tolling!
See, they come as a cloud,
Hearts of a mighty people,
Bearing his pall and shroud;
Lifting up, like a banner,
Signals of loss and woe;
Wonder of breathless nations,
Moveth the solemn show.

Tolling, tolling, tolling!
Was it, O man beloved,
Was it thy funeral only
Over the land that moved?
Veiled by that hour of anguish,
Borne with the rebel rout,
Forth into utter darkness,
Slavery's curse went out.

[14] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

[Pg 143]

ABRAHAM LINCOLN[15]

"Strangulatus Pro Republica"

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE

Hundreds there have been, loftier than their kind,
Heroes and victors in the world's great wars:
Hundreds, exalted as the eternal stars,
By the great heart, or keen and mighty mind;
There have been sufferers, maimed and halt and blind,
Who bore their woes in such triumphant calm
That God hath crowned them with the martyr's palm;
And there were those who fought through fire to find
Their Master's face, and were by fire refined.
But who like thee, oh Sire! hath ever stood
Steadfast for truth and right, when lies and wrong
Rolled their dark waters, turbulent and strong;
Who bore reviling, baseness, tears and blood
Poured out like water, till thine own was spent,
Then reaped Earth's sole reward—a grave and monument!

[15] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

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EFFECT OF THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER

Again a great leader of the people has passed through toil, sorrow, battle and war, and come near to the promised land of peace into which he might not pass over. Who shall recount our martyr's sufferings for this people? Since the November of 1860, his horizon has been black with storms.

By day and by night, he trod a way of danger and darkness. On his shoulders rested a government dearer to him than his own life. At its integrity millions of men were striking at home. Upon this government foreign eyes lowered. It stood like a lone island in a sea full of storms, and every tide and wave seemed eager to devour it. Upon thousands of hearts great sorrows and anxieties have rested, but not on one such, and in such measure, as upon that simple, truthful, noble soul, our faithful and sainted Lincoln. Never rising to the enthusiasm of more impassioned natures in hours of hope, and never sinking with the mercurial, in hours of defeat, to the depths of despondency, he held on with immovable patience and fortitude, putting caution against hope, that it might not be premature, and hope against caution that it might not yield to dread and danger. He wrestled ceaselessly, through four black and dreadful purgatorial years, wherein God was cleansing the sin of His people as by fire.

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At last, the watcher beheld the gray dawn for the country. The mountains began to give forth their forms from out the darkness and the East came rushing toward us with arms full of joy for all our sorrows. Then it was for him to be glad exceedingly that had sorrowed immeasurably. Peace could bring to no other heart such joy and rest, such honor, such trust, such gratitude. But he looked upon it as Moses looked upon the promised land. Then the wail of a nation proclaimed that he had gone from among us. Not thine the sorrow, but ours, sainted soul. Thou hast, indeed, entered the promised land, while we are yet on the march. To us remain the rocking of the deep, the storm upon the land, days of duty and nights of watching; but thou art sphered high above all darkness and fear, beyond all sorrow and weariness. Rest, O weary heart! Rejoice exceedingly,—

thou that hast enough suffered! Thou hast beheld Him who invisibly led thee in this great wilderness. Thou standest among the elect. Around thee are the royal men that have ennobled human life in every age. Kingly art thou, with glory on thy brow as a diadem. And joy is upon thee for evermore. Over all this land, over all the little cloud of years that now from thine infinite horizon moves back as a speck, thou art lifted up as high as the star is above the clouds that hide us, but never reach it. In the goodly company of Mount Zion thou shalt find that rest which thou [Pg 146] hast sorrowing sought in vain; and thy name, an everlasting name in heaven, shall flourish in fragrance and beauty as long as men shall last upon the earth, or hearts remain, to revere truth, fidelity and goodness.

Never did two such orbs of experience meet in one hemisphere, as the joy and the sorrow of the same week in this land. The joy was as sudden as if no man had expected it, and as entrancing as if it had fallen a sphere from heaven. It rose up over sobriety, and swept business from its moorings, and ran down through the land in irresistible course. Men embraced each other in brotherhood that were strangers in the flesh. They sang, or prayed, or deeper yet, many could only think thanksgiving and weep gladness.

That peace was sure; that government was firmer than ever; that the land was cleansed of plague; that the ages were opening to our footsteps, and we were to begin a march of blessings; that blood was staunched and scowling enmities were sinking like storms beneath the horizon; that the dear fatherland, nothing lost, much gained, was to rise up in unexampled honor among the nations of the earth—these thoughts, and that undistinguishable throng of fancies, and hopes, and desires, and yearnings, that filled the soul with tremblings like the heated air of midsummer days—all these kindled up such a surge of joy as no words may describe.

In one hour, joy lay without a pulse, without a gleam or breath. A sorrow came that swept [Pg 147] through the land as huge storms sweep through the forest and field, rolling thunder along the sky, disheveling the flowers, daunting every singer in thicket or forest, and pouring blackness and darkness across the land and up the mountains. Did ever so many hearts, in so brief a time, touch two such boundless feelings? It was the uttermost of joy; it was the uttermost of sorrow—noon and midnight, without a space between.

The blow brought not a sharp pang. It was so terrible that at first it stunned sensibility. Citizens were like men awakened at midnight by an earthquake, and bewildered to find everything that they were accustomed to trust wavering and falling. The very earth was no longer solid. The first feeling was the least. Men waited to get strength to feel. They wandered in the streets as if groping after some impending dread, or undeveloped sorrow, or some one to tell them what ailed them. They met each other as if each would ask the other, "Am I awake, or do I dream?" There was a piteous helplessness. Strong men bowed down and wept. Other and common griefs belonged to someone in chief; this belonged to all. It was each and every man's. Every virtuous household in the land felt as if its firstborn were gone. Men were bereaved and walked for days as if a corpse lay unburied in their dwellings. There was nothing else to think of. They could speak of nothing but that; and yet of that they could speak only falteringly. All business was laid aside. Pleasure forgot to smile. The city for nearly a week ceased to roar. The [Pg 148] great Leviathan lay down, and was still. Even avarice stood still, and greed was strangely moved to generous sympathy and universal sorrow. Rear to his name monuments, found charitable institutions, and write his name above their lintels, but no monument will ever equal the universal, spontaneous, and sublime sorrow that in a moment swept down lines and parties, and covered up animosities, in an hour brought a divided people into unity of grief and indivisible fellowship of anguish.

This Nation has dissolved—but in tears only. It stands four-square, more solid to-day than any pyramid in Egypt. This people are neither wasted, nor daunted, nor disordered. Men hate slavery and love liberty with stronger hate and love to-day than ever before. The government is not weakened; it is made stronger. How naturally and easily were the ranks closed! Another steps forward, in the hour that one fell, to take his place and his mantle; and I avow my belief that he will be found a man true to every instinct of liberty; true to the whole trust that is reposed in him; vigilant of the Constitution; careful of the laws; wise for liberty, in that he himself, through his life, has known what it was to suffer from the stings of slavery, and to prize liberty from bitter personal experiences.

Where could the head of government of any monarchy be smitten down by the hand of an assassin, and the funds not quiver or fall one-half of one per cent? After a long period of national [Pg 149] disturbance, after four years of drastic war, after tremendous drafts on the resources of the country, in the height and top of our burdens, the heart of this people is such that now, when the head of government is stricken down, the public funds do not waver, but stand as the granite ribs in our mountains.

Republican institutions have been vindicated in this experience as they never were before; and the whole history of the last four years, rounded up by this cruel stroke, seems in the providence of God, to have been clothed now, with an illustration, with a sympathy, with an aptness, and with a significance, such as we never could have expected nor imagined. God, I think, has said, by the voice of this event, to all nations of the earth: "Republican liberty, based upon true Christianity, is firm as the foundation of the globe."

Even he who now sleeps has, by this event, been clothed with new influence. Dead, he speaks to men who now willingly hear what before they refused to listen to. Now his simple and weighty words will be gathered like those of Washington, and your children and your children's children

shall be taught to ponder the simplicity and deep wisdom of utterances which, in their time, passed, in party heat, as idle words. Men will receive a new impulse of patriotism for his sake, and will guard with zeal the whole country which he loved so well. I swear you, on the altar of his memory, to be more faithful to the country for which he has perished. They will, as they follow his [Pg 150] hearse, swear a new hatred to that slavery against which he warred, and which, in vanquishing him, has made him a martyr and a conqueror. I swear you, by the memory of this martyr, to hate slavery, with an unappeasable hatred. They will admire and imitate the firmness of this man, his inflexible conscience for the right, and yet his gentleness, as tender as a woman's, his moderation of spirit, which not all the heat of party could inflame, nor all the jars and disturbances of his country shake out of place. I swear you to an emulation of his justice, his moderation, and his mercy.

You I can comfort; but how can I speak to that twilight million to whom his name was as the name of an angel of God? There will be wailing in places which no minister shall be able to reach. When, in hovel and in cot, in wood and in wilderness, in the field throughout the South, the dusky children, who looked upon him as that Moses whom God sent before them to lead them out of the land of bondage, learn that he has fallen, who shall comfort them? O, thou Shepherd of Israel, that didst comfort Thy people of old, to Thy care we commit the helpless, the long-wronged, and grieved.

And now the martyr is moving in triumphal march, mightier than when alive. The Nation rises up at every stage of his coming. Cities and States are his pallbearers, and the cannon beats the hours with solemn progression. Dead, dead, dead, he yet speaketh. Is Washington dead? Is Hampden dead? Is David dead? Is any man that was ever fit to live dead? Disenthralled of flesh, [Pg 151] and risen in the unobstructed sphere where passion never comes, he begins his illimitable work. His life now is grafted upon the infinite, and will be fruitful as no earthly life can be.

Pass on, thou that hast overcome. Your sorrows, O people, are his peace. Your bells and bands and muffled drums sound triumph in his ear. Wail and weep here; God made it echo joy and triumph there. Pass on.

Four years ago, O Illinois, we took from your midst an untried man, and from among the people. We return him to you a mighty conqueror. Not thine any more, but the Nation's; not ours, but the world's. Give him place, O ye prairies. In the midst of this great continent his dust shall rest, a sacred treasure to myriads who shall pilgrim to that shrine to kindle anew their zeal and patriotism. Ye winds that move over the mighty places of the West, chant his requiem. Ye people, behold a martyr whose blood as so many articulate words, pleads for fidelity, for law, for liberty.

HYMN[16]

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

O Thou of soul and sense and breath,
The ever-present Giver,
Unto Thy mighty angel, death, [Pg 152]
All flesh thou didst deliver;
What most we cherish, we resign,
For life and death alike are Thine,
Who reignest Lord forever!

Our hearts lie buried in the dust
With him, so true and tender,
The patriot's stay, the people's trust,
The shield of the offender;
Yet every murmuring voice is still,
As, bowing to Thy sovereign will,
Our best loved we surrender.

Dear Lord, with pitying eye behold
This martyr generation,
Which Thou, through trials manifold,
Art showing Thy salvation!
O let the blood by murder split
Wash out Thy stricken children's guilt,
And sanctify our nation!

Be Thou Thy orphaned Israel's friend,
Forsake Thy people never,
In One our broken Many blend,
That none again may sever!
Hear us, O Father, while we raise
With trembling lips our song of praise,
And bless Thy name forever!

[16] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

[Pg 153]

Foully Assassinated April 14, 1865

BY TOM TAYLOR (MARK LEMON) IN LONDON PUNCH.

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;

You whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain:

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for you?

Yes: he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil, and confute my pen:—
To make me own this man of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

[Pg 154]

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble, yet how hopeful he could be:
How in good fortune and in ill, the same:
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work,—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand,—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work His will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mights,—

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron-bark, that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid, that o'erbears the boatsman's toil,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,

[Pg 155]

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear;—
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture,—but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it: four long suffering years,
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers.

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood:
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seem to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon hand, between the goal and him,

Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest,—
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high;
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.

[Pg 156]

A deed accurst! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.

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VI
TRIBUTES

[Pg 159]

THE MARTYR CHIEF[17]

From the Harvard Commemoration Ode,

BY JAMES RUSSEL LOWELL

Life may be given in many ways,
And loyalty to Truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So generous is Fate;
But then to stand beside her,
When craven churls deride her,
To front a lie in arms, and not to yield—
This shows, methinks, God's plan
And measure of a stalwart man,
Limbed, like the old heroic breeds,
Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid earth,
Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,
Fed from within with all the strength he needs.
Such was he, our Martyr Chief,
Whom late the nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief:
Forgive me, if from present things I turn
To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,
And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.
Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,

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And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;

They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A seamark now, now lost in vapors blind,
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of serf and peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late; [Pg 161]
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he;
He knew to bide him time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes:
These are all gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil the first American.

[17] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN[18]

Remarks at the funeral services held in Concord, April 19, 1865

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON

We meet under the gloom of a calamity which darkens down over the minds of good men in all civil society, as the fearful tidings travel over sea, over land, from country to country, like the [Pg 162] shadow of an uncalculated eclipse over the planet. Old as history is, and manifold as are its tragedies, I doubt if any death has caused so much pain to mankind as this has caused, or will cause, on its announcement; and this, not so much because nations are by modern arts brought so closely together, as because of the mysterious hopes and fears which, in the present day, are connected with the name and institutions of America.

In this country, on Saturday, every one was struck dumb, and saw at first only deep below deep, as he meditated on the ghastly blow. And perhaps, at this hour, when the coffin which contains the dust of the President sets forward on its long march through mourning States, on its way to his home in Illinois, we might well be silent and suffer the awful voices of the time to thunder to us. Yes, but that first despair was brief: the man was not so to be mourned. He was the most active and hopeful of men; and his work has not perished: but acclamations of praise for the task he has accomplished burst out into a song of triumph, which even tears for his death cannot keep down.

The President stood before us as a man of the people. He was thoroughly American, had never crossed the sea, had never been spoiled by English insularity or French dissipation; a quiet native, aboriginal man, as an acorn from the oak; no aping of foreigners, no frivolous accomplishments, Kentuckian born, working on a farm, a flatboat-man, a captain in the Black [Pg 163] Hawk war, a country lawyer, a representative in the rural legislature of Illinois;—on such modest foundations the broad structure of his fame was laid. How slowly, and yet by happily prepared steps, he came to his place. All of us remember—it is only a history of five or six years—the surprise and the disappointment of the country at his first nomination by the convention at Chicago. Mr. Seward, then in the culmination of his good fame, was the favorite of the Eastern States. And when the new and comparatively unknown name of Lincoln was announced (notwithstanding the report of the acclamations of that convention), we heard the result coldly and sadly. It seemed too rash, on a purely local reputation, to build so grave a trust in such anxious times; and men naturally talked of the chances in politics as incalculable. But it turned out not to be chance. The profound good opinion which the people of Illinois and of the West had conceived of him, and which they had imparted to their colleagues, that they also might justify

themselves to their constituents at home, was not rash, though they did not begin to know the riches of his worth.

A plain man of the people, an extraordinary fortune attended him. He offered no shining qualities at the first encounter; he did not offend by superiority. He had a face and manner which disarmed suspicion, which inspired confidence, which confirmed good will. He was a man without vices. He had a strong sense of duty, which it was very easy for him to obey. Then he had what farmers call a long head; was excellent in working out the sum for himself; in arguing his case [Pg 164] and convincing you fairly and firmly. Then it turned out that he was a great worker; had prodigious faculty of performance; worked easily. A good worker is so rare; everybody has some disabling quality. In a host of young men that start together and promise so many brilliant leaders for the next age, each fails on trial; one by bad health, one by conceit, or by love of pleasure, or lethargy, or an ugly temper,—each has some disqualifying fault that throws him out of the career. But this man was sound to the core, cheerful, persistent, all right for labor, and liked nothing so well.

Then he had a vast good nature, which made him tolerant and accessible to all; fair minded, leaning to the claim of the petitioner; affable, and not sensible to the affliction which the innumerable visits paid to him when President would have brought to any one else. And how this good nature became a noble humanity, in many a tragic case which the events of the war brought to him, every one will remember; and with what increasing tenderness he dealt when a whole race was thrown on his compassion. The poor negro said of him, on an impressive occasion, "Massa Linkum am ebery-where." Then his broad good humor, running easily into jocular talk, in which he delighted and in which he excelled, was a rich gift to this wise man. It enabled him to keep his secret; to meet every kind of man and every rank in society; to take off the edge of the [Pg 165] severest decisions; to mask his own purpose and sound his companion; and to catch with true instinct the temper of every company he addressed. And, more than all, it is to a man of severe labor, in anxious and exhausting crises, the natural restorative, good as sleep, and is the protection of the overdriven brain against rancor and insanity.

He is the author of a multitude of good sayings, so disguised as pleasantries that it is certain they had no reputation at first but as jests; and only later, by the very acceptance and adoption they find in the mouths of millions, turn out to be the wisdom of the hour. I am sure if this man had ruled in a period of less facility of printing, he would have become mythological in a very few years, like Æsop or Pilpay, or one of the Seven Wise Masters, by his fables and proverbs. But the weight and penetration of many passages in his letters, messages, and speeches, hidden now by the very closeness of their application to the moment, are destined hereafter to wide fame. What pregnant definitions; what unerring common sense; what foresight; and, on great occasion, what lofty, and more than national, what humane tone! His brief speech at Gettysburg will not easily be surpassed by words on any recorded occasion. This, and one other American speech, that of John Brown to the court that tried him, and a part of Kossuth's speech at Birmingham, can only be compared with each other, and with no fourth.

His occupying the chair of State was a triumph of the good sense of mankind, and of the public [Pg 166] conscience. This middle-class country had got a middle-class President, at last. Yes, in manners and sympathies, but not in powers, for his powers were superior. This man grew according to the need. His mind mastered the problem of the day; and as the problem grew, so did his comprehension of it. Rarely was man so fitted to the event. In the midst of fears and jealousies, in the Babel of counsels and parties, this man wrought incessantly with all his might and all his honesty, laboring to find what the people wanted, and how to obtain that. It cannot be said there is any exaggeration of his worth. If ever a man was fairly tested, he was. There was no lack of resistance, nor of slander, nor of ridicule. The times have allowed no state secrets; the nation has been in such ferment, such multitudes had to be trusted, that no secret could be kept. Every door was ajar, and we know all that befell.

Then, what an occasion was the whirlwind of the war. Here was place for no holiday magistrate, no fair-weather sailor; the new pilot was hurried to the helm in a tornado. In four years,—four years of battle-days,—his endurance, his fertility of resources, his magnanimity, were sorely tried and never found wanting. There, by his courage, his justice, his even temper, his fertile counsel, his humanity, he stood a heroic figure in the centre of a heroic epoch. He is the true history of the American people in his time. Step by step he walked before them; slow with their slowness, quickening his march by theirs, the true representative of this continent; an [Pg 167] entirely public man; father of his country, the pulse of twenty-millions throbbing in his heart, the thought of their minds articulated by his tongue.

Adam Smith remarks that the axe, which in Houbraken's portraits of British kings and worthies is engraved under those who have suffered at the block, adds a certain lofty charm to the picture. And who does not see, even in this tragedy so recent, how fast the terror and ruin of the massacre are already burning into glory around the victim? Far happier this fate than to have lived to be wished away; to have watched the decay of his own faculties; to have seen—perhaps even be—the proverbial ingratitude of statesmen; to have seen mean men preferred. Had he not lived long enough to keep the greatest promise that ever man made to his fellow men,—the practicable abolition of slavery? He had seen Tennessee, Missouri, and Maryland emancipate their slaves. He had seen Savannah, Charleston, and Richmond surrendered; had seen the main army of the rebellion lay down its arms. He had conquered the public opinion of Canada, England, and France. Only Washington can compare with him in fortune.

And what if it should turn out, in the unfolding of the web, that he had reached the term; that this heroic deliverer could no longer serve us; that the rebellion had touched its natural conclusion, and what remained to be done required new and uncommitted hands,—a new spirit born out of the ashes of the war; and that Heaven, wishing to show the world a completed benefactor, shall make him serve his country even more by his death than by his life? Nations, like kings, are not good by facility and complaisance. "The kindness of kings consists in justice and strength." Easy good nature has been the dangerous foible of the Republic, and it was necessary that its enemies should outrage it, and drive us to unwonted firmness, to secure the salvation of this country in the next ages. [Pg 168]

The ancients believed in a serene and beautiful Genius which ruled in the affairs of nations; which, with a slow but stern justice, carried forward the fortunes of certain chosen houses, weeding out single offenders or offending families, and securing at last the firm prosperity of the favorites of Heaven. It was too narrow a view of the Eternal Nemesis. There is a serene Providence which rules the fate of nations, which makes little account of time, little of one generation or race, makes no account of disasters, conquers alike by what is called defeat or by what is called victory, thrusts aside enemy and obstruction, crushes everything immoral as inhuman, and obtains the ultimate triumph of the best race by the sacrifice of everything which resists the moral laws of the world. It makes its own instruments, creates the man for the time, trains him in poverty, inspires his genius, and arms him for his task. It has given every race its own talent, and ordains that only that race which combines perfectly with the virtues of all shall endure.

[18] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

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WASHINGTON AND LINCOLN

BY WILLIAM MCKINLEY

The greatest names in American history are Washington and Lincoln. One is forever associated with the independence of the States and the formation of the Federal Union; the other with universal freedom and the preservation of the Union.

Washington enforced the Declaration of Independence as against England. Lincoln proclaimed the fulfilment not only to a down-trodden race in America, but to all people for all time who may seek the protection of our flag. These illustrious men achieved grander results for mankind within a single century than any other men ever accomplished in all the years since the first flight of time began.

Washington drew his sword not for a change of rulers upon an established throne, but to establish a new government which should acknowledge no throne but the tribute of the people.

Lincoln accepted war to save the Union, the safeguard of our liberties, and re-established it on indestructible foundations as forever "one and indivisible." To quote his own words: "Now we are contending that this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." [Pg 170]

LINCOLN

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Abraham Lincoln—the spirit incarnate of those who won victory in the Civil War—was the true representative of this people, not only for his own generation, but for all time, because he was a man among men. A man who embodied the qualities of his fellow-men, but who embodied them to the highest and most unusual degree of perfection, who embodied all that there was in the nation of courage, of wisdom, of gentle, patient kindliness, and of common sense.

LINCOLN'S GRAVE

BY MAURICE THOMPSON

May one who fought in honor for the South
Uncovered stand and sing by Lincoln's grave?
Why, if I shrunk not at the cannon's mouth,
Nor swerved one inch for any battle-wave,
Should I now tremble in this quiet close
Hearing the prairie wind go lightly by
From billowy plains of grass and miles of corn,
While out of deep repose
The great sweet spirit lifts itself on high
And broods above our land this summer morn?

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Meseems I feel his presence. Is he dead?
Death is a word. He lives and grander grows.

At Gettysburg he bows his bleeding head;
He spreads his arms where Chickamauga flows,
As if to clasp old soldiers to his breast,
Of South or North no matter which they be,
Not thinking of what uniform they wore,
His heart a palimpsest,
Record on record of humanity,
Where love is first and last forevermore.

He was the Southern mother leaning forth,
At dead of night to hear the cannon roar,
Beseeching God to turn the cruel North
And break it that her son might come once more;
He was New England's maiden pale and pure,
Whose gallant lover fell on Shiloh's plain;
He was the mangled body of the dead;
He writhing did endure
Wounds and disfigurement and racking pain,
Gangrene and amputation, all things dread.

He was the North, the South, the East, the West,
The thrall, the master, all of us in one;
There was no section that he held the best;
His love shone as impartial as the sun;
And so revenge appealed to him in vain;
He smiled at it, as at a thing forlorn,
And gently put it from him, rose and stood
A moment's space in pain,
Remembering the prairies and the corn
And the glad voices of the field and wood.

[Pg 172]

And then when Peace set wing upon the wind
And northward flying fanned the clouds away,
He passed as martyrs pass. Ah, who shall find
The chord to sound the pathos of that day!
Mid-April blowing sweet across the land,
New bloom of freedom opening to the world,
Loud pæans of the homeward-looking host,
The salutations grand
From grimy guns, the tattered flags unfurled;
And he must sleep to all the glory lost!

Sleep! loss! But there is neither sleep nor loss,
And all the glory mantles him about;
Above his breast the precious banners cross,
Does he not hear his armies tramp and shout?
Oh, every kiss of mother, wife or maid
Dashed on the grizzly lip of veteran,
Comes forthright to that calm and quiet mouth,
And will not be delayed,
And every slave, no longer slave but man,
Sends up a blessing from the broken South.

He is not dead, France knows he is not dead;
He stirs strong hearts in Spain and Germany,
In far Siberian mines his words are said,
He tells the English Ireland shall be free,
He calls poor serfs about him in the night,
And whispers of a power that laughs at kings,
And of a force that breaks the strongest chain;
Old tyranny feels his might
Tearing away its deepest fastenings,
And jewelled sceptres threaten him in vain.

[Pg 173]

Years pass away, but freedom does not pass,
Thrones crumble, but man's birthright crumbles not,
And, like the wind across the prairie grass,
A whole world's aspirations fan this spot
With ceaseless panting after liberty,
One breath of which would make dark Russia fair,
And blow sweet summer through the exile's cave
And set the exile free;
For which I pray, here in the open air
Of Freedom's morning-tide, by Lincoln's grave.

TRIBUTES TO LINCOLN

A man of great ability, pure patriotism, unselfish nature, full of forgiveness to his enemies, bearing malice toward none, he proved to be the man above all others for the struggle through which the nation had to pass to place itself among the greatest in the family of nations. His fame will grow brighter as time passes and his great great work is better understood.

U. S. Grant.

At the moment when the stars of the Union, sparkling and resplendent with the golden fires of liberty, are waving over the subdued walls of Richmond the sepulchre opens, and the strong, the powerful enters it.

Sr. Rebello Da Silva.

He ascended the mount where he could see the fair fields and the smiling vineyards of the promised land. But, like the great leader of Israel, he was not permitted to come to the possession. [Pg 174]

Seth Sweetser.

In his freedom from passion and bitterness; in his acute sense of justice; in his courageous faith in the right, and his inextinguishable hatred of wrong; in his warm and heartfelt sympathy and mercy; in his coolness of judgment; in his unquestioned rectitude of intention—in a word, in his ability to lift himself for his country's sake above all mere partisanship, in all the marked traits of his character combined, he has had no parallel since Washington, and while our republic endures he will live with him in the grateful hearts of his grateful countrymen.

Schuyler Colfax.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY HENRY HOWARD BROWNELL

Dead is the roll of the drums,
And the distant thunders die,
They fade in the far-off sky;
And a lovely summer comes,
Like the smile of Him on high.

Lulled, the storm and the onset.
Earth lies in a sunny swoon;
Stiller splendor of noon, [Pg 175]
Softer glory of sunset,
Milder starlight and moon!

For the kindly Seasons love us;
They smile over trench and clod
(Where we left the bravest of us)—
There's a brighter green of the sod,
And a holier calm above us
In the blessed Blue of God.

The roar and ravage were vain;
And Nature, that never yields,
Is busy with sun and rain
At her old sweet work again
On the lonely battle-fields.

How the tall white daisies grow,
Where the grim artillery rolled!
(Was it only a moon ago?
It seems a century old)—

And the bee hums in the clover,
As the pleasant June comes on;
Aye, the wars are all over,—
But our good Father is gone.

There was tumbling of traitor fort,
Flaming of traitor fleet—
Lighting of city and port,
Clasping in square and street.

[Pg 176]

There was thunder of mine and gun,
Cheering by mast and tent,—
When—his dread work all done,

And his high fame full won—
Died the Good President.

In his quiet chair he sate,
Pure of malice or guile,
Stainless of fear or hate,—
And there played a pleasant smile
On the rough and careworn face;
For his heart was all the while
On means of mercy and grace.

The brave old Flag drooped o'er him,
(A fold in the hard hand lay)—
He looked, perchance, on the play—
But the scene was a shadow before him,
For his thoughts were far away.

'Twas but the morn (yon fearful
Death-shade, gloomy and vast,
Lifting slowly at last),
His household heard him say,
"'Tis long since I've been so cheerful,
So light of heart as to-day."

'Twas dying, the long dread clang—
But, or ever the blessèd ray
Of peace could brighten to-day,
Murder stood by the way—
Treason struck home his fang!
One throb—and, without a pang,
That pure soul passed away.

[Pg 177]

Kindly Spirit!—Ah, when did treason
Bid such a generous nature cease,
Mild by temper and strong by reason,
But ever leaning to love and peace?

A head how sober; a heart how spacious;
A manner equal with high or low;
Rough but gentle, uncouth but gracious,
And still inclining to lips of woe.

Patient when saddest, calm when sternest,
Grieved when rigid for justice' sake;
Given to jest, yet ever in earnest
If aught of right or truth were at stake.

Simple of heart, yet shrewd therewith,
Slow to resolve, but firm to hold;
Still with parable and with myth
Seasoning truth, like Them of old;
Aptest humor and quaintest pith!
(Still we smile o'er the tales he told.)

Yet whoso might pierce the guise
Of mirth in the man we mourn,
Would mark, and with grieved surprise,
All the great soul had borne,
In the piteous lines, and the kind, sad eyes
So dreadfully wearied and worn.

And we trusted (the last dread page
Once turned, of our Dooms-day Scroll),
To have seen him, sunny of soul,
In a cheery, grand old age.

[Pg 178]

But, Father, 'tis well with thee!
And since ever, when God draws nigh,
Some grief for the good must be,
'Twas well, even so to die,—

'Mid the thunder of Treason's fall,
The yielding of haughty town,
The crashing of cruel wall,
The trembling of tyrant crown!

The ringing of hearth and pavement

To the clash of falling chains,—
The centuries of enslavement
Dead, with their blood-bought gains!

And through trouble weary and long,
Well hadst thou seen the way,
Leaving the State so strong
It did not reel for a day.

And even in death couldst give
A token for Freedom's strife—
A proof how republics live,
And not by a single life,

But the Right Divine of man,
And the many, trained to be free,—
And none, since the world began,
Ever was mourned like thee.

Dost thou feel it, O noble Heart!
(So grieved and so wronged below),
From the rest wherein thou art?
Do they see it, those patient eyes? [Pg 179]
Is there heed in the happy skies
For tokens of world-wide woe?

The Land's great lamentations,
The mighty mourning of cannon
The myriad flags half-mast—
The late remorse of the nations,
Grief from Volga to Shannon!
(Now they know thee at last.)

How, from gray Niagara's shore
To Canaveral's surfy shoal—
From the rough Atlantic roar
To the long Pacific roll—
For bereavement and for dole,
Every cottage wears its weed,
White as thine own pure soul,
And black as the traitor deed.

How, under a nation's pall,
The dust so dear in our sight
To its home on the prairie passed,—
The leagues of funeral,
The myriads, morn and night,
Pressing to look their last.

Nor alone the State's Eclipse;
But tears in hard eyes gather—
And on rough and bearded lips,
Of the regiments and the ships—
"Oh, our dear Father!"
[Pg 180]

And methinks of all the million
That looked on the dark dead face,
'Neath its sable-plumed pavilion,
The crone of a humbler race
Is saddest of all to think on,
And the old swart lips that said,
Sobbing, "Abraham Lincoln!
Oh, he is dead, he is dead!"

Hush! let our heavy souls
To-day be glad; for again
The stormy music swells and rolls,
Stirring the hearts of men.

And under the Nation's Dome,
They've guarded so well and long,
Our boys come marching home,
Two hundred thousand strong.

All in the pleasant month of May,
With war-worn colors and drums,

Still through the livelong summer's day,
Regiment, regiment comes.

Like the tide, yesty and barmy,
That sets on a wild lee-shore,
Surge the ranks of an army
Never reviewed before!

Who shall look on the like again,
Or see such host of the brave?
A mighty River of marching men
Rolls the Capital through—
Rank on rank, and wave on wave,
Of bayonet-crested blue!

[Pg 181]

How the chargers neigh and champ,
(Their riders weary of camp),
With curvet and with caracole!—
The cavalry comes with thunderous tramp,
And the cannons heavily roll.

And ever, flowery and gay,
The Staff sweeps on in a spray
Of tossing forelocks and manes;
But each bridle-arm has a weed
Of funeral, black as the steed
That fiery Sheridan reins.

Grandest of mortal sights
The sun-browned ranks to view—
The Colors ragg'd in a hundred fights,
And the dusty Frocks of Blue!

And all day, mile on mile,
With cheer, and waving, and smile,
The war-worn legions defile
Where the nation's noblest stand;
And the Great Lieutenant looks on,
With the Flower of a rescued Land,—
For the terrible work is done,
And the Good Fight is won
For God and for Fatherland.

So, from the fields they win,
Our men are marching home,
A million are marching home!
To the cannon's thundering din,
And banners on mast and dome,—

[Pg 182]

And the ships come sailing in
With all their ensigns dight,
As erst for a great sea-fight.

Let every color fly,
Every pennon flaunt in pride;
Wave, Starry Flag, on high!
Float in the sunny sky,
Stream o'er the stormy tide!
For every stripe of stainless hue,
And every star in the field of blue,
Ten thousand of the brave and true
Have laid them down and died.

And in all our pride to-day
We think, with a tender pain,
Of those so far away
They will not come home again.

And our boys had fondly thought,
To-day, in marching by,
From the ground so dearly bought,
And the fields so bravely fought,
To have met their Father's eye.

But they may not see him in place,
Nor their ranks be seen of him;
We look for the well-known face,

And the splendor is strangely dim.

Perish?—who was it said
Our Leader had passed away?
Dead? Our President dead? [Pg 183]
He has not died for a day!

We mourn for a little breath
Such as, late or soon, dust yields;
But the Dark Flower of Death
Blooms in the fadeless fields.

We looked on a cold, still brow,
But Lincoln could yet survive;
He never was more alive,
Never nearer than now.

For the pleasant season found him,
Guarded by faithful hands,
In the fairest of Summer Lands;
With his own brave Staff around him,
There our President stands.

There they are all at his side,
The noble hearts and true,
That did all men might do—
Then slept, with their swords and died.

And around—(for there can cease
This earthly trouble)—they throng,
The friends that have passed in peace,
The foes that have seen their wrong.

(But, a little from the rest,
With sad eyes looking down,
And brows of softened frown,
With stern arms on the chest, [Pg 184]
Are two, standing abreast—
Stonewall and Old John Brown.)

But the stainless and the true,
These by their President stand,
To look on his last review,
Or march with the old command.

And lo! from a thousand fields,
From all the old battle-haunts,
A greater Army than Sherman wields,
A grander Review than Grant's!

Gathered home from the grave,
Risen from sun and rain—
Rescued from wind and wave
Out of the stormy main—
The Legions of our Brave
Are all in their lines again!

Many a stout Corps that went,
Full-ranked, from camp and tent,
And brought back a brigade;
Many a brave regiment,
That mustered only a squad.

The lost battalions,
That, when the fight went wrong,
Stood and died at their guns,—
The stormers steady and strong, [Pg 185]

With their best blood that bought
Scrap, and ravelin, and wall,—
The companies that fought
Till a corporal's guard was all.

Many a valiant crew,
That passed in battle and wreck,—
Ah, so faithful and true!
They died on the bloody deck,

They sank in the soundless blue.

All the loyal and bold
That lay on a soldier's bier,—
The stretchers borne to the rear,
The hammocks lowered to the hold.

The shattered wreck we hurried,
In death-fight, from deck and port,—
The Blacks that Wagner buried—
That died in the Bloody Fort!

Comrades of camp and mess,
Left, as they lay, to die,
In the battle's sorest stress,
When the storm of fight swept by,—
They lay in the Wilderness,
Ah, where did they not lie?

In the tangled swamp they lay,
They lay so still on the sward!—
They rolled in the sick-bay,
Moaning their lives away—
They flushed in the fevered ward.

[Pg 186]

They rotted in Libby yonder,
They starved in the foul stockade—
Hearing afar the thunder
Of the Union cannonade!

But the old wounds all are healed,
And the dungeoned limbs are free,—
The Blue Frocks rise from the field,
The Blue Jackets out of the sea.

They've 'scaped from the torture-den,
They've broken the bloody sod,
They're all come to life again!—
The Third of a Million men
That died for Thee and for God!

A tenderer green than May
The Eternal Season wears,—
The blue of our summer's day
Is dim and pallid to theirs,—
The Horror faded away,
And 'twas heaven all unawares!

Tents on the Infinite Shore!
Flags in the azuline sky,
Sails on the seas once more!
To-day, in the heaven on high,
All under arms once more!

The troops are all in their lines,
The guidons flutter and play;
But every bayonet shines,
For all must march to-day.

[Pg 187]

What lofty pennons flaunt?
What mighty echoes haunt,
As of great guns, o'er the main?
Hark to the sound again—
The Congress is all a-taunt!
The Cumberland's manned again!

All the ships and their men
Are in line of battle to-day,—
All at quarters, as when
Their last roll thundered away,—
All at their guns, as then,
For the Fleet salutes to-day.

The armies have broken camp
On the vast and sunny plain,
The drums are rolling again;
With steady, measured tramp,

They're marching all again.

With alignment firm and solemn,
Once again they form
In mighty square and column,—
But never for charge and storm.

The Old Flag they died under
Floats above them on the shore,
And on the great ships yonder
The ensigns dip once more—
And once again the thunder
Of the thirty guns and four!

[Pg 188]

In solid platoons of steel,
Under heaven's triumphal arch,
The long lines break and wheel—
And the word is, "Forward, march!"

The Colors ripple o'erhead,
The drums roll up to the sky,
And with martial time and tread
The regiments all pass by—
The ranks of our faithful Dead,
Meeting their President's eye.

With a soldier's quiet pride
They smile o'er the perished pain,
For their anguish was not vain—
For thee, O Father, we died!
And we did not die in vain.

March on, your last brave mile!
Salute him, Star and Lace,
Form round him, rank and file,
And look on the kind, rough face;

But the quaint and homely smile
Has a glory and a grace
It never had known erewhile—
Never, in time and space.

Close round him, hearts of pride!
Press near him, side by side,—
Our Father is not alone!
For the Holy Right ye died,
And Christ, the Crucified,
Waits to welcome His own.

[Pg 189]

TRIBUTES

A statesman of the school of sound common sense, and a philanthropist of the most practical type, a patriot without a superior—his monument is a country preserved.

C. S. Harrington.

Now all men begin to see that the plain people, who at last came to love him and to lean upon his wisdom, and trust him absolutely, were altogether right, and that in deed and purpose he was earnestly devoted to the welfare of the whole country, and of all its inhabitants.

R. B. Hayes.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN[19]

BY JOEL BENTON

Some opulent force of genius, soul, and race,
Some deep life-current from far centuries
Flowed to his mind, and lighted his sad eyes,
And gave his name, among great names, high place.

But these are miracles we may not trace—
Nor say why from a source and lineage mean
He rose to grandeur never dreamt or seen,
Or told on the long scroll of history's space.

The tragic fate of one broad hemisphere [Pg 190]
Fell on stern days to his supreme control,
All that the world and liberty held dear
Pressed like a nightmare on his patient soul.
Martyr beloved, on whom, when life was done,
Fame looked, and saw another Washington!

[19] *By permission of the author.*

ON THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN[20]

BY RICHARD WATSON GILDER

This bronze doth keep the very form and mold
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks that hold
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea
For storms to beat on; the lone agony
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men
As might some prophet of the elder day—
Brooding above the tempest and the fray
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.
A power was his beyond the touch of art
Or armed strength—his pure and mighty heart.

[20] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

[Pg 191]

TRIBUTES

To him belongs the credit of having worked his way up from the humblest position an American freeman can occupy to the highest and most powerful, without losing, in the least, the simplicity and sincerity of nature which endeared him alike to the plantation slave and the metropolitan millionaire.

The most malignant party opposition has never been able to call in question the patriotism of his motives, or tarnish with the breath of suspicion the brightness of his spotless fidelity. Ambition did not warp, power corrupt, nor glory dazzle him.

Warren H. Cudworth.

By his steady, enduring confidence in God, and in the complete ultimate success of the cause of God which is the cause of humanity, more than in any other way does he now speak to us, and to the nation he loved and served so well.

P. D. Gurley.

Chieftain, farewell! The nation mourns thee. Mothers shall teach thy name to their lisping children. The youth of our land shall emulate thy virtues. Statesmen shall study thy record, and learn lessons of wisdom. Mute though thy lips be, yet they still speak. Hushed is thy voice, but its [Pg 192] echoes of liberty are ringing through the world, and the sons of bondage listen with joy.

Matthew Simpson.

LINCOLN

BY GEORGE HENRY BOKER.

Crown we our heroes with a holier wreath
Than man e'er wore upon this side of death;
Mix with their laurels deathless asphodels,
And chime their pæans from the sacred bells!
Nor in your prayers forget the martyred Chief,
Fallen for the gospel of your own belief,
Who, ere he mounted to the people's throne,
Asked for your prayers, and joined in them his own.
I knew the man. I see him, as he stands
With gifts of mercy in his outstretched hands;
A kindly light within his gentle eyes,
Sad as the toil in which his heart grew wise;
His lips half-parted with the constant smile
That kindled truth, but foiled the deepest guile;

His head bent forward, and his willing ear
Divinely patient right and wrong to hear:
Great in his goodness, humble in his state,
Firm in his purpose, yet not passionate,
He led his people with a tender hand,
And won by love a sway beyond command,
Summoned by lot to mitigate a time
Frenzied with rage, unscrupulous with crime,
He bore his mission with so meek a heart [Pg 193]
That Heaven itself took up his people's part;
And when he faltered, helped him ere he fell,
Eking his efforts out by miracle.
No king this man, by grace of God's intent;
No, something better, freeman,—President!
A nature, modeled on a higher plan,
Lord of himself, an inborn gentleman!

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

JAMES A. GARFIELD

In the great drama of the rebellion there were two acts. The first was the war, with its battles and sieges, its victories and defeats, its sufferings and tears. Just as the curtain was lifting on the second and final act, the restoration of peace and liberty, the evil spirit of the rebellion, in the fury of despair, nerved and directed the hand of an assassin to strike down the chief character in both. It was no one man who killed Abraham Lincoln; it was the embodied spirit of treason and slavery, inspired with fearful and despairing hate, that struck him down in the moment of the nation's supremest joy.

Sir, there are times in the history of men and nations when they stand so near the veil that separates mortals from the immortals, time from eternity, and men from God that they can almost hear the beatings and pulsations of the heart of the Infinite. Through such a time has this [Pg 194] nation passed.

When two hundred and fifty thousand brave spirits passed from the field of honor, through that thin veil, to the presence of God, and when at last its parting folds admitted the martyr President to the company of those dead heroes of the Republic, the nation stood so near the veil that the whispers of God were heard by the children of men. Awe-stricken by his voice, the American people knelt in tearful reverence and made a solemn covenant with him and with each other that this nation should be saved from its enemies, that all its glories should be restored, and, on the ruins of slavery and treason, the temples of freedom and justice should be built, and should survive forever.

It remains for us, consecrated by that great event and under a covenant with God, to keep that faith, to go forward in the great work until it shall be completed. Following the lead of that great man, and obeying the high behests of God, let us remember that:

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

[Pg 195]

AN HORATIAN ODE[21]

BY RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

Not as when some great captain falls
In battle, where his country calls,
Beyond the struggling lines
That push his dread designs

To doom, by some stray ball struck dead:
Or in the last charge, at the head
Of his determined men,
Who must be victors then!

Nor as when sink the civic great,
The safer pillars of the State,
Whose calm, mature, wise words
Suppress the need of swords!—

With no such tears as e'er were shed
Above the noblest of our dead
Do we to-day deplore

The man that is no more!

Our sorrow hath a wider scope,
Too strange for fear, too vast for hope,—
A wonder, blind and dumb,
That waits—what is to come!

Not more astonished had we been
If madness, that dark night, unseen,
Had in our chambers crept,
And murdered while we slept!

[Pg 196]

We woke to find a mourning earth—
Our Lares shivered on the hearth,—
To roof-tree fallen,—all
That could affright, appall!

Such thunderbolts, in other lands,
Have smitten the rod from royal hands,
But spared, with us, till now,
Each laurelled Cæsar's brow!

No Cæsar he, whom we lament,
A man without a precedent,
Sent it would seem, to do
His work—and perish too!

Not by the weary cares of state,
The endless tasks, which will not wait,
Which, often done in vain,
Must yet be done again:

Not in the dark, wild tide of war,
Which rose so high, and rolled so far,
Sweeping from sea to sea
In awful anarchy:—

Four fateful years of mortal strife,
Which slowly drained the nation's life,
(Yet, for each drop that ran
There sprang an armed man!)

Not then;—but when by measures meet,—
By victory, and by defeat,—
By courage, patience, skill,
The people's fixed "We will!"

[Pg 197]

Had pierced, had crushed rebellion dead,—
Without a hand, without a head:—
At last, when all was well,
He fell—O, how he fell!

The time,—the place,—the stealing shape,—
The coward shot,—the swift escape,—
The wife,—the widow's scream,—
It is a hideous dream!

A dream?—what means this pageant, then?
These multitudes of solemn men,
Who speak not when they meet,
But throng the silent street?

The flags half-mast, that late so high
Flaunted at each new victory?
(The stars no brightness shed,
But bloody looks the red!)

The black festoons that stretch for miles,
And turn the streets to funeral aisles?
(No house too poor to show
The nation's badge of woe!)

The cannon's sudden, sullen boom,—
The bells that toll of death and doom,—
The rolling of the drums,—
The dreadful car that comes?

Cursed be the hand that fired the shot!
The frenzied brain that hatched the plot!
Thy country's father slain
By thee, thou worse than Cain!

[Pg 198]

Tyrants have fallen by such as thou,
And good hath followed—may it now!
(God lets bad instruments
Produce the best events.)

But he, the man we mourn to-day,
No tyrant was: so mild a sway
In one such weight who bore
Was never known before!

Cool should be he, of balanced powers.
The ruler of a race like ours,
Impatient, headstrong, wild,—
The man to guide the child!

And this he was, who most unfit
(So hard the sense of God to hit!)
Did seem to fill his place.
With such a homely face,—

Such rustic manners,—speech uncouth,—
(That somehow blundered out the truth!)
Untried, untrained to bear
The more than kingly care!

Ay! And his genius put to scorn
The proudest in the purple born,
Whose wisdom never grew
To what, untaught, he knew—

The people, of whom he was one.
No gentleman like Washington,—
(Whose bones, methinks, make room,
To have him in their tomb!)

[Pg 199]

A laboring man, with horny hands,
Who swung the axe, who tilled his lands,
Who shrank from nothing new,
But did as poor men do!

One of the people! Born to be
Their curious epitome;
To share, yet rise above
Their shifting hate and love.

Common his mind (it seemed so then),
His thought the thoughts of other men:
Plain were his words, and poor—
But now they will endure!

No hasty fool, of stubborn will,
But prudent, cautious, pliant, still;
Who, since his work was good,
Would do it, as he could.

Doubting, was not ashamed to doubt,
And, lacking prescience, went without:
Often appeared to halt,
And was, of course, at fault:

Heard all opinions, nothing loth,
And loving both sides, angered both:
Was—not like justice, blind,
But watchful, clement, kind.

No hero, this, of Roman mould;
Nor like our stately sires of old:
Perhaps he was not great—
But he preserved that State!

[Pg 200]

O honest face, which all men knew!
O tender heart, but known to few!

O wonder of the age,
Cut off by tragic rage!

Peace! Let the long procession come,
For hark!—the mournful, muffled drum—
The trumpet's wail afar,—
And see! the awful car!

Peace! Let the sad procession go,
While cannon boom, and bells toll slow:
And go, thou sacred car,
Bearing our woe afar!

Go, darkly borne, from State to State,
Whose loyal, sorrowing cities wait
To honor all they can
The dust of that good man!

Go, grandly borne, with such a train
As greatest kings might die to gain:
The just, the wise, the brave
Attend thee to the grave!

And you, the soldiers of our wars,
Bronzed veterans, grim with noble scars,
Salute him once again,
Your late commander—slain!

Yes, let your tears, indignant, fall,
But leave your muskets on the wall:
Your country needs you now
Beside the forge, the plough!

[Pg 201]

(When justice shall unsheathe her brand,—
If mercy may not stay her hand,
Nor would we have it so—
She must direct the blow!)

And you, amid the master-race,
Who seem so strangely out of place,
Know ye who cometh? He
Who hath declared ye free!

Bow while the body passes—nay,
Fall on your knees, and weep, and pray!
Weep, weep—I would ye might—
Your poor, black faces white!

And children, you must come in bands,
With garlands in your little hands,
Of blue, and white, and red,
To strew before the dead!

So sweetly, sadly, sternly goes
The fallen to his last repose:
Beneath no mighty dome.
But in his modest home;

The churchyard where his children rest,
The quiet spot that suits him best:
There shall his grave be made,
And there his bones be laid!

And there his countrymen shall come,
With memory proud, with pity dumb,
And strangers far and near,
For many and many a year!

[Pg 202]

For many a year, and many an age,
While history on her ample page
The virtues shall enroll
Of that paternal soul!

[21] *By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.*

SOME FOREIGN TRIBUTES TO LINCOLN

From "The Lives and Deeds of Our Self-made Men"[22]

BY MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

(1889)

On the first of May, 1865, Sir George Grey, in the English House of Commons, moved an address to the Crown, to express the feelings of the House upon the assassination of Mr. Lincoln. In this address he said that he was convinced that Mr. Lincoln "in the hour of victory, and in the triumph of victory, would have shown that wise forbearance, and that generous consideration, which would have added tenfold lustre to the fame that he had already acquired, amidst the varying fortunes of the war."

In seconding the second address, at the same time and place, Mr. Benjamin Disraeli said: "But in the character of the victim, and in the very accessories of his almost latest moments, there is something so homely and so innocent that it takes the subject, as it were, out of the pomp of history, and out of the ceremonial of diplomacy. It touches the heart of nations, and appeals to the domestic sentiments of mankind." [Pg 203]

In the House of Lords, Lord John Russell, in moving a similar address, observed: "President Lincoln was a man who, although he had not been distinguished before his election, had from that time displayed a character of so much integrity, sincerity and straightforwardness, and at the same time of so much kindness, that if any one could have been able to alleviate the pain and animosity which have prevailed during the civil war, I believe President Lincoln was the man to have done so." And again, in speaking of the question of amending the Constitution so as to prohibit slavery, he said: "We must all feel that there again the death of President Lincoln deprives the United States of the man who was the leader on this subject."

Mr. John Stuart Mill, the distinguished philosopher, in a letter to an American friend, used far stronger expressions than these guarded phrases of high officials. He termed Mr. Lincoln "the great citizen who had afforded so noble an example of the qualities befitting the first magistrate of a free people, and who, in the most trying circumstances, had gradually won not only the admiration, but almost the personal affection of all who love freedom or appreciate simplicity or uprightness."

Professor Goldwin Smith writing to the London Daily News, began by saying, "It is difficult to measure the calamity which the United States and the world have sustained by the murder of President Lincoln. The assassin has done his best to strike down mercy and moderation, of both of which this good and noble life was the mainstay." [Pg 204]

Senhor Rebello da Silva, a member of the Portuguese Chamber of Peers, in moving a resolution on the death of Mr. Lincoln, thus outlined his character: "He is truly great who rises to the loftiest heights from profound obscurity, relying solely on his own merits as did Napoleon, Washington, Lincoln. For these arose to power and greatness, not through any favor or grace, by a chance cradle, or genealogy, but through the prestige of their own deeds, through the nobility which begins and ends with themselves—the sole offspring of their own works.... Lincoln was of this privileged class; he belonged to this aristocracy. In infancy, his energetic soul was nourished by poverty. In youth, he learned through toil the love of liberty, and respect for the rights of man. Even to the age of twenty-two, educated in adversity, his hands made callous by honorable labor, he rested from the fatigues of the field, spelling out, in the pages of the Bible, in the lessons of the gospel, in the fugitive leaves of the daily journal—which the aurora opens, and the night disperses—the first rudiments of instruction, which his solitary meditations ripened. The chrysalis felt one day the ray of the sun, which called it to life, broke its involucrum, and it launched forth fearlessly from the darkness of its humble cloister into the luminous spaces of its destiny. The farmer, day-laborer, shepherd, like Cincinnatus, left the ploughshare in the half-broken furrow, and, legislator of his own State, and afterwards of the Great Republic, saw himself proclaimed in the tribunal the popular chief of several millions of people, the maintainer of the holy principle inaugurated by Wilberforce." [Pg 205]

There are some vague and some only partially correct statements in this diffuse passage; but it shows plainly enough how enthusiastically the Portuguese nobleman had admired the antique simplicity and strength of Mr. Lincoln's character.

Dr. Merle d'Aubigne, the historian of the Reformation, writing to Mr. Fogg, U. S. Minister to Switzerland, said: "While not venturing to compare him to the great sacrifice of Golgotha, which gave liberty to the captives, is it not just, in this hour, to recall the word of an apostle (I John iii, 16): 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren?' Who can say that the President did not lay down his life by the firmness of his devotion to a great duty? The name of Lincoln will remain one of the greatest that history has to inscribe on its annals.... Among the legacies which Lincoln leaves to us, we shall all regard as the most precious, his spirit of equity, of moderation, and of peace, according to which he will still preside, if I may so speak, over the restoration of your great nation."

The "Democratic Association" of Florence, addressed "to the Free People of the United States," a letter, in which they term Mr. Lincoln "the honest, the magnanimous citizen, the most worthy chief magistrate of your glorious Federation." [Pg 206]

The eminent French liberal, M. Edouard Laboulaye, in a speech showing a remarkably just understanding and extremely broad views with respect to the affairs and the men of the United

States, said: "Mr. Lincoln was one of those heroes who are ignorant of themselves; his thoughts will reign after him. The name of Washington has already been pronounced, and I think with reason. Doubtless Mr. Lincoln resembled Franklin more than Washington. By his origin, his arch good nature, his ironical good sense, and his love of anecdotes and jesting, he was of the same blood as the printer of Philadelphia. But it is nevertheless true that in less than a century, America has passed through two crises in which its liberty might have been lost, if it had not had honest men at its head; and that each time it has had the happiness to meet the man best fitted to serve it. If Washington founded the Union, Lincoln has saved it. History will draw together and unite those two names. A single word explains Mr. Lincoln's whole life: it was Duty. Never did he put himself forward; never did he think of himself; never did he seek one of those ingenious combinations which puts the head of a state in bold relief, and enhances his importance at the expense of the country; his only ambition, his only thought was faithfully to fulfil the mission which his fellow-citizens had entrusted to him.... His inaugural address, March 4, 1865, shows us what progress had been made in his soul. This piece of familiar eloquence is a master-piece; it is [Pg 207] the testament of a patriot. I do not believe that any eulogy of the President would equal this page on which he had depicted himself in all his greatness and all his simplicity.... History is too often only a school of immorality. It shows us the victory of force or stratagem much more than the success of justice, moderation, and probity. It is too often only the apotheosis of triumphant selfishness. There are noble and great exceptions; happy those who can increase the number, and thus bequeath a noble and beneficent example to posterity! Mr. Lincoln is among these. He would willingly have repeated, after Franklin, that 'falsehood and artifice are the practice of fools who have not wit enough to be honest.' All his private life, and all his political life, were inspired and directed by this profound faith in the omnipotence of virtue. It is through this, again, that he deserves to be compared with Washington; it is through this that he will remain in history with the most glorious name that can be merited by the head of a free people—a name given him by his cotemporaries, and which will be preserved to him by posterity—that of Honest Abraham Lincoln."

A letter from the well-known French historian, Henri Martin, to the Paris Siècle, contained the following passages: "Lincoln will remain the austere and sacred personification of a great epoch, the most faithful expression of democracy. This simple and upright man, prudent and strong, elevated step by step from the artisan's bench to the command of a great nation, and always [Pg 208] without parade and without effort, at the height of his position; executing without precipitation, without flourish, and with invincible good sense, the most colossal acts; giving to the world this decisive example of the civil power in a republic; directing a gigantic war, without free institutions being for an instant compromised or threatened by military usurpation; dying, finally, at the moment when, after conquering, he was intent on pacification, ... this man will stand out, in the traditions of his country and the world, as an incarnation of the people, and of modern democracy itself. The great work of emancipation had to be sealed, therefore, with the blood of the just, even as it was inaugurated with the blood of the just. The tragic history of the abolition of slavery, which opened with the gibbet of John Brown, will close with the assassination of Lincoln.

"And now let him rest by the side of Washington, as the second founder of the great Republic. European democracy is present in spirit at his funeral, as it voted in its heart for his re-election, and applauded the victory in the midst of which he passed away. It will wish with one accord to associate itself with the monument that America will raise to him upon the capitol of prostrate slavery."

The London Globe, in commenting on Mr. Lincoln's assassination, said that he "had come nobly through a great ordeal. He had extorted the admiration even of his opponents, at least on this [Pg 209] side of the water. They had come to admire, reluctantly, his firmness, honesty, fairness and sagacity. He tried to do, and had done, what he considered his duty, with magnanimity."

The London Express said, "He had tried to show the world how great, how moderate, and how true he could be, in the moment of his great triumph."

The Liverpool Post said, "If ever there was a man who in trying times avoided offenses, it was Mr. Lincoln. If there ever was a leader in a civil contest who shunned acrimony and eschewed passion, it was he. In a time of much cant and affectation he was simple, unaffected, true, transparent. In a season of many mistakes he was never known to be wrong.... By a happy tact, not often so felicitously blended with pure evidence of soul, Abraham Lincoln knew when to speak, and never spoke too early or too late.... The memory of his statesmanship, translucent in the highest degree, and above the average, and openly faithful, more than almost any of this age has witnessed, to fact and right, will live in the hearts and minds of the whole Anglo-Saxon race, as one of the noblest examples of that race's highest qualities. Add to all this that Abraham Lincoln was the humblest and pleasantest of men, that he had raised himself from nothing, and that to the last no grain of conceit or ostentation was found in him, and there stands before the world a man whose like we shall not soon look upon again." [Pg 210]

In the remarks of M. Rouher, the French Minister, in the Legislative Assembly, on submitting to that Assembly the official despatch of the French Foreign Minister of the Chargé at Washington, M. Rouher remarked, of Mr. Lincoln's personal character, that he had exhibited "that calm firmness and indomitable energy which belong to strong minds, and are the necessary conditions of the accomplishment of great duties. In the hour of victory he exhibited generosity, moderation and conciliation."

And in the despatch, which was signed by Mr. Drouyn de L'Huys, were the following expressions: "Abraham Lincoln exhibited, in the exercise of the power placed in his hands, the most substantial qualities. In him, firmness of character was allied to elevation of principle.... In reviewing these last testimonies to his exalted wisdom, as well as the examples of good sense, of courage, and of patriotism, which he has given, history will not hesitate to place him in the rank of citizens who have the most honored their country."

In the Prussian Lower House, Herr Loewes, in speaking of the news of the assassination, said that Mr. Lincoln "performed his duties without pomp or ceremony, and relied on that dignity of his inner self alone, which is far above rank, orders and titles. He was a faithful servant, not less of his own commonwealth than of civilization, freedom and humanity."

[22] *By permission of Dana Estes Company.*

[Pg 211]

From 'THE GETTYSBURG ODE'

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

After the eyes that looked, the lips that spake
Here, from the shadows of impending death,
Those words of solemn breath,
What voice may fitly break
The silence, doubly hallowed, left by him?
We can but bow the head, with eyes grown dim,
And as a Nation's litany, repeat
The phrase his martyrdom hath made complete,
Noble as then, but now more sadly sweet:
"Let us, the Living, rather dedicate
Ourselves to the unfinished work, which they
Thus far advanced so nobly on its way,
And saved the perilled State!
Let us, upon this field where they, the brave,
Their last full measure of devotion gave,
Highly resolve they have not died in vain!—
That, under God, the Nation's later birth
Of Freedom, and the people's gain
Of their own Sovereignty, shall never wane
And perish from the circle of the earth!"
From such a perfect text, shall Song aspire
To light her faded fire,
And into wandering music turn
Its virtue, simple, sorrowful, and stern?
His voice all elegies anticipated;
For, whatsoe'er the strain,
We hear that one refrain:
"We consecrate ourselves to them, the Consecrated!"

[Pg 212]

[Transcriber's Note: Some of the poem omitted in original.]

TRIBUTES

Thank God for Abraham Lincoln! However lightly the words may sometimes pass your lips, let us speak them now and always of this man sincerely, solemnly, reverently, as so often dying soldiers and bereaved women and little children spoke them. Thank God for Abraham Lincoln—for the Lincoln who died and whose ashes rest at Springfield—for the Lincoln who lives in the hearts of the American people—in their widened sympathies and uplifted ideals. Thank God for the work he did, is doing, and is to do. Thank God for Abraham Lincoln.

James Willis Gleed.

Let us not then try to compare and to measure him with others, and let us not quarrel as to whether he was greater or less than Washington, as to whether either of them set to perform the other's task would have succeeded in it, or, perchance would have failed. Not only is the competition itself an ungracious one, but to make Lincoln a competitor is foolish and useless. He was the most individual man who ever lived; let us be content with this fact. Let us take him simply as Abraham Lincoln, singular and solitary, as we all see that he was; let us be thankful if we can make a niche big enough for him among the world's heroes, without worrying ourselves about the proportion which it may bear to other niches; and there let him remain forever, lonely, as in his strange lifetime, impressive, mysterious, unmeasured, and unsolved.

[Pg 213]

John T. Morse, Jr.

Those who are raised high enough to be able to look over the stone walls, those who are intelligent enough to take a broader view of things than that which is bounded by the lines of any one State or section, understand that the unity of the nation is of the first importance, and are

prepared to make those sacrifices and concessions, within the bounds of loyalty, which are necessary for its maintenance, and to cherish that temper of fraternal affection which alone can fill the form of national existence with the warm blood of life. The first man after the Civil War, to recognize this great principle and to act upon it was the head of the nation,—that large and generous soul whose worth was not fully felt until he was taken from his people by the stroke of the assassin, in the very hour when his presence was most needed for the completion of the work of reunion.

Henry Van Dyke.

[Pg 214]

LINCOLN

From *MacMillan's Magazine*, England

LINCOLN! When men would name a man
    Just, unperturbed, magnanimous,
Tried in the lowest seat of all,
    Tried in the chief seat of the house—

Lincoln! When men would name a man
    Who wrought the great work of his age,
Who fought and fought the noblest fight,
    And marshalled it from stage to stage,

Victorious, out of dusk and dark,
    And into dawn and on till day,
Most humble when the pæans rang,
    Least rigid when the enemy lay

Prostrated for his feet to tread—
    This name of Lincoln will they name,
A name revered, a name of scorn,
    Of scorn to sundry, not to fame.

Lincoln, the man who freed the slave;
    Lincoln whom never self enticed;
Slain Lincoln, worthy found to die
    A soldier of his captain Christ.

[Pg 215]

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

This man whose homely face you look upon,
Was one of Nature's masterful, great men;
Born with strong arms, that unfought battles won,
Direct of speech, and cunning with the pen.
Chosen for large designs, he had the art
Of winning with his humor, and he went
Straight to his mark, which was the human heart;
Wise, too, for what he could not break he bent.
Upon his back a more than Atlas-load,
The burden of the Commonwealth, was laid;
He stooped, and rose up to it, though the road
Shot suddenly downwards, not a whit dismayed.
Hold, warriors, councillors, kings! All now give place
To this dead Benefactor of the race!

Richard Henry Stoddard.

LINCOLN[23]

BY EDNA DEAN PROCTOR

Now must the storied Potomac
    Laurels for ever divide,
Now to the Sangamon fameless
    Give of its century's pride.
Sangamon, stream of the prairies,
    Placidly westward that flows,
Far in whose city of silence
    Calm he has sought his repose.
Over our Washington's river
    Sunrise beams rosy and fair,

[Pg 216]

Sunset on Sangamon fairer—
Father and martyr lies there.

Kings under pyramids slumber,
Sealed in the Lybian sands;
Princes in gorgeous cathedrals
Decked with the spoil of the lands
Kinglier, princelier sleeps he
Couched 'mid the prairies serene,
Only the turf and the willow
Him and God's heaven between!
Temple nor column to cumber
Verdure and bloom of the sod—
So, in the vale by Beth-peor,
Moses was buried of God.

Break into blossom, O prairies!
Snowy and golden and red;
Peers of the Palestine lilies
Heap for your glorious dead!
Roses as fair as of Sharon,
Branches as stately as palm,
Odors as rich as the spices—
Cassia and aloes and balm—
Mary the loved and Salome,
All with a gracious accord,
Ere the first glow of the morning
Brought to the tomb of the Lord

[Pg 217]

Wind of the West! breathe around him
Soft as the saddened air's sigh
When to the summit of Pisgah
Moses had journeyed to die.
Clear as its anthem that floated
Wide o'er the Moabite plain,
Low with the wail of the people
Blending its burdened refrain.
Rarer, O Wind! and diviner,—
Sweet as the breeze that went by
When, over Olivet's mountain,
Jesus was lost in the sky.

Not for thy sheaves nor savannas
Crown we thee, proud Illinois!
Here in his grave is thy grandeur;
Born of his sorrow thy joy.
Only the tomb by Mount Zion
Hewn for the Lord do we hold
Dearer than his in thy prairies,
Girdled with harvests of gold.
Still for the world, through the ages
Wreathing with glory his brow,
He shall be Liberty's Saviour—
Freedom's Jerusalem thou!

[23] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

[Pg 218]

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D[24]

BY WALT WHITMAN

I

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

II

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!

O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

[Pg 219]

III

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,

With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

IV

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.
Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life (for well, dear brother, I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die).

V

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray debris,
[Pg 220]
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass.
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

VI

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang,
[Pg 221]
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

VII

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you, O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first.
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you, O death).

VIII

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,

As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side (while the other stars all look'd on),
As we wander'd together the solemn night (for something, I know not what, kept me from sleep),
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe, [Pg 222]
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you, sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

IX

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer, bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star, my departing comrade holds and detains me.

X

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?
Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

[Pg 223]

XI

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

XII

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty, [Pg 224]
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading, bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

XIII

Sing on, sing on, you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on, dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon depart),
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

XIV

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers
preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests, [Pg 225]
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturb'd winds and the storms),
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of
children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals
and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets, how their throbbings throbb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then
and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.
Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of
companions,
I fled forth to the hiding, receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me, [Pg 226]
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come, lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother, always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all, [Pg 227]
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

From me to thee, glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies
wide,

Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death.

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XV

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading, filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs (and all in silence),
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

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XVI

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrade's hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the grey-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well.
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and cedars, dusk and dim.

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[24] *By permission of David McKay.*

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VII
THE WHOLE MAN

[Pg 233]

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE[25]

BY EDWIN MARKHAM

Revised especially for this volume.

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth,
Dashed through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixed a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and smell of elemental things—
The rectitude and patience of the rocks;
The good-will of the rain that falls for all;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The mercy of the snow that hides all scars;
The undelaying justice of the light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind— [Pg 234]
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky.

Born of the ground,
The Great West nursed him on her rugged knees.
Her rigors keyed the sinews of his will;
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind;
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
The tools were his first teachers, kindly stern.
The plow, the flail, the maul, the echoing ax
Taught him their homely wisdom, and their peace.
A rage for knowledge drove his restless mind:
He fed his spirit with the bread of books,
He slaked his thirst at all the wells of thought.
Hunger and hardship, penury and pain
Waylaid his youth and wrestled for his life.
They came to master, but he made them serve.

From prairie cabin up to Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To strike the stroke that rounds the perfect star.
The grip that swung the ax on Sangamon
Was on the pen that spelled Emancipation.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow,
The conscience of him testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.

So came the Captain with the thinking heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again [Pg 235]
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar green with boughs
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

From the Memorial Address to Congress on the

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY GEORGE BANCROFT

Senators, Representatives of America:

That God rules in the affairs of men is as certain as any truth of physical science. On the great moving power which is from the beginning hangs the world of the senses and the world of thought and action. Eternal wisdom marshals the great procession of the nations, working in patient continuity through the ages, never halting and never abrupt, encompassing all events in its oversight, and ever effecting its will, though mortals may slumber in apathy or oppose with madness. Kings are lifted up or thrown down, nations come and go, republics flourish and wither, dynasties pass away like a tale that is told; but nothing is by chance, though men, in their [Pg 236] ignorance of causes, may think so. The deeds of time are governed, as well as judged, by the decrees of eternity. The caprice of fleeting existences bends to the immovable omnipotence, which plants its foot on all the centuries and has neither change of purpose nor repose. Sometimes, like a messenger through the thick darkness of night, it steps along mysterious ways; but when the hour strikes for a people, or for mankind, to pass into a new form of being, unseen hands draw the bolts from the gates of futurity; an all-subsiding influence prepares the minds of men for the coming revolution; those who plan resistance find themselves in conflict with the will of Providence rather than with human devices; and all hearts and all understandings, most of all the opinions and influences of the unwilling, are wonderfully attracted and compelled to bear forward the change, which becomes more an obedience to the law of universal nature than submission to the arbitrament of man.

In the fulness of time a republic rose up in the wilderness of America. Thousands of years had passed away before this child of the ages could be born. From whatever there was of good in the systems of former centuries she drew her nourishment; the wrecks of the past were her warnings. With the deepest sentiment of faith fixed in her inmost nature, she disenthralled religion from bondage to temporal power, that her worship might be worship only in spirit and in truth. The wisdom which had passed from India through Greece, with what Greece had added of [Pg 237] her own; the jurisprudence of Rome; the mediæval municipalities; the Teutonic method of representation; the political experience of England; the benignant wisdom of the expositors of the law of nature and of nations in France and Holland, all shed on her their selectest influence. She washed the gold of political wisdom from the sands wherever it was found; she cleft it from the rocks; she gleaned it among ruins. Out of all the discoveries of statesmen and sages, out of all the experience of past human life, she compiled a perennial political philosophy, the primordial principles of national ethics. The wise men of Europe sought the best government in a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy; America went behind these names to extract from them the vital elements of social forms, and blend them harmoniously in the free commonwealth, which comes nearest to the illustration of the natural equality of all men. She intrusted the guardianship of established rights to law, the movements of reform to the spirit of the people, and drew her force from the happy reconciliation of both.

Republics had heretofore been limited to small cantons, or cities and their dependencies; America, doing that of which the like had not before been known upon the earth, or believed by kings and statesmen to be possible, extended her republic across a continent. Under her auspices the vine of liberty took deep root and filled the land; the hills were covered with its shadow, its boughs were like the goodly cedars, and reached unto both oceans. The fame of this only [Pg 238] daughter of freedom went out into all the lands of the earth; from her the human race drew hope.

Neither hereditary monarchy nor hereditary aristocracy planted itself on our soil; the only hereditary condition that fastened itself upon us was servitude. Nature works in sincerity, and is ever true to its law. The bee hives honey; the viper distils poison; the vine stores its juices, and so do the poppy and the upas. In like manner every thought and every action ripens its seed, each according to its kind. In the individual man, and still more in a nation, a just idea gives life, and progress, and glory; a false conception portends disaster, shame, and death. A hundred and twenty years ago a West Jersey Quaker wrote: "This trade of importing slaves is dark gloominess hanging over the land; the consequences will be grievous to posterity." At the North the growth of slavery was arrested by natural causes; in the region nearest the tropics it throve rankly, and worked itself into the organism of the rising States. Virginia stood between the two, with soil, and climate, and resources demanding free labor, yet capable of the profitable employment of the slave. She was the land of great statesmen, and they saw the danger of her being whelmed under the rising flood in time to struggle against the delusions of avarice and pride. Ninety-four years ago the legislature of Virginia addressed the British king, saying that the trade in slaves was "of great inhumanity," was opposed to the "security and happiness" of their constituents, "would in [Pg 239] time have the most destructive influence," and "endanger their very existence." And the king answered them that, "upon pain of his highest displeasure, the importation of slaves should not be in any respect obstructed." "Pharisaical Britain," wrote Franklin in behalf of Virginia, "to pride thyself in setting free a single slave that happened to land on thy coasts, while thy laws continue a traffic whereby so many hundreds of thousands are dragged into a slavery that is entailed on their posterity." "A serious view of this subject," said Patrick Henry in 1773, "gives a gloomy prospect to future times." In the same year George Mason wrote to the legislature of Virginia: "The laws of impartial Providence may avenge our injustice upon our posterity." Conforming his conduct to his convictions, Jefferson, in Virginia and in the Continental Congress, with the approval of Edmund Pendleton, branded the slave-trade as piracy; and he fixed in the Declaration of Independence, as the corner-stone of America: "All men are created equal, with an unalienable right to liberty." On the first organization of temporary governments for the continental domain, Jefferson, but for the default of New Jersey, would, in 1784, have consecrated every part of that territory to freedom. In the formation of the national Constitution, Virginia, opposed by a part of New England, vainly struggled to abolish the slave trade at once and forever; and when the ordinance of 1787 was introduced by Nathan Dane without the clause prohibiting slavery, it was [Pg 240]

through the favorable disposition of Virginia and the South that the clause of Jefferson was restored, and the whole northwestern territory—all the territory that then belonged to the nation—was reserved for the labor of freemen.

The hope prevailed in Virginia that the abolition of the slave-trade would bring with it the gradual abolition of slavery; but the expectation was doomed to disappointment. In supporting incipient measures for emancipation, Jefferson encountered difficulties greater than he could overcome, and, after vain wrestlings, the words that broke from him, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever," were words of despair. It was the desire of Washington's heart that Virginia should remove slavery by a public act; and as the prospects of a general emancipation grew more and more dim, he, in utter hopelessness of the action of the State, did all that he could by bequeathing freedom to his own slaves. Good and true men had, from the days of 1776, suggested the colonizing of the negro in the home of his ancestors; but the idea of colonization was thought to increase the difficulty of emancipation, and, in spite of strong support, while it accomplished much good for Africa, it proved impracticable as a remedy at home. Madison, who in early life disliked slavery so much that he wished "to depend as little as possible on the labor of slaves"; Madison, who held that where [Pg 241] slavery exists "the republican theory becomes fallacious"; Madison, who in the last years of his life would not consent to the annexation of Texas, lest his countrymen should fill it with slaves; Madison, who said, "slavery is the greatest evil under which the nation labors—a portentous evil—an evil, moral, political, and economical—a sad blot on our free country"—went mournfully into old age with the cheerless words: "No satisfactory plan has yet been devised for taking out the stain."

The men of the Revolution passed away; a new generation sprang up, impatient that an institution to which they clung should be condemned as inhuman, unwise, and unjust. In the throes of discontent at the self-reproach of their fathers, and blinded by the lustre of wealth to be acquired by the culture of a new staple, they devised the theory that slavery, which they would not abolish, was not evil, but good. They turned on the friends of colonization, and confidently demanded: "Why take black men from a civilized and Christian country, where their labor is a source of immense gain, and a power to control the markets of the world, and send them to a land of ignorance, idolatry, and indolence, which was the home of their forefathers, but not theirs? Slavery is a blessing. Were they not in their ancestral land naked, scarcely lifted above brutes, ignorant of the course of the sun, controlled by nature? And in their new abode have they not been taught to know the difference of the seasons, to plough, and plant, and reap, to drive oxen, to tame the horse, to exchange their scanty dialect for the richest of all the languages [Pg 242] among men, and the stupid adoration of follies for the purest religion? And since slavery is good for the blacks, it is good for their masters, bringing opulence and the opportunity of educating a race. The slavery of the black is good in itself; he shall serve the white man forever." And nature, which better understood the quality of fleeting interest and passion, laughed as it caught the echo, "man" and "forever!"

A regular development of pretensions followed the new declaration with logical consistency. Under the old declaration every one of the States had retained, each for itself, the right of manumitting all slaves by an ordinary act of legislation; now the power of the people over servitude through their legislatures was curtailed, and the privileged class was swift in imposing legal and constitutional obstructions of the people themselves. The power of emancipation was narrowed or taken away. The slave might not be disquieted by education. There remained an unconfessed consciousness that the system of bondage was wrong, and a restless memory that it was at variance with the true American tradition; its safety was therefore to be secured by political organization. The generation that made the Constitution took care for the predominance of freedom in Congress by the ordinance of Jefferson; the new school aspired to secure for slavery an equality of votes in the Senate, and while it hinted at an organic act that should concede to the collective South a veto power on national legislation, it assumed that each State [Pg 243] separately had the right to revise and nullify laws of the United States, according to the discretion of its judgment.

The new theory hung as a bias on the foreign relations of the country; there could be no recognition of Hayti, nor even of the American colony of Liberia; and the world was given to understand that the establishment of free labor in Cuba would be a reason for wresting that island from Spain. Territories were annexed—Louisiana, Florida, Texas, half of Mexico; slavery must have its share in them all, and it accepted for a time a dividing line between the unquestioned domain of free labor and that in which involuntary labor was to be tolerated. A few years passed away, and the new school, strong and arrogant, demanded and received an apology for applying the Jefferson proviso to Oregon.

The application of that proviso was interrupted for three administrations, but justice moved steadily onward. In the news that the men of California had chosen freedom, Calhoun heard the knell of parting slavery, and on his deathbed he counseled secession. Washington, and Jefferson, and Madison had died despairing of the abolition of slavery; Calhoun died in despair at the growth of freedom. His system rushed irresistibly to its natural development. The death-struggle for California was followed by a short truce; but the new school of politicians, who said that slavery was not evil, but good, soon sought to recover the ground they had lost, and, confident of [Pg 244] securing Kansas, they demanded that the established line in the Territories between freedom and slavery should be blotted out. The country, believing in the strength and enterprise and expansive energy of freedom, made answer, though reluctantly: "Be it so; let there be no strife

between brethren; let freedom and slavery compete for the Territories on equal terms, in a fair field, under an impartial administration"; and on this theory, if on any, the contest might have been left to the decision of time.

The South started back in appallment from its victory, for it knew that a fair competition foreboded its defeat. But where could it now find an ally to save it from its own mistake? What I have next to say is spoken with no emotion but regret. Our meeting to-day is, as it were, at the grave, in the presence of eternity, and the truth must be uttered in soberness and sincerity. In a great republic, as was observed more than two thousand years ago, any attempt to overturn the state owes its strength to aid from some branch of the government. The Chief Justice of the United States, without any necessity or occasion, volunteered to come to the rescue of the theory of slavery; and from his court there lay no appeal but to the bar of humanity and history. Against the Constitution, against the memory of the nation, against a previous decision, against a series of enactments, he decided that the slave is property; that slave property is entitled to no less protection than any other property; that the Constitution upholds it in every Territory against any [Pg 245] act of a local legislature, and even against Congress itself; or, as the President for that term tersely promulgated the saying, "Kansas is as much a slave State as South Carolina or Georgia; slavery, by virtue of the Constitution, exists in every Territory." The municipal character of slavery being thus taken away, and slave property decreed to be "sacred," the authority of the courts was invoked to introduce it by the comity of law into States where slavery had been abolished, and in one of the courts of the United States a judge pronounced the African slave-trade legitimate, and numerous and powerful advocates demanded its restoration.

Moreover, the Chief Justice, in his elaborate opinion, announced what had never been heard from any magistrate of Greece or Rome; what was unknown to civil law, and canon law, and feudal law, and common law, and constitutional law; unknown to Jay, to Rutledge, Ellsworth and Marshall—that there are "slave races." The spirit of evil is intensely logical. Having the authority of this decision, five States swiftly followed the earlier example of a sixth, and opened the way for reducing the free negro to bondage; the migrating free negro became a slave if he but entered within the jurisdiction of a seventh; and an eighth, from its extent, and soil, and mineral resources, destined to incalculable greatness, closed its eyes on its coming prosperity, and enacted, as by Taney's dictum it had the right to do, that every free black man who would live [Pg 246] within its limits must accept the condition of slavery for himself and his posterity.

Only one step more remained to be taken. Jefferson and the leading statesmen of his day held fast to the idea that the enslavement of the African was socially, morally and politically wrong. The new school was founded exactly upon the opposite idea; and they resolved, first, to distract the democratic party, for which the Supreme Court had now furnished the means, and then to establish a new government, with negro slavery for its corner-stone, as socially, morally, and politically right.

As the Presidential election drew on, one of the great traditional parties did not make its appearance; the other reeled as it sought to preserve its old position, and the candidate who most nearly represented its best opinion, driven by patriotic zeal, roamed the country from end to end to speak for union, eager, at least, to confront its enemies, yet not having hope that it would find its deliverance through him. The storm rose to a whirlwind; who would allay its wrath? The most experienced statesmen of the country had failed; there was no hope from those who were great after the flesh: could relief come from one whose wisdom was like the wisdom of little children?

The choice of America fell on a man born west of the Alleghenies, in the cabin of poor people of Hardin county, Kentucky—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

His mother could read, but not write; his father would do neither; but his parents sent him, with an old spelling-book, to school, and he learned in his childhood to do both. [Pg 247]

When eight years old he floated down the Ohio with his father on a raft, which bore the family and all their possessions to the shore of Indiana; and, child as he was, he gave help as they toiled through dense forests to the interior of Spencer County. There, in the land of free labor, he grew up in a log-cabin, with the solemn solitude for his teacher in his meditative hours. Of Asiatic literature he knew only the Bible; of Greek, Latin, and mediæval, no more than the translation of Æsop's Fables; of English, John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. The traditions of George Fox and William Penn passed to him dimly along the lines of two centuries through his ancestors, who were Quakers.

Otherwise his education was altogether American. The Declaration of Independence was his compendium of political wisdom, the Life of Washington his constant study, and something of Jefferson and Madison reached him through Henry Clay, whom he honored from boyhood. For the rest, from day to day, he lived the life of the American people, walked in its light, reasoned with its reason, thought with its power of thought, felt the beatings of its mighty heart, and so was in every way a child of nature, a child of the West, a child of America.

At nineteen, feeling impulses of ambition to get on in the world, he engaged himself to go down the Mississippi in a flatboat, receiving ten dollars a month for his wages, and afterwards he made [Pg 248] the trip once more. At twenty-one he drove his father's cattle as the family migrated to Illinois, and split rails to fence in the new homestead in the wild. At twenty-three he was a captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk war. He kept a store. He learned something of surveying, but of English literature he added to Bunyan nothing but Shakespeare's plays. At twenty-five he was elected to the legislature of Illinois, where he served eight years. At twenty-seven he was

admitted to the bar. In 1837 he chose his home in Springfield, the beautiful centre of the richest land in the State. In 1847 he was a member of the national Congress, where he voted about forty times in favor of the principle of the Jefferson proviso. In 1849 he sought, eagerly but unsuccessfully, the place of Commissioner of the Land Office, and he refused an appointment that would have transferred his residence to Oregon. In 1854 he gave his influence to elect from Illinois, to the American Senate, a Democrat, who would certainly do justice to Kansas. In 1858, as the rival of Douglas, he went before the people of the mighty Prairie State, saying, "This Union cannot permanently endure half slave and half free; the Union will not be dissolved, but the house will cease to be divided"; and now, in 1861, with no experience whatever as an executive officer, while States were madly flying from their orbit, and wise men knew not where to find counsel, this descendant of Quakers, this pupil of Bunyan, this offspring of the great West, was elected President of America. [Pg 249]

He measured the difficulty of the duty that devolved upon him, and was resolved to fulfil it. As on the eleventh of February, 1861, he left Springfield, which for a quarter of a century had been his happy home, to the crowd of his friends and neighbors, whom he was never more to meet, he spoke a solemn farewell: "I know not how soon I shall see you again. A duty has devolved upon me, greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since Washington. He never would have succeeded, except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. On the same Almighty Being I place my reliance. Pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain." To the men of Indiana he said: "I am but an accidental, temporary instrument; it is your business to rise up and preserve the Union and liberty." At the capital of Ohio he said: "Without a name, without a reason why I should have a name, there has fallen upon me a task such as did not rest even upon the Father of his country." At various places in New York, especially at Albany, before the legislature, which tendered him the united support of the great Empire State, he said: "While I hold myself the humblest of all the individuals who have ever been elevated to the Presidency, I have a more difficult task to perform than any of them. I bring a true heart to the work. I must rely upon the people of the whole country for support, and with their sustaining aid, even I, humble as I am, cannot fail to carry the ship of state safely through the storm." To the assembly of New Jersey, at [Pg 250] Trenton, he explained: "I shall take the ground I deem most just to the North, the East, the West, the South, and the whole country, in good temper, certainly with no malice to any section. I am devoted to peace, but it may be necessary to put the foot down firmly." In the old Independence Hall, of Philadelphia, he said: "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence, which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but to the world in all future time. If the country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I would rather be assassinated on the spot than surrender it. I have said nothing but what I am willing to live and die by."

Travelling, in the dead of night to escape assassination, LINCOLN arrived at Washington nine days before his inauguration. The outgoing President, at the opening of the session of Congress, had still kept as the majority of his advisors men engaged in treason; had declared that in case of even an "imaginary" apprehension of danger from notions of freedom among the slaves, "disunion would become inevitable." LINCOLN and others had questioned the opinion of Taney; such impugning he ascribed to the "factious temper of the times." The favorite doctrine of the majority of the Democratic party on the power of a territorial legislature over slavery he condemned as an attack on "the sacred rights of property." The State legislature, he insisted, must repeal what he [Pg 251] called "their unconstitutional and obnoxious enactments," and which, if such, were "null and void" or "it would be impossible for any human power to save the Union." Nay! if these unimportant acts were not repealed, "the injured States would be justified in revolutionary resistance to the government of the Union." He maintained that no State might secede at its sovereign will and pleasure; that the Union was meant for perpetuity, and that Congress might attempt to preserve it, but only by conciliation; that "the sword was not placed in their hands to preserve it by force"; that "the last desperate remedy of a despairing people would be an explanatory amendment recognizing the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States." The American Union he called "a confederacy" of States, and he thought it a duty to make the appeal for the amendment "before any of these States should separate themselves from the Union." The views of the Lieutenant-General, containing some patriotic advice, "conceded the right of secession," pronounced a quadruple rupture of the Union "a smaller evil than the reuniting of the fragments by the sword," and "eschewed the idea of invading a seceded State." After changes in the Cabinet, the President informed Congress that "matters were still worse"; that "the South suffered serious grievances," which should be redressed "in peace." The day after this message the flag of the Union was fired upon from Fort Morris, and the insult was not [Pg 252] revenged or noticed. Senators in Congress telegraphed to their constituents to seize the national forts, and they were not arrested. The finances of the country were grievously embarrassed. Its little army was not within reach; the part of it in Texas, with all its stores, was made over by its commander to rebels. One State after another voted in convention to secede. A peace congress, so called, met at the request of Virginia, to concert the terms of a capitulation which should secure permission for the continuance of the Union. Congress, in both branches, sought to devise conciliatory expedients; the territories of the country were organized in a manner not to conflict with any pretensions of the South, or any decision of the Supreme Court; and, nevertheless, the representatives of the rebellion formed at Montgomery a provisional government, and pursued their relentless purpose with such success that the Lieutenant-General feared the city of Washington might find itself "included in a foreign country," and proposed, among the options for the consideration of LINCOLN, to bid the wayward States "depart in peace." The great republic

appeared to have its emblem in the vast unfinished Capitol, at that moment surrounded by masses of stone and prostrate columns never yet lifted into their places, seemingly the moment of high but delusive aspirations, the confused wreck of inchoate magnificence, sadder than any ruin of Egyptian Thebes or Athens.

[Pg 253] The fourth of March came. With instinctive wisdom the new President, speaking to the people on taking the oath of office, put aside every question that divided the country, and gained a right to universal support by planting himself on the single idea of Union. The Union he declared to be unbroken and perpetual, and he announced his determination to fulfil "the simple duty of taking care that the laws be faithfully executed in all the States." Seven days later, the convention of Confederate States unanimously adopted a constitution of their own, and the new government was authoritatively announced to be founded on the idea that the negro race is a slave race; that slavery is its natural and normal condition. The issue was made up, whether the great republic was to maintain its providential place in the history of mankind, or a rebellion founded on negro slavery gain a recognition of its principle throughout the civilized world. To the disaffected LINCOLN had said, "You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors." To fire the passions of the southern portion of the people, the confederate government chose to become aggressors, and, on the morning of the twelfth of April, began the bombardment of Fort Sumter, and compelled its evacuation.

It is the glory of the late President that he had perfect faith in the perpetuity of the Union. Supported in advance by Douglas, who spoke as with the voice of a million, he instantly called a meeting of Congress, and summoned the people to come up and repossess the forts, places, and property which had been seized from the Union. The men of the North were trained in schools; [Pg 254] industrious and frugal; many of them delicately bred, their minds teeming with ideas and fertile in plans of enterprise; given to the culture of the arts; eager in the pursuit of wealth, yet employing wealth less for ostentation than for developing the resources of their country; seeking happiness in the calm of domestic life; and such lovers of peace, that for generations they had been reputed unwarlike. Now, at the cry of their country in its distress, they rose up with unappeasable patriotism; not hirelings—the purest and the best blood in the land. Sons of a pious ancestry, with a clear perception of duty, unclouded faith and fixed resolve to succeed, they thronged around the President, to support the wronged, the beautiful flag of the nation. The halls of theological seminaries sent forth their young men, whose lips were touched with eloquence, whose hearts kindled with devotion, to serve in the ranks, and make their way to command only as they learned the art of war. Striplings in the colleges, as well the most gentle and the most studious, those of sweetest temper and loveliest character and brightest genius, passed from their classes to the camp. The lumbermen from the forests, the mechanics from their benches, where they had been trained, by the exercise of political rights, to share the life and hope of the republic, to feel their responsibility to their forefathers, their posterity and mankind, went to the front, resolved that their dignity, as a constituent part of this republic, should not be impaired. [Pg 255] Farmers and sons of farmers left the land but half ploughed, the grain but half planted, and, taking up the musket, learned to face without fear the presence of peril and the coming of death in the shocks of war, while their hearts were still attracted to their herds and fields, and all the tender affections of home. Whatever there was of truth and faith and public love in the common heart, broke out with one expression. The mighty winds blew from every quarter, to fan the flame of the sacred and unquenchable fire.

For a time the war was thought to be confined to our own domestic affairs, but it was soon seen that it involved the destinies of mankind; its principles and causes shook the politics of Europe to the centre, and from Lisbon to Pekin divided the governments of the world.

There was a kingdom whose people had in an eminent degree attained to freedom of industry and the security of person and property. Its middle class rose to greatness. Out of that class sprung the noblest poets and philosophers, whose words built up the intellect of its people; skilful navigators, to find out for its merchants the many paths of the oceans; discoverers in natural science, whose inventions guided its industry to wealth, till it equalled any nation of the world in letters, and excelled all in trade and commerce. But its government was become a government of land, and not of men; every blade of grass was represented, but only a small minority of the people. In the transition from the feudal forms the heads of the social organization freed [Pg 256] themselves from the military services which were the conditions of their tenure, and, throwing the burden on the industrial classes, kept all the soil to themselves. Vast estates that had been managed by monasteries as endowments for religion and charity were impropriated to swell the wealth of courtiers and favorites; and the commons, where the poor man once had his right of pasture, were taken away, and, under forms of law, enclosed distributively within the domains of the adjacent landholders. Although no law forbade any inhabitant from purchasing land, the costliness of the transfer constituted a prohibition; so that it was the rule of the country that the plough should not be in the hands of its owner. The Church was rested on a contradiction; claiming to be an embodiment of absolute truth, it was a creature of the statute-book.

The progress of time increased the terrible contrast between wealth and poverty. In their years of strength the laboring people, cut off from all share in governing that state, derived a scant support from the severest toil, and had no hope for old age but in public charity or death. A grasping ambition had dotted the world with military posts, kept watch over our borders on the northeast, at the Bermudas, in the West Indies, appropriated the gates of the Pacific, of the Southern and of the Indian ocean, hovered on our northwest at Vancouver, held the whole of the newest continent, and the entrances to the old Mediterranean and Red Sea, and garrisoned forts [Pg 257]

all the way from Madras to China. That aristocracy had gazed with terror on the growth of a commonwealth where freeholders existed by the million, and religion was not in bondage to the state, and now they could not repress their joy at its perils. They had not one word of sympathy for the kind-hearted poor man's son whom America had chosen for her chief; they jeered at his large hands, and long feet, and ungainly stature; and the British secretary of state for foreign affairs made haste to send word through the places of Europe that the great republic was in its agony; that the republic was no more; that a headstone was all that remained due by the law of nations to "the late Union." But it is written, "Let the dead bury their dead"; they may not bury the living. Let the dead bury their dead; let a bill of reform remove the worn-out government of a class, and infuse new life into the British constitution by confiding rightful power to the people.

But while the vitality of America is indestructible, the British government hurried to do what never before had been done by Christian powers; what was in direct conflict with its own exposition of public law in the time of our struggle for independence. Though the insurgent States had not a ship in an open harbor, it invested them with all the rights of a belligerent, even on the ocean; and this, too, when the rebellion was not only directed against the gentlest and most beneficent government on earth, without a shadow of justifiable cause, but when the [Pg 258] rebellion was directed against human nature itself for the perpetual enslavement of a race. And the effect of this recognition was, that acts in themselves piratical found shelter in British courts of law. The resources of British capitalists, their workshops, their armories, their private arsenals, their shipyards, were in league with the insurgents, and every British harbor in the wide world became a safe port for British ships, manned by British sailors, and armed with British guns, to prey on our peaceful commerce; even on our ships coming from British ports, freighted with British products, or that had carried gifts of grain to the English poor. The prime minister, in the House of Commons, sustained by cheers, scoffed at the thought that their laws could be amended at our request, so as to preserve real neutrality; and to remonstrances, now owned to have been just, their secretary of state answered that they could not change their laws ad infinitum.

The people of America then wished, as they always have wished, as they still wish, friendly relations with England, and no man in England or America can desire it more strongly than I. This country has always yearned for good relations with England. Thrice only in all its history has that yearning been fairly met: in the days of Hampden and Cromwell, again in the first ministry of the elder Pitt, and once again in the ministry of Shelburne. Not that there have not at all times been just men among the peers of Britain—like Halifax in the days of James the Second, or a [Pg 259] Granville, an Argyll, or a Houghton in ours; and we cannot be indifferent to a country that produces statesmen like Cobden and Bright; but the best bower anchor of peace was the working class of England, who suffered most from our civil war, but who, while they broke their diminished bread in sorrow, always encouraged us to persevere.

The act of recognizing the rebel belligerents was concerted with France—France, so beloved in America, on which she had conferred the greatest benefits that one people ever conferred on another; France, which stands foremost on the continent of Europe for the solidity of her culture, as well as for the bravery and generous impulses of her sons; France, which for centuries had been moving steadily in her own way towards intellectual and political freedom. The policy regarding further colonization of America by European powers, known commonly as the doctrine of Monroe, had its origin in France, and if it takes any man's name, should bear the name of Turgot. It was adopted by Louis the Sixteenth, in the cabinet of which Vergennes was the most important member. It is emphatically the policy of France, to which, with transient deviations, the Bourbons, the first Napoleon, the House of Orleans have adherred.

The late President was perpetually harassed by rumors that the Emperor Napoleon the Third desired formally to recognize the States in rebellion as an independent power, and that England held him back by her reluctance, or France by her traditions of freedom, or he himself by his own [Pg 260] better judgment and clear perception of events. But the republic of Mexico, on our borders, was, like ourselves, distracted by a rebellion, and from a similar cause. The monarchy of England had fastened upon us slavery which did not disappear with independence; in like manner, the ecclesiastical policy established by the Spanish council of the Indies, in the days of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, retained its vigor in the Mexican republic.

The fifty years of civil war under which she had languished was due to the bigoted system which was the legacy of monarchy, just as here the inheritance of slavery kept alive political strife, and culminated in civil war. As with us there could be no quiet but through the end of slavery, so in Mexico there could be no prosperity until the crushing tyranny of intolerance should cease. The party of slavery in the United States sent their emissaries to Europe to solicit aid; and so did the party of the Church in Mexico, as organized by the old Spanish council of the Indies, but with a different result. Just as the Republican party had made an end of the rebellion, and was establishing the best government ever known in that region, and giving promise to the nation of order, peace, and prosperity, word was brought us, in the moment of our deepest affliction, that the French Emperor, moved by a desire to erect in North America a buttress for imperialism, would transform the republic of Mexico into a secundo-geniture for the House of Hapsburg. America might complain; she could not then interpose, and delay seemed justifiable. It [Pg 261] was seen that Mexico could not, with all its wealth of land, compete in cereal products with our northwest, nor in tropical products with Cuba, nor could it, under a disputed dynasty, attract capital, or create public works, or develop mines, or borrow money; so that the imperial system of Mexico, which was forced at once to recognize the wisdom of the policy of the republic by

adopting it, could prove only an unremunerating drain on the French treasury for the support of an Austrian adventurer.

Meantime a new series of momentous questions grows up, and forces itself on the consideration of the thoughtful. Republicanism has learned how to introduce into its constitution every element of order, as well as every element of freedom; but thus far the continuity of its government has seemed to depend on the continuity of elections. It is now to be considered how perpetuity is to be secured against foreign occupation. The successor of Charles the First of England dated his reign from the death of his father; the Bourbons, coming back after a long series of revolutions, claimed that the Louis who became king was the eighteenth of that name. The present Emperor of the French, disdaining a title from election alone, calls himself Napoleon the Third. Shall a republic have less power of continuance when invading armies prevent a peaceful resort to the ballot-box? What force shall it attach to intervening legislation? What validity to debts contracted for its overthrow? These momentous questions are, by the invasion of [Pg 262] Mexico, thrown up for solution. A free State once truly constituted should be as undying as its people: the republic of Mexico must rise again.

It was the condition of affairs in Mexico that involved the Pope of Rome in our difficulties so far that he alone among sovereigns recognized the chief of the Confederate States as a president, and his supporters as a people; and in letters to two great prelates of the Catholic Church in the United States gave counsels for peace at a time when peace meant the victory of secession. Yet events move as they are ordered. The blessing of the Pope at Rome on the head of Duke Maximilian could not revive in the nineteenth century the ecclesiastical policy of the sixteenth, and the result is only a new proof that there can be no prosperity in the State without religious freedom.

When it came home to the consciousness of the Americans that the war which they were waging was a war for the liberty of all the nations of the world, for freedom itself, they thanked God for giving them strength to endure the severity of the trial to which He put their sincerity, and nerved themselves for their duty with an inexorable will. The President was led along by the greatness of their self-sacrificing example, and as a child, in a dark night, on a rugged way, catches hold of the hand of its father for guidance and support, he clung fast to the hand of the people, and moved calmly through the gloom. While the statesmanship of Europe was mocking at [Pg 263] the hopeless vanity of their efforts, they put forth such miracles of energy as the history of the world had never known. The contributions to the popular loans amounted in four years to twenty-seven and a half hundred millions of dollars; the revenue of the country from taxation was increased sevenfold. The navy of the United States, drawing into the public service the willing militia of the seas, doubled its tonnage in eight months, and established an actual blockade from Cape Hatteras to the Rio Grande; in the course of the war it was increased five-fold in men and in tonnage, while the inventive genius of the country devised more effective kinds of ordnance, and new forms of naval architecture in wood and iron. There went into the field, for various terms of enlistment, about two million men, and in March last the men in the army exceeded a million: that is to say, nine of every twenty able-bodied men in the free Territories and States took some part in the war; and at one time every fifth of their able-bodied men was in service. In one single month one hundred and sixty-five thousand men were recruited into service. Once, within four weeks, Ohio organized and placed in the field forty-two regiments of infantry—nearly thirty-six thousand men; and Ohio was like other States in the East and in the West. The well-mounted cavalry numbered eighty-four thousand; of horses and mules there were bought, from first to last, two-thirds of a million. In the movements of troops science came in aid of patriotism, so that, to [Pg 264] choose a single instance out of many, an army twenty-three thousand strong, with its artillery, trains, baggage, and animals, were moved by rail from the Potomac to the Tennessee, twelve hundred miles, in seven days. On the long marches, wonders of military construction bridged the rivers, and wherever an army halted, ample supplies awaited them at their ever-changing base. The vile thought that life is the greatest of blessings did not rise up. In six hundred and twenty-five battles and severe skirmishes blood flowed like water. It streamed over the grassy plains; it stained the rocks; the undergrowth of the forests was red with it; and the armies marched on with majestic courage from one conflict to another, knowing that they were fighting for God and liberty. The organization of the medical department met its infinitely multiplied duties with exactness and despatch. At the news of a battle, the best surgeons of our cities hastened to the field, to offer the untiring aid of the greatest experience and skill. The gentlest and most refined of women left homes of luxury and ease to build hospital tents near the armies, and serve as nurses to the sick and dying. Beside the large supply of religious teachers by the public, the congregations spared to their brothers in the field the ablest ministers. The Christian Commission, which expended more than six and a quarter millions, sent nearly five thousand clergymen, chosen out of the best, to keep unsoiled the religious character of the men, and made gifts of clothes and food and medicine. The organization of private charity assumed unheard-of [Pg 265] dimensions. The Sanitary Commission, which had seven thousand societies, distributed, under the direction of an unpaid board, spontaneous contributions to the amount of fifteen millions in supplies or money—a million and a half in money from California alone—and dotted the scene of war, from Paducah to Port Royal, from Belle Plain, Virginia, to Brownsville, Texas, with homes and lodges.

The country had for its allies the river Mississippi, which would not be divided, and the range of mountains which carried the stronghold of the free through Western Virginia and Kentucky and Tennessee to the highlands of Alabama. But it invoked the still higher power of immortal justice. In ancient Greece, where servitude was the universal custom, it was held that if a child were to

strike its parent, the slave should defend the parent, and by that act recover his freedom. After vain resistance, LINCOLN, who had tried to solve the question by gradual emancipation, by colonization, and by compensation, at last saw that slavery must be abolished, or the republic must die; and on the first day of January, 1863, he wrote liberty on the banners of the armies. When this proclamation, which struck the fetters from three millions of slaves, reached Europe, Lord Russell, a countryman of Milton and Wilberforce, eagerly put himself forward to speak of it in the name of mankind, saying: "It is of a very strange nature"; "a measure of war of a very questionable kind"; an act "of vengeance on the slave owner," that does no more than "profess to [Pg 266] emancipate slaves where the United States authorities cannot make emancipation a reality." Now there was no part of the country embraced in the proclamation where the United States could not and did not make emancipation a reality. Those who saw LINCOLN most frequently had never before heard him speak with bitterness of any human being, but he did not conceal how keenly he felt that he had been wronged by Lord Russell. And he wrote, in reply to other cavils: "The emancipation policy and the use of colored troops were the greatest blows yet dealt to the rebellion; the job was a great national one, and let none be slighted who bore an honorable part in it. I hope peace will come soon, and come to stay; then will there be some black men who can remember that they have helped mankind to this great consummation."

The proclamation accomplished its end, for, during the war, our armies came into military possession of every State in rebellion. Then, too, was called forth the new power that comes from the simultaneous diffusion of thought and feeling among the nations of mankind. The mysterious sympathy of the millions throughout the world was given spontaneously. The best writers of Europe waked the conscience of the thoughtful, till the intelligent moral sentiment of the Old World was drawn to the side of the unlettered statesman of the West. Russia, whose emperor had just accomplished one of the grandest acts in the course of time, by raising twenty millions of [Pg 267] bondmen into freeholders, and thus assuring the growth and culture of a Russian people, remained our unwavering friend. From the oldest abode of civilization, which gave the first example of an imperial government with equality among the people, Prince Kung, the secretary of state for foreign affairs, remembered the saying of Confucius, that we should not do to others what we would not that others should do to us, and, in the name of his emperor, read a lesson to European diplomatists by closing the ports of China against the warships and privateers of "the seditious."

The war continued, with all the peoples of the world, for anxious spectators. Its cares weighed heavily on LINCOLN, and his face was ploughed with the furrows of thought and sadness. With malice towards none, free from the spirit of revenge, victory made him importunate for peace, and his enemies never doubted his word, or despaired of his abounding clemency. He longed to utter pardon as the word for all, but not unless the freedom of the negro should be assured. The grand battles of Fort Donelson, Chattanooga, Malvern Hill, Antietam, Gettysburg, the Wilderness of Virginia, Winchester, Nashville, the capture of New Orleans, Vicksburg, Mobile, Fort Fisher, the march from Atlanta, and the capture of Savannah and Charleston, all foretold the issue. Still more, the self-regeneration of Missouri, the heart of the continent; of Maryland, whose sons never heard the midnight bells chime so sweetly as when they rang out to earth and heaven that, [Pg 268] by the voice of her own people, she took her place among the free; of Tennessee, which passed through fire and blood, through sorrows and the shadow of death, to work out her own deliverance, and by the faithfulness of her own sons to renew her youth like the eagle—proved that victory was deserved, and would be worth all that it cost. If words of mercy, uttered as they were by LINCOLN on the waters of Virginia, were defiantly repelled, the armies of the country, moving with one will, went as the arrow to its mark, and, without a feeling of revenge, struck the death-blow at rebellion.

Where, in the history of nations, had a Chief Magistrate possessed more sources of consolation and joy than LINCOLN? His countrymen had shown their love by choosing him to a second term of service. The raging war that had divided the country had lulled, and private grief was hushed by the grandeur of the result. The nation had its new birth of freedom, soon to be secured forever by an amendment of the Constitution. His persistent gentleness had conquered for him a kindlier feeling on the part of the South. His scoffers among the grandees of Europe began to do him honor. The laboring classes everywhere saw in his advancement their own. All peoples sent him their benedictions. And at this moment of the height of his fame, to which his humility and modesty added charms, he fell by the hand of the assassin, and the only triumph awarded him was the march to the grave. [Pg 269]

This is no time to say that human glory is but dust and ashes; that we mortals are no more than shadows in pursuit of shadows. How mean a thing were man if there were not that within him which is higher than himself; if he could not master the illusions of sense, and discern the connexions of events by a superior light which comes from God! He so shares the divine impulses that he has power to subject ambition to the ennoblement of his kind. Not in vain has LINCOLN lived, for he has helped to make this republic an example of justice, with no caste but the caste of humanity. The heroes who led our armies and ships into battle and fell in the service—Lyon, McPherson, Reynolds, Sedgwick, Wadsworth, Foote, Ward, with their compeers—did not die in vain; they and the myriads of nameless martyrs, and he, the chief martyr, gave up their lives willingly "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

The assassination of LINCOLN, who was so free from malice, has, by some mysterious influence, struck the country with solemn awe, and hushed, instead of exciting, the passion for

revenge. It seems as if the just had died for the unjust. When I think of the friends I have lost in this war—and every one who hears me has, like myself, lost some of those whom he most loved—there is no consolation to be derived from victims on the scaffold, or from anything but the established union of the regenerated nation.

In his character LINCOLN was through and through an American. He is the first native of the region west of the Alleghenies to attain to the highest station; and how happy it is that the man who was brought forward as the natural outgrowth and first fruits of that region should have been of unblemished purity in private life, a good son, a kind husband, a most affectionate father, and, as a man, so gentle to all. As to integrity, Douglas, his rival, said of him: "Lincoln is the honestest man I ever knew." [Pg 270]

The habits of his mind were those of meditation and inward thought, rather than of action. He delighted to express his opinions by an apothegm, illustrate them by a parable, or drive them home by a story. He was skilful in analysis, discerned with precision the central idea on which a question turned, and knew how to disengage it and present it by itself in a few homely, strong old English words that would be intelligible to all. He excelled in logical statements more than in executive ability. He reasoned clearly, his reflective judgment was good, and his purposes were fixed; but, like the Hamlet of his only poet, his will was tardy in action, and, for this reason, and not from humility or tenderness of feeling, he sometimes deplored that the duty which devolved on him had not fallen to the lot of another.

LINCOLN gained a name by discussing questions which, of all others, most easily lead to fanaticism; but he was never carried away by enthusiastic zeal, never indulged in extravagant language, never hurried to support extreme measures, never allowed himself to be controlled by sudden impulses. During the progress of the election at which he was chosen President he expressed no opinion that went beyond the Jefferson proviso of 1784. Like Jefferson and Lafayette, he had faith in the intuitions of the people, and read those intuitions with rare sagacity. He knew how to bide time, and was less apt to run ahead of public thought than to lag behind. He never sought to electrify the community by taking an advanced position with a banner of opinion, but rather studied to move forward compactly, exposing no detachment in front or rear; so that the course of his administration might have been explained as the calculating policy of a shrewd and watchful politician, had there not been seen behind it a fixedness of principle which from the first determined his purpose, and grew more intense with every year, consuming his life by its energy. Yet his sensibilities were not acute; he had no vividness of imagination to picture to his mind the horrors of the battlefield or the sufferings in hospitals; his conscience was more tender than his feelings. [Pg 271]

LINCOLN was one of the most unassuming of men. In time of success, he gave credit for it to those whom he employed, to the people, and to the Providence of God. He did not know what ostentation is; when he became President he was rather saddened than elated, and conduct and manners showed more than ever his belief that all men are born equal. He was no respecter of persons, and neither rank, nor reputation, nor services overawed him. In judging of character he failed in discrimination, and his appointments were sometimes bad; but he readily deferred to public opinion, and in appointing the head of the armies he followed the manifest preference of Congress. [Pg 272]

A good President will secure unity to his administration by his own supervision of the various departments. LINCOLN, who accepted advice readily, was never governed by any member of his cabinet, and could not be moved from a purpose deliberately formed; but his supervision of affairs was unsteady and incomplete, and sometimes, by a sudden interference transcending the usual forms, he rather confused than advanced the public business. If he ever failed in the scrupulous regard due to the relative rights of Congress, it was so evidently without design that no conflict could ensue, or evil precedent be established. Truth he would receive from any one, but when impressed by others, he did not use their opinions till, by reflection, he had made them thoroughly his own.

It was the nature of LINCOLN to forgive. When hostilities ceased, he, who had always sent forth the flag with every one of its stars in the field, was eager to receive back his returning countrymen, and meditated "some new announcement to the South." The amendment of the Constitution abolishing slavery had his most earnest and unwearied support. During the rage of war we get a glimpse into his soul from his privately suggesting to Louisiana, that "in defining the franchise some of the colored people might be let in," saying: "They would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom." In 1857 he avowed himself "not in favor of" what he improperly called "negro citizenship," for the Constitution discriminates between citizens and electors. Three days before his death he declared his preference that "the elective franchise were now conferred on the very intelligent of the colored men, and on those of them who served our cause as soldiers"; but he wished it done by the States themselves, and he never harbored the thought of exacting it from a new government, as a condition of its recognition. [Pg 273]

The last day of his life beamed with sunshine, as he sent, by the Speaker of this House, his friendly greetings to the men of the Rocky mountains and the Pacific slope; as he contemplated the return of hundreds of thousands of soldiers to fruitful industry; as he welcomed in advance hundreds of thousands of emigrants from Europe; as his eye kindled with enthusiasm at the coming wealth of the nation. And so, with these thoughts for his country, he was removed from the toils and temptations of this life, and was at peace.

Hardly had the late President been consigned to the grave when the prime minister of England died, full of years and honors. Palmerston traced his lineage to the time of the conqueror; LINCOLN went back only to his grandfather. Palmerston received his education from the best scholars of Harrow, Edinburg, and Cambridge; LINCOLN'S early teachers were the silent forests, the prairie, the river, and the stars. Palmerston was in public life for sixty years; LINCOLN for [Pg 274] but a tenth of that time. Palmerston was a skilful guide of an established aristocracy; LINCOLN a leader, or rather a companion, of the people. Palmerston was exclusively an Englishman, and made his boast in the House of Commons that the interest of England was his Shibboleth; LINCOLN thought always of mankind, as well as his own country, and served human nature itself. Palmerston, from his narrowness as an Englishman, did not endear his country to any one court or to any one nation, but rather caused general uneasiness and dislike; LINCOLN left America more beloved than ever by all the peoples of Europe. Palmerston was self-possessed and adroit in reconciling the conflicting factions of the aristocracy; LINCOLN, frank and ingenuous, knew how to poise himself on the ever-moving opinions of the masses. Palmerston was capable of insolence towards the weak, quick to the sense of honor, not heedful of right; LINCOLN rejected counsel given only as a matter of policy, and was not capable of being wilfully unjust. Palmerston, essentially superficial, delighted in banter, and knew how to divert grave opposition by playful levity; LINCOLN was a man of infinite jest on his lips with saddest earnestness at his heart. Palmerston was a fair representative of the aristocratic liberality of the day, choosing for his tribunal, not the conscience of humanity, but the House of Commons; LINCOLN took to heart the eternal truths of liberty, obeyed them as the commands of Providence, and accepted the human [Pg 275] race as the judge of his fidelity. Palmerston did nothing that will endure; LINCOLN finished a work which all time cannot overthrow. Palmerston is a shining example of the ablest of a cultivated aristocracy; LINCOLN is the genuine fruit of institutions where the laboring man shares and assists to form the great ideas and designs of his country. Palmerston was buried in Westminster Abbey by the order of his Queen, and was attended by the British aristocracy to his grave, which, after a few years, will hardly be noticed by the side of the graves of Fox and Chatham; LINCOLN was followed by the sorrow of his country across the continent to his resting-place in the heart of the Mississippi valley, to be remembered through all time by his countrymen, and by all the peoples of the world.

As the sum of all, the hand of LINCOLN raised the flag; the American people was the hero of the war; and, therefore, the result is a new era of republicanism. The disturbances in the country grew not out of anything republican, but out of slavery, which is a part of the system of hereditary wrong; and the expulsion of this domestic anomaly opens to the renovated nation a career of unthought of dignity and glory. Henceforth our country has a moral unity as the land of free labor. The party for slavery and the party against slavery are no more, and are merged in the party of Union and freedom. The States which would have left us are not brought back as [Pg 276] subjugated States, for then we should hold them only so long as that conquest could be maintained; they come to their rightful place under the constitution as original, necessary, and inseparable members of the Union.

We build monuments to the dead, but no monuments of victory. We respect the example of the Romans, who never, even in conquered lands, raised emblems of triumph. And our generals are not to be classed in the herd of vulgar warriors, but are of the school of Timoleon, and William of Nassau, and Washington. They have used the sword only to give peace to their country and restore her to her place in the great assembly of the nations.

SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES of America: as I bid you farewell, my last words shall be words of hope and confidence; for now slavery is no more, the Union is restored, a people begins to live according to the laws of reason, and republicanism is intrenched in a continent.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY GOLDWIN SMITH

Abraham Lincoln is assuredly one of the marvels of history. No land but America has produced his like. This destined chief of a nation in its most perilous hour was the son of a thriftless and wandering settler. He had a strong and eminently fair understanding, with great powers of [Pg 277] patient thought, which he cultivated by the study of Euclid. In all his views there was the simplicity of his character. Both as an advocate and as a politician he was "Honest Abe." As an advocate he would throw up his brief when he knew that his case was bad. He said himself that he had not controlled events, but had been guided by them. To know how to be guided by events, however, if it is not imperial genius, is practical wisdom. Lincoln's goodness of heart, his sense of duty, his unselfishness, his freedom from vanity, his long suffering, his simplicity, were never disturbed either by power or by opposition. To the charge of levity no man could be less open. Though he trusted in Providence, care for the public and sorrow for the public calamities filled his heart and sat visibly upon his brow. His State papers are excellent, not only as public documents, but as compositions, and are distinguished by their depth of human feeling and tenderness, from those of other statesmen. He spoke always from his own heart to the heart of the people. His brief funeral oration over the graves of those who had fallen in the war is one of the gems of the language. [Pg 278]

GREATNESS OF HIS SIMPLICITY

He was uneducated, as that term goes to-day, and yet he gave statesmen and educators things to think about for a hundred years to come. Beneath the awkward, angular and diffident frame beat one of the noblest, largest, tenderest hearts that ever swelled in aspiration for truth, or longed to accomplish a freeman's duty. He might have lacked in that acute analysis which knows the "properties of matter," but he knew the passions, emotions, and weaknesses of men; he knew their motives. He had the genius to mine men and strike easily the rich ore of human nature. He was poor in this world's goods, and I prize gratefully a fac-simile letter lying among the treasures of my study written by Mr. Lincoln to an old friend, requesting the favor of a small loan, as he had entered upon that campaign of his that was not done until death released the most steadfast hero of that cruel war. Men speculate as to his religion. It was the religion of the seer, the hero, the patriot, and the lover of his race and time. Amid the political idiocy of the times, the corruption in high places, the dilettante culture, the vaporings of wild and helpless theorists, in this swamp of political quagmire, O Lincoln, it is refreshing to think of thee! [Pg 279]

HORACE GREELEY'S ESTIMATE OF LINCOLN

From "Greeley on Lincoln"

When I last saw him, some five or six weeks before his death, his face was haggard with care, and seamed with thought and trouble. It looked care-ploughed, tempest-tossed, weather-beaten, as if he were some tough old mariner, who had for years been beating up against the wind and tide, unable to make his port or find safe anchorage. Judging from that scathed, rugged countenance, I do not believe he could have lived out his second term had no felon hand been lifted against his priceless life.

The chief moral I deduce from his eventful career asserts

> The might that slumbers in a peasant's arm!

the majestic heritage, the measureless opportunity, of the humblest American youth. Here was an heir of poverty and insignificance, obscure, untaught, buried throughout his childhood in the frontier forests, with no transcendent, dazzling abilities, such as make their way in any country, under any institutions, but emphatically in intellect, as in station, one of the millions of strivers for a rude livelihood, who, though attaching himself stubbornly to the less popular party, and especially so in the State which he has chosen as his home, did nevertheless become a central figure of the Western Hemisphere, and an object of honor, love, and reverence throughout the [Pg 280] civilized world. Had he been a genius, an intellectual prodigy, like Julius Caesar, or Shakespeare, or Mirabeau, or Webster, we might say: "This lesson is not for us—with such faculties any one could achieve and succeed"; but he was not a born king of men, ruling by the resistless might of his natural superiority, but a child of the people, who made himself a great persuader, therefore a leader by dint of firm resolve, and patient effort, and dogged perseverance. He slowly won his way to eminence and renown by ever doing the work that lay next to him—doing it with all his growing might—doing it as well as he could, and learning by his failure, when failure was encountered, how to do it better. Wendell Phillips once coarsely said, "He grew because we watered him"; which was only true in so far as this—he was open to all impressions and influences, and gladly profited by all the teachings of events and circumstances, no matter how adverse or unwelcome. There was probably no year of his life in which he was not a wiser, larger, better man than he had been the year preceding. It was of such a nature—patient, plodding, sometimes groping, but ever towards the light—that Tennyson sings:

> Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
> At last he beat his music out.
> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds.

[Pg 281]

There are those who profess to have been always satisfied with his conduct of the war, deeming it prompt, energetic, vigorous, masterly. I did not, and could not, so regard it. I believed then—I believe this hour,—that a Napoleon I., a Jackson, would have crushed secession out in a single short campaign—almost in a single victory. I believed that an advance to Richmond 100,000 strong might have been made by the end of June, 1861; that would have insured a counter-revolution throughout the South, and a voluntary return of every State, through a dispersion and disavowal of its rebel chiefs, to the councils and the flag of the Union. But such a return would have not merely left slavery intact—it would have established it on firmer foundations than ever before. The momentarily alienated North and South would have fallen on each other's necks, and, amid tears and kisses, have sealed their reunion by ignominiously making the Black the scapegoat of their bygone quarrel, and wreaking on him the spite which they had purposed to expend on each other. But God had higher ends, to which a Bull Run, a Ball's Bluff, a Gaines's Mill, a Groveton, were indispensable: and so they came to pass, and were endured and profited by. The Republic needed to be passed through chastening, purifying fires of adversity and suffering: so these came and did their work and the verdure of a new national life springs greenly, luxuriantly, from their ashes. Other men were helpful to the great renovation, and nobly did their part in it; yet, looking back through the lifting mists of seven eventful, tragic, trying, [Pg 282] glorious years, I clearly discern that the one providential leader, the indispensable hero of the

great drama—faithfully reflecting even in his hesitations and seeming vacillations the sentiment of the masses—fitted by his very defects and shortcomings for the burden laid upon him, the good to be wrought out through him, was Abraham Lincoln.

LINCOLN

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE

Heroic soul, in homely garb half hid,
Sincere, sagacious, melancholy, quaint;
What he endured, no less than what he did,
Has reared his monument, and crowned him saint.

THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN[26]

BY B. B. TYLER

In 1865, the bullet of an assassin suddenly terminated the life among men of one who was an honor to his race. He was great and good. He was great because he was good. Lincoln's religious [Pg 283] character was the one thing which, above all other features of his unique mental and moral as well as physical personality, lifted him above his fellow men.

Because an effort has been made to parade Abraham Lincoln as an unbeliever, I have been led to search carefully for the facts in his life bearing on this point. The testimony seems to be almost entirely, if not altogether, on one side. I cannot account for the statement which William H. Herndon makes in his life of the martyred President, that, "Mr. Lincoln had no faith." For twenty-five years Mr. Herndon was Abraham Lincoln's law partner in Springfield, Ill. He had the best opportunities to know Abraham Lincoln. When, however, he affirms that "Mr. Lincoln had no faith," he speaks without warrant. It is simply certain that he uses words in their usually accepted signification, although his statement concerning Lincoln is not true.

Abraham Lincoln was a man of profound faith. He believed in God. He believed in Christ. He believed in the Bible. He believed in men. His faith made him great. His life is a beautiful commentary on the words, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." There was a time in Lincoln's experience when his faith faltered, as there was a time when his reason tottered, but these sad experiences were temporary, and Abraham Lincoln was neither an infidel nor a lunatic. It is easy to trace in the life of this colossal character, a steady growth of faith. This [Pg 284] grace in him increased steadily in breadth and in strength with the passing years, until it came to pass that his last public utterances show forth the confidence and the fire of an ancient Hebrew prophet.

It is true that Lincoln never united with the Church, although a lifelong and regular attendant on its services. He had a reason for occupying a position outside the fellowship of the Church of Christ as it existed in his day and in his part of the world. This reason Lincoln did not hesitate to declare. He explained on one occasion that he had never become a church member because he did not like and could not in conscience subscribe to the long and frequently complicated statements of Christian doctrines which characterized the confessions of the Churches. He said: "When any Church will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that Church will I join with all my heart and soul."

Abraham Lincoln in these words recognizes the central figure of the Bible, Jesus of Nazareth, as "the Saviour." He recognizes God as the supreme Lawgiver, and expresses readiness, while eschewing theological subtleties, to submit heart and soul to the supreme Lawgiver of the universe. His faith, according to this language, goes out manward as well as Godward. He [Pg 285] believed not only in God, but he believed in man as well, and this Christianity, according to Christ, requires of all disciples of the great Teacher.

About a year before his assassination Lincoln, in a letter to Joshua Speed, said: "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a better man." He saw and declared that the teaching of the Bible had a tendency to improve character. He had a right view of this sacred literature. Its purpose is character building.

Leonard Swett, who knew Abraham Lincoln well, said at the unveiling of the Chicago monument that Lincoln "believed in God as the supreme ruler of the universe, the guide of men, and the controller of the great events and destinies of mankind. He believed himself to be an instrument and leader in this country of the force of freedom."

From this it appears that his belief was not merely theoretical, but that it was practical. He regarded himself as an instrument, as Moses was an instrument in the hands of Almighty God, to lead men into freedom.

It was after his election, in the autumn of 1860, and but a short time before his inauguration as

President of the United States, that in a letter to Judge Joseph Gillespie, he said: "I have read on my knees the story of Gethsemane, where the Son of God prayed in vain that the cup of bitterness might pass from Him. I am in the garden of Gethsemane now, and my cup of bitterness is full and overflowing." [Pg 286]

From this it is clear that he believed the Jesus of the Gospels to be "the Son of God." And what a sense of responsibility he must at the time of writing this letter have experienced to cause him to declare, "I am in the garden of Gethsemane now, and my cup of bitterness is full and overflowing!" Only a superlatively good man, only a man of genuine piety, could use honestly such language as this. These words do not indicate unbelief or agnosticism. If ever a man in public life in these United States was removed the distance of the antipodes from the coldness and bleakness of agnosticism, that man was Abraham Lincoln. This confession of faith, incidentally made in a brief letter to a dear friend, is not only orthodox according to the accepted standards of orthodoxy, but, better, it is evangelical. To him the hero of the Gospel histories was none other than "the Son of God." By the use of these words did Lincoln characterize Jesus of Nazareth.

Herndon has said in his life of Abraham Lincoln that he never read the Bible, but Alexander Williamson, who was employed as a tutor in President Lincoln's family in Washington, said that "Mr. Lincoln very frequently studied the Bible, with the aid of Cruden's Concordance, which lay on his table." If Lincoln was not a reader and student of the inspired literature which we call the Bible, what explanation can be made of his language just quoted, addressed to Judge Gillespie, "I have read on my knees the story of Gethsemane, where the Son of God prayed in vain that the cup of bitterness might pass from Him"? [Pg 287]

I have admitted that in Lincoln's experience there was a time when his faith faltered. It is interesting to know in what manner he came to have the faith which in the maturity of his royal manhood and in the zenith of his intellectual powers he expressed. One of his pastors—for he sat under the ministry of James Smith, has told in what way Lincoln came to be an intelligent believer in the Bible, in Jesus as the Son of God, and in Christianity as Divine in its origin, and a mighty moral and spiritual power for the regeneration of men and of the race. Mr. Smith placed before him, he says, the arguments for and against the Divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures. To the arguments on both sides Lincoln gave a patient, impartial, and searching investigation. He himself said that he examined the arguments as a lawyer investigates testimony in a case in which he is deeply interested. At the conclusion of the investigation he declared that the arguments in favor of the Divine authority and inspiration of the Bible is unanswerable.

So far did Lincoln go in his open sympathy with the teachings of the Bible that on one occasion in the presence of a large assembly, he delivered the address at an annual meeting of the Springfield, Illinois, Bible Society. In the course of his address he drew a contrast between the decalog and the most eminent lawgiver of antiquity, in which he said: "It seems to me that nothing short of infinite wisdom could by any possibility have devised and given to man this excellent and perfect moral code. It is suited to men in all the conditions of life, and inculcates all the duties they owe to their Creator, to themselves, and their fellow men." [Pg 288]

Lincoln prepared an address, in which he declared that this country cannot exist half slave and half-free. He affirmed the saying of Jesus, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Having read this address to some friends, they urged him to strike out that portion of it. If he would do so, he could probably be elected to the United States Senate; but if he delivered the address as written, the ground taken was so high, the position was so advanced, his sentiments were so radical, he would probably fail of gaining a seat in the supreme legislative body of the greatest republic on earth.

Lincoln, under those circumstances, said: "I know there is a God, and that He hates the injustice of slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and a work for me, and I think he has, I believe I am ready. I am nothing but truth is everything. I know I am right, because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God."

And yet we are asked to believe that a man who could express himself in this way and show this courage was a doubter, a skeptic, an unbeliever, an agnostic, an infidel. "Christ is God." This was Lincoln's faith in 1860, found in a letter addressed to the Hon. Newton Bateman. [Pg 289]

Lincoln's father was a Christian. Old Uncle Tommy Lincoln, as his friends familiarly called him, was a good man. He was what might be called a ne'er-do-well. As the world counts success, Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln, was not successful, but he was an honest man. He was a truthful man. He was a man of faith. He worshipped God. He belonged to the church. He was a member of a congregation in Charleston, Ill., which I had the honor to serve in the beginning of my ministry, known as the Christian Church. He died not far from Charleston, and is buried a few miles distant from the beautiful little town, the county seat of Coles County, Ill.

During the last illness of his father, Lincoln wrote a letter to his step-brother, John Johnston, which closes with the following sentences: "I sincerely hope that father may recover his health, but at all events tell him to remember to call upon and confide in our great, and good, and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads, and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that if we could meet now it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant, but that if it be his lot to go now he will soon have a joyful meeting with loved ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the mercy of God, hope ere long to join [Pg 290]

them."

From this it appears that Lincoln cherished a hope of life everlasting through the mercy of God. This sounds very much like the talk of a Christian.

Although Lincoln was not a church member, he was a man of prayer. He believed that God can hear, does hear, and answer prayer. Lincoln said in conversation with General Sickles concerning the battle of Gettysburg, that he had no anxiety as to the result. At this General Sickles expressed surprise, and inquired into the reason for this unusual state of mind at that period in the history of the war. Lincoln hesitated to accede to the request of General Sickles, but was finally prevailed upon to do so, and this is what he said:

"Well, I will tell you how it was. In the pinch of your campaign up there, when everybody seemed panic stricken, and nobody could tell what was going to happen, oppressed by the gravity of our affairs, I went into my room one day and locked the door, and got down on my knees before Almighty God, and prayed to Him mightily for victory at Gettysburg. I told Him this was His war, and our cause His cause, but that we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. And I then and there made a solemn vow to Almighty God that if He would stand by our boys at Gettysburg I would stand by Him. And He did and I will. And after that (I don't know how it was, and I can't explain it) but soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul that things would go all right at Gettysburg, and that is why I had no fears about you." [Pg 291]

Such faith as this will put to the blush many who are members of the church.

It was afterward that General Sickles asked him what news he had from Vicksburg. He answered that he had no news worth mentioning, but that Grant was still "pegging away" down there, and he thought a good deal of him as a general, and had no thought of removing him notwithstanding that he was urged to do so; and, "besides," he added, "I have been praying over Vicksburg also, and believe our Heavenly Father is going to give us victory there too, because we need it, in order to bisect the Confederacy and have the Mississippi flow unvexed to the sea."

When he entered upon the task to which the people of the United States had called him, at the railway station in Springfield on the eve of his departure to Washington to take the oath of office, he delivered an address. It is a model. I quote it entire. It is as follows:

"My friends, no one not in my position can realize the sadness I feel at this parting. To this people I owe all that I am. Here I have lived more than a quarter of a century. Here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you again. I go to assume a task more than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He never would have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same Divine blessing which [Pg 292] sustained him, and on the same almighty Being I place my reliance for support. And I hope you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain. Again, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

At the time of Lincoln's assassination these words were printed in a great variety of forms. In my home for a number of years, beautifully framed, these parting words addressed to the friends of many years in Springfield, Ill., ornamented my humble residence. And yet one of his biographers refers to this address as if its genuineness may well be doubted. At the time of its delivery it was taken down and published broadcast in the papers of the day.

But it would be wearisome to you to recite all the evidences bearing on the religious character of Abraham Lincoln. John G. Nicolay well says: "Benevolence and forgiveness were the very basis of his character; his world-wide humanity is aptly embodied in a phrase of his second inaugural: 'With malice toward none, with charity for all.' His nature was deeply religious, but he belonged to no denomination; he had faith in the eternal justice and boundless mercy of Providence, and made the Golden Rule of Christ his practical creed."

In this passage Mr. Nicolay refers especially to Lincoln's second inaugural address. This address has the ring of an ancient Hebrew prophet. Only a man of faith and piety could deliver [Pg 293] such an address. After the struggles through which the country had passed Lincoln's self-poise, his confidence in God, his belief in and affection for his fellow men, remained unabated. In Lincoln's second inaugural address he used these words:

"Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained: neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease when or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered: that of neither has been answered fully.

"The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Wo unto the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come; but we to that man by whom the offense cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the wo due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living [Pg 294] God always ascribe to Him. Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of

war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with a lash shall be paid with another drawn by a sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said. 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the Nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among our selves and with all nations."

The spirit of this address, under the circumstances, is intensely Christian, and it is one of the most remarkable speeches in the literature of the world.

When Lincoln was urged to issue his Proclamation of Emancipation he waited on God for guidance. He said to some who urged this matter, who were anxious to have the President act without delay: "I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that, if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would [Pg 295] reveal it directly to me, for, unless I am more deceived in myself that I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter, and if I can learn what it is, I will do it."

Stoddard, in his Life of Lincoln, gives attention beyond any of his biographers to the religious side of Lincoln's character. Commenting on the inaugural from which I have quoted, Mr. Stoddard said:

"His mind and soul have reached the full development in a religious life so unusually intense and absorbing that it could not otherwise than utter itself in the grand sentences of his last address to the people. The knowledge had come, and the faith had come, and the charity had come, and with all had come the love of God which had put away all thought of rebellious resistance to the will of God leading, as in his earlier days of trial, to despair and insanity."

I wish to call special attention to Lincoln's temperance habits. He was a teetotaler so far as the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage was concerned. When the committee of the Chicago Convention waited upon Lincoln to inform him of his nomination he treated them to ice-water and said:

"Gentlemen, we must pledge our mutual healths in the most healthy beverage which God has given to man. It is the only beverage I have ever used or allowed in my family, and I cannot conscientiously depart from it on the present occasion. It is pure Adam's ale from the spring." [Pg 296]

Mr. John Hay, one of his biographers, says: "Mr. Lincoln was a man of exceedingly temperate habits. He made no use of either whisky or tobacco during all the years that I knew him."

Abraham Lincoln was a model in every respect but one. It was a mistake on the part of this great and good man that he never identified himself openly with the Church. I know what can be said in favor of his position. It is not, however, satisfactory. If all men were to act in this matter as Lincoln did, there would be no Church. This is obvious. Hence the mistake which he made. Otherwise, as to his personal habits; as to his confidence in God; as to his faith in man; as to his conception and use of the Bible; as to his habits of prayer; as to his judicial fairness; as to his sympathy with men—in all these respects, as in many others, Abraham Lincoln is a character to be studied and imitated.

[26] *From 'The Homiletic Review,' Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers.*

TO THE SPIRIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN[27]

(Reunion at Gettysburg Twenty-Five Years After the Battle)

BY RICHARD WATSON GILDER

1888

Shade of our greatest, O look down to day!
Here the long, dread midsummer battle roared,
And brother in brother plunged the accursed sword;— [Pg 297]
Here foe meets foe once more in proud array
Yet not as once to harry and to slay
But to strike hands, and with sublime accord
Weep tears heroic for the souls that soared
Quick from earth's carnage to the starry way.
Each fought for what he deemed the people's good,
And proved his bravery with his offered life,
And sealed his honor with his outpoured blood;
But the Eternal did direct the strife,
And on this sacred field one patriot host
Now calls thee father,—dear, majestic ghost!

[27] *By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company.*

LINCOLN AS A TYPICAL AMERICAN

BY PHILLIPS BROOKS

While I speak to you to-day, the body of the President who ruled this people, is lying, honored and loved, in our city. It is impossible, with that sacred presence in our midst, for me to stand and speak of ordinary topics which occupy the pulpit. I must speak of him to-day; and I therefore undertake to do what I have intended to do at some future time, to invite you to study with me the character of Abraham Lincoln, the impulse of his life and the causes of his death. I know how hard it is to do it rightly, how impossible it is to do it worthily. But I shall speak with confidence, because I speak to those who love him, and whose ready love will fill out the deficiencies in a picture which my words will weakly try to draw. [Pg 298]

We take it for granted, first of all, that there is an essential connection between Mr. Lincoln's character and his violent and bloody death. It is no accident, no arbitrary decree of Providence. He lived as he did, and he died as he did, because he was what he was. The more we see of events the less we come to believe in any fate, or destiny, except the destiny of character. It will be our duty, then, to see what there was in the character of our great President that created the history of his life, and at last produced the catastrophe of his cruel death. After the first trembling horror, the first outburst of indignant sorrow, has grown calm, these are the questions which we are bound to ask and answer.

It is not necessary for me even to sketch the biography of Mr. Lincoln. He was born in Kentucky fifty-six years ago, when Kentucky was a pioneer State. He lived, as a boy and man, the hard and needy life of a backwoodsman, a farmer, a river boatman, and, finally, by his own efforts at self-education, of an active, respected, influential citizen, in the half organized and manifold interests of a new and energetic community. From his boyhood up he lived in direct and vigorous contact with men and things, not as in older states and easier conditions with words and theories; and both his moral convictions and intellectual opinions gathered from that contact a supreme degree of that character by which men knew him; that character which is the most distinctive possession of the best American nature; that almost indescribable quality which we call, in general, clearness or truth, and which appears in the physical structure as health, in the moral constitution as honesty, in the mental structure as sagacity, and in the region of active life as practicalness. This one character, with many sides, all shaped of the same essential force and testifying to the same inner influences, was what was powerful in him and decreed for him the life he was to live and the death he was to die. We must take no smaller view then this of what he was. [Pg 299]

It is the great boon of such characters as Mr. Lincoln's, that they reunite what God has joined together and man has put asunder. In him was vindicated the greatness of real goodness and the goodness of real greatness. The twain were one flesh. Not one of all the multitudes who stood and looked up to him for direction with such a loving and implicit trust can tell you to-day whether the wise judgments that he gave came most from a strong head or a sound heart. If you ask them, they are puzzled. There are men as good as he, but they do bad things. There are men as intelligent as he, but they do foolish things. In him, goodness and intelligence combined and made their best result of wisdom. For perfect truth consists not merely in the right constituents of character, but in their right and intimate conjunction. This union of the mental and moral into a life of admirable simplicity is what we most admire in children; but in them it is unsettled and unpractical. But when it is preserved into manhood, deepened into reliability and maturity, it is that glorified childlikeness, that high and reverend simplicity, which shames and baffles the most accomplished astuteness, and is chosen by God to fill His purposes when He needs a ruler for His people, of faithful and true heart, such as he had, who was our President. [Pg 300]

Another evident quality of such character as this will be its freshness or newness, if we may so speak; its freshness or readiness,—call it what you will,—its ability to take up new duties and do them in a new way, will result of necessity from its truth and clearness. The simple natures and forces will always be the most pliant ones. Water bends and shapes itself to any channel. Air folds and adapts itself to each new figure. They are the simplest and the most infinitely active things in nature. So this nature, in very virtue of its simplicity, must be also free, always fitting itself to each new need. It will always start from the most fundamental and eternal conditions, and work in the straightest, even though they be the newest ways, to the present prescribed purpose. In one word, it must be broad and independent and radical. So that freedom and radicalness in the character of Abraham Lincoln were not separate qualities, but the necessary results of his simplicity and childlikeness and truth. [Pg 301]

Here then we have some conception of the man. Out of this character came the life which we admire and the death which we lament to-day. He was called in that character to that life and death. It was just the nature, as you see, which a new nation such as ours ought to produce. All the conditions of his birth, his youth, his manhood, which made him what he was, were not irregular and exceptional, but were the normal conditions of a new and simple country. His pioneer home in Indiana was a type of the pioneer land in which he lived. If ever there was a man who was a part of the time and country he lived in, this was he. The same simple respect for labor won in the school of work and incorporated into blood and muscle; the same unassuming loyalty to the simple virtues of temperance and industry and integrity; the same sagacious judgment which had learned to be quick-eyed and quick-brained in the constant presence of emergency; the same direct and clear thought about things, social, political and religious, that was in him supremely, was in the people he was sent to rule. Surely, with such a type-man for ruler, there

would seem to be but a smooth and even road over which he might lead the people whose character he represented into the new region of national happiness, and comfort, and usefulness, for which that character had been designed.

The cause that Abraham Lincoln died for shall grow stronger by his death, stronger and sterner. Stronger to set its pillars deep into the structure of our Nation's life; sterner to execute the justice of the Lord upon his enemies. Stronger to spread its arms and grasp our whole land into freedom; sterner to sweep the last poor ghost of slavery out of our haunted homes. [Pg 302]

So let him lie there in our midst to-day and let our people go and bend with solemn thoughtfulness and look upon his face and read the lessons of his burial. As he passed here on his journey from the Western home and told us what, by the help of God, he meant to do, so let him pause upon his way back to his Western grave and tell us, with a silence more eloquent than words, how bravely, how truly, by the strength of God, he did it. God brought him up as He brought David up from the sheep-folds to feed Jacob, His people, and Israel, His inheritance. He came up in earnestness and faith, and he goes back in triumph. As he pauses here to-day, and from his cold lips bids us bear witness how he has met the duty that was laid on him, what can we say out of our full hearts but this:—"He fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power."

The Shepherd of the People! that old name that the best rulers ever craved. What ruler ever won it like this dead President of ours? He fed us faithfully and truly. He fed us with counsel when we were in doubt, with inspiration when we sometimes faltered, with caution when we would be rash, with calm, clear, trustful cheerfulness through many an hour, when our hearts were dark. [Pg 303] He fed hungry souls all over the country with sympathy and consolation. He spread before the whole land feasts of great duty and devotion and patriotism, on which the land grew strong. He fed us with solemn, solid truths. He taught us the sacredness of government, the wickedness of treason. He made our souls glad and vigorous with the love of liberty that was in his. He showed us how to love truth and yet be charitable—how to hate wrong and all oppression, and yet not treasure one personal injury or insult. He fed all his people, from the highest to the lowest, from the most privileged down to the most enslaved. Best of all, he fed us with a reverent and genuine religion. He spread before us the love and fear of God just in that shape in which we need them most, and out of his faithful service of a higher Master, who of us has not taken and eaten and grown strong? "He fed them with a faithful and true heart." Yes, till the last. For at the last, behold him standing with hand reached out to feed the South with mercy, and the North with charity, and the whole land with peace, when the Lord who had sent him called him, and his work was done!

He stood once on the battlefield of our own State, and said of the brave men who had saved it, words as noble as any countryman of ours ever spoke. Let us stand in the country he has saved, and which is to be his grave and monument, and say of Abraham Lincoln what he said of the soldiers who had died at Gettysburg. He stood there with their graves before him, and these are [Pg 304] the words he said:

"We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. These brave men who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; and this nation, under God shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

May God make us worthy of the memory of Abraham Lincoln!

LINCOLN AS CAVALIER AND PURITAN

BY H. W. GRADY

The virtues and traditions of both happily still live for the inspiration of their sons and the saving of the old fashion. But both Puritan and Cavalier were lost in the storm of their first revolution, and the American citizen, supplanting both, and stronger than either, took possession [Pg 305] of the Republic bought by their common blood and fashioned in wisdom, and charged himself with teaching men free government and establishing the voice of the people as the voice of God. Great types like valuable plants are slow to flower and fruit. But from the union of these colonists, from the straightening of their purposes and the crossing of their blood, slow perfecting through a century, came he who stands as the first typical American, the first who comprehended within himself all the strength and gentleness, all the majesty and grace of this Republic—Abraham Lincoln. He was the sum of Puritan and Cavalier, for in his ardent nature were fused the virtues of both, and in the depths of his great soul the faults of both were lost. He was greater than Puritan, greater than Cavalier, in that he was American, and that in his homely form were first gathered the vast and thrilling forces of this ideal government—charging it with such tremendous meaning and so elevating it above human suffering that martyrdom, though infamously aimed came as a fitting crown to a life consecrated from its cradle to human liberty. Let us, each cherishing his traditions and honoring his fathers, build with reverent hands to the

type of this simple but sublime life, in which all types are honored, and in the common glory we shall win as Americans, there will be plenty and to spare for your forefathers and for mine. [Pg 306]

LINCOLN, THE TENDER-HEARTED

BY H. W. BOLTON

His biography is written in blood and tears; uncounted millions arise and call him blessed; a redeemed and reunited republic is his monument. History embalms the memory of Richard the Lion-Hearted; here, too, our martyr finds loyal sepulture as Lincoln the tender-hearted.

He was brave. While assassins swarmed in Washington, he went everywhere, without guard or arms. He was magnanimous. He harbored no grudge, nursed no grievance; was quick to forgive, and was anxious for reconciliation. Hear him appealing to the South: "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break, our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every loving heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

He was compassionate. With what joy he brought liberty to the enslaved. He was forgiving. In this respect he was strikingly suggestive of the Saviour. He was great. Time will but augment the greatness of his name and fame. Perhaps a greater man never ruled in this or any other nation. [Pg 307] He was good and pure and incorruptible. He was a patriot; he loved his country; he poured out his soul unto death for it. He was human, and thus touched the chord that makes the whole world kin.

THE CHARACTER OF LINCOLN

BY W. H. HERNDON (LINCOLN'S LAW PARTNER)

The true peculiarity of Mr. Lincoln has not been seen by his various biographers; or, if seen, they have failed wofully to give it that prominence which it deserves. It is said that Newton saw an apple fall to the ground from a tree, and beheld the law of the universe in that fall; Shakespeare saw human nature in the laugh of a man; Professor Owen saw the animal in its claw; and Spencer saw the evolution of the universe in the growth of a seed. Nature was suggestive to all these men. Mr. Lincoln no less saw philosophy in a story, and a schoolmaster in a joke. No man, no men, saw nature, fact, thing, or man from his stand-point. His was a new and original position, which was always suggesting, hinting something to him. Nature, insinuations, hints and suggestions were new, fresh, original and odd to him. The world, fact, man, principle, all had their powers of suggestion to his susceptible soul. They continually put him in mind of something. He was odd, fresh, new, original, and peculiar, for this reason, that he was a new, [Pg 308] odd, and original creation and fact. He had keen susceptibilities to the hints and suggestions of nature, which always put him in mind of something known or unknown. Hence his power and tenacity of what is called association of ideas must have been great. His memory was tenacious and strong. His susceptibility to all suggestions and hints enabled him at will to call up readily the associated and classified fact and idea.

As an evidence of this, especially peculiar to Mr. Lincoln, let me ask one question. Were Mr. Lincoln's expression and language odd and original, standing out peculiar from those of all other men? What does this imply? Oddity and originality of vision as well as expression; and what is expression in words and human language, but a telling of what we see, defining the idea arising from and created by vision and view in us? Words and language are but the counterparts of the idea—the other half of the idea; they are but the stinging, hot, heavy, leaden bullets that drop from the mold; and what are they in a rifle with powder stuffed behind them and fire applied, but an embodied force pursuing their object? So are words an embodied power feeling for comprehension in other minds. Mr. Lincoln was often perplexed to give expression to his ideas: first, because he was not master of the English language: and, secondly, because there were no words in it containing the coloring, shape, exactness, power, and gravity of his ideas. He was frequently at a loss for a word, and hence was compelled to resort to stories, maxims, and jokes [Pg 309] to embody his idea, that it might be comprehended. So true was this peculiar mental vision of his, that though mankind has been gathering, arranging, and classifying facts for thousands of years, Lincoln's peculiar stand-point could give him no advantage of other men's labor. Hence he tore up to the deep foundations all arrangements of facts, and coined and arranged new plans to govern himself. He was compelled, from his peculiar mental organization, to do this. His labor was great, continuous, patient and all-enduring.

The truth about this whole matter is that Mr. Lincoln read less and thought more than any man in his sphere in America. No man can put his finger on any great book written in the last or present century that he read. When young he read the Bible, and when of age he read Shakespeare. This latter book was scarcely ever out of his mind. Mr. Lincoln is acknowledged to have been a great man, but the question is, what made him great? I repeat, that he read less and thought more than any man of his standing in America, if not in the world. He possessed originality and power of thought in an eminent degree. He was cautious, cool, concentrated, with continuity of reflection; was patient and enduring. These are some of the grounds of his

wonderful success.

Not only was nature, man, fact and principle suggestive to Mr. Lincoln, not only had he accurate and exact perceptions, but he was causative, i. e., his mind ran back behind all facts, things and principles to their origin, history and first cause, to that point where forces act at once [Pg 310] as effect and cause. He would stop and stand in the street and analyze a machine. He would whittle things to a point, and then count the numberless inclined planes, and their pitch, making the point. Mastering and defining this, he would then cut that point back, and get a broad transverse section of his pine stick, and peel and define that. Clocks, omnibuses and language, paddle-wheels and idioms, never escaped his observation and analysis. Before he could form any idea of anything, before he would express his opinion on any subject, he must know it in origin and history, in substance and quality, in magnitude and gravity. He must know his subject inside and outside, upside and down side. He searched his own mind and nature thoroughly, as I have often heard him say. He must analyze a sensation, an idea, and words, and run them back to their origin, history, purpose and destiny. He was most emphatically a remorseless analyzer of facts, things and principles. When all these processes had been well and thoroughly gone through, he could form an opinion and express it, but no sooner. He had no faith. "Say so's" he had no respect for, coming though they might from tradition, power or authority.

All things, facts and principles had to run through his crucible and be tested by the fires of his analytic mind; and hence, when he did speak, his utterances rang out gold-like, quick, keen and current upon the counters of the understanding. He reasoned logically, through analogy and comparison. All opponents dreaded him in his originality of idea, condensation, definition and [Pg 311] force of expression, and woe be to the man who hugged to his bosom a secret error if Mr. Lincoln got on the chase of it. I say, woe to him! Time could hide the error in no nook or corner of space in which he would not detect and expose it.

[Transcriber's Note: Part of this was omitted in original.]

The great predominating elements of Mr. Lincoln's peculiar character, were: First, his great capacity and power of reason; secondly, his excellent understanding; thirdly, an exalted idea of the sense of right and equity; and, fourthly, his intense veneration of what was true and good. His reason ruled despotically all other faculties and qualities of his mind. His conscience and heart were ruled by it. His conscience was ruled by one faculty—reason. His heart was ruled by two faculties—reason and conscience. I know it is generally believed that Mr. Lincoln's heart, his love and kindness, his tenderness and benevolence, were his ruling qualities; but this opinion is erroneous in every particular. First, as to his reason. He dwelt in the mind, not in the conscience, and not in the heart. He lived and breathed and acted from his reason—the throne of logic and the home of principle, the realm of Deity in man. It is from this point that Mr. Lincoln must be viewed. His views were correct and original. He was cautious not to be deceived; he was patient and enduring. He had concentration and great continuity of thought; he had a profound analytic power; his visions were clear, and he was emphatically the master of statement. His pursuit of [Pg 312] the truth was indefatigable, terrible. He reasoned from his well-chosen principles with such clearness, force, and compactness, that the tallest intellects in the land bowed to him with respect. He was the strongest man I ever saw, looking at him from the stand-point of his reason—the throne of his logic. He came down from that height with an irresistible and crushing force. His printed speeches will prove this; but his speeches before courts, especially before the Supreme Courts of the State and Nation, would demonstrate it: unfortunately, none of them have been preserved. Here he demanded time to think and prepare. The office of reason is to determine the truth. Truth is the power of reason—the child of reason. He loved and idolized truth for its own sake. It was reason's food.

Conscience, the second great quality and force of Mr. Lincoln's character, is that faculty which loves the just: its office is justice; right and equity are its correlatives. It decides upon all acts of all people at all times. Mr. Lincoln had a deep, broad, living conscience. His great reason told him what was true, good and bad, right, wrong, just or unjust, and his conscience echoed back its decision; and it was from this point that he acted and spoke and wove his character and fame among us. His conscience ruled his heart; he was always just before he was gracious. This was his motto, his glory: and this is as it should be. It cannot be truthfully said of any mortal man that he was always just. Mr. Lincoln was not always just; but his great general life was. It follows that [Pg 313] if Mr. Lincoln had great reason and great conscience, he was an honest man. His great and general life was honest, and he was justly and rightfully entitled to the appellation, "Honest Abe." Honesty was his great polar star.

Mr. Lincoln had also a good understanding; that is, the faculty that understands and comprehends the exact state of things, their near and remote relations. The understanding does not necessarily inquire for the reason of things. I must here repeat that Mr. Lincoln was an odd and original man; he lived by himself and out of himself. He could not absorb. He was a very sensitive man, unobtrusive and gentlemanly, and often hid himself in the common mass of men, in order to prevent the discovery of his individuality. He had no insulting egotism, and no pompous pride; no haughtiness, and no aristocracy. He was not indifferent, however, to approbation and public opinion. He was not an upstart, and had no insolence. He was a meek, quiet, unobtrusive gentleman.... Read Mr. Lincoln's speeches, letters, messages and proclamations, read his whole record in his actual life, and you cannot fail to perceive that he had good understanding. He understood and fully comprehended himself, and what he did and why he did it, better than most living men.

[Transcriber's Note: Part of this was omitted in original.]

There are contradictory opinions in reference to Mr. Lincoln's heart and humanity. One opinion is that he was cold and obdurate, and the other opinion is that he was warm and affectionate. I [Pg 314] have shown you that Mr. Lincoln first lived and breathed upon the world from his head and conscience. I have attempted to show you that he lived and breathed upon the world through the tender side of his heart, subject at all times and places to the logic of his reason, and to his exalted sense of right and equity; namely, his conscience. He always held his conscience subject to his head; he held his heart always subject to his head and conscience. His heart was the lowest organ, the weakest of the three. Some men would reverse this order, and declare that his heart was his ruling organ; that always manifested itself with love, regardless of truth and justice, right and equity. The question still is, was Mr. Lincoln a cold, heartless man, or a warm, affectionate man? Can a man be a warm-hearted man who is all head and conscience, or nearly so? What, in the first place, do we mean by a warm-hearted man? Is it one who goes out of himself and reaches for others spontaneously because of a deep love of humanity, apart from equity and truth, and does what it does for love's sake? If so, Mr. Lincoln was a cold man. Or, do we mean that when a human being, man or child, approached him in behalf of a matter of right, and that the prayer of such a one was granted, that this is an evidence of his love? The African was enslaved, his rights were violated, and a principle was violated in them. Rights imply obligations as well as duties. Mr. Lincoln was President; he was in a position that made it his duty, through [Pg 315] his sense of right, his love of principle, his constitutional obligations imposed upon him by oath of office, to strike the blow against slavery. But did he do it for love? He himself has answered the question: "I would not free the slaves if I could preserve the Union without it." I use this argument against his too enthusiastic friends. If you mean that this is love for love's sake, then Mr. Lincoln was a warm-hearted man—not otherwise. To use a general expression, his general life was cold. He had, however, a strong latent capacity to love; but the object must first come as principle, second as right, and third as lovely. He loved abstract humanity when it was oppressed. This was an abstract love, not concrete in the individual, as said by some. He rarely used the term love, yet was he tender and gentle. He gave the key-note to his own character when he said, "with malice toward none, with charity for all," he did what he did. He had no intense loves, and hence no hates and no malice. He had a broad charity for imperfect man, and let us imitate his great life in this.

"But was not Mr. Lincoln a man of great humanity?" asks a friend at my elbow, a little angrily; to which I reply, "Has not that question been answered already?" Let us suppose that it has not. We must understand each other. What do you mean by humanity? Do you mean that he had much of human nature in him? If so, I will grant that he was a man of humanity. Do you mean, if the [Pg 316] above definition is unsatisfactory, that Mr. Lincoln was tender and kind? Then I agree with you. But if you mean to say that he so loved a man that he would sacrifice truth and right for him, for love's sake, then he was not a man of humanity. Do you mean to say that he so loved man, for love's sake, that his heart led him out of himself, and compelled him to go in search of the objects of his love, for their sake? He never, to my knowledge, manifested this side of his character. Such is the law of human nature, that it cannot be all head, all conscience, and all heart at one and the same time in one and the same person. Our Maker made it so, and where God through reason blazed the path, walk therein boldly. Mr. Lincoln's glory and power lay in the just combination of head, conscience, and heart, and it is here that his fame must rest, or not at all.

Not only were Mr. Lincoln's perceptions good; not only was nature suggestive to him; not only was he original and strong; not only had he great reason, good understanding; not only did he love the true and good—the eternal right; not only was he tender and kind—but in due proportion and in legitimate subordination, had he a glorious combination of them all. Through his perceptions—the suggestiveness of nature, his originality and strength; through his magnificent reason, his understanding, his conscience, his tenderness and kindness, his heart, rather than love—he approximated as nearly as most human beings in this imperfect state to an embodiment of the great moral principle, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." [Pg 317]

"WITH CHARITY FOR ALL"

BY WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

I know, when I left him, that I was more than ever impressed by his kindly nature, his deep and earnest sympathy with the afflictions of the whole people, resulting from the war, and by the march of hostile armies through the South; and that his earnest desire seemed to be to end the war speedily, without more bloodshed or devastation, and to restore all the men of both sections to their homes. In the language of his second inaugural address he seemed to have "charity for all, malice toward none," and, above all, an absolute faith in the courage, manliness, and integrity of the armies in the field. When at rest or listening, his legs and arms seemed to hang almost lifeless, and his face was care-worn and haggard; but the moment he began to talk his face lightened up, his tall form, as it were, unfolded, and he was the very impersonation of good-humor and fellowship. The last words I recall as addressed to me were that he would feel better when I was back at Goldsboro'. We parted at the gang-way of the River Queen about noon of March 28th, and I never saw him again. Of all the men I ever met, he seemed to possess more of the elements of greatness, combined with goodness, than any other. [Pg 318]

LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

IDA VOSE WOODBURY

Again thy birthday dawns, O man beloved,
Dawns on the land thy blood was shed to save,
And hearts of millions, by one impulse moved,
Bow and fresh laurels lay upon thy grave.

The years but add new luster to thy glory,
And watchmen on the heights of vision see
Reflected in thy life the old, old story,
The story of the Man of Galilee.

We see in thee the image of Him kneeling
Before the close-shut tomb, and at the word
"Come forth," from out the blackness long concealing
There rose a man; clearly again was heard

The Master's voice, and then, his cerements broken,
Friends of the dead a living brother see;
Thou, at the tomb where millions lay, hast spoken:
"Loose him and let him go!"—the slave was free.

And in the man so long in thraldom hidden
We see the likeness of the Father's face,
Clod changed to soul; by thy atonement bidden,
We hasten to the uplift of a race.

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Spirit of Lincoln! Summon all thy loyal;
Nerve them to follow where thy feet have trod,
To prove, by voice as clear and deed as royal,
Man's brotherhood in our one Father—God.

FEBRUARY TWELFTH

BY MARY H. HOWLISTON

It was early in the evening in a shop where flags were sold.

There were large flags, middle-sized flags, small flags and little bits of flags. The finest of all was Old Glory. Old Glory was made of silk and hung in graceful folds from the wall.

"Attention!" called Old Glory.

Starry eyes all over the room looked at him.

"What day of the month is it?"

"February Twelfth," quickly answered the flags.

"Whose birthday is it?" "Abraham Lincoln's."

"Where is he buried?" "Springfield, Illinois."

"Very well," said Old Glory, "you are to take some of Uncle Sam's children there to-night."

"Yes, captain," said the flags, wondering what he meant.

"First, I must know whether you are good American flags. How many red stripes have you?"

"Seven!" was the answer.

"How many white stripes?" "Six!"

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"How many stars?" "Forty-five!" shouted the large flags.

The little ones said nothing.

"Ah, I see," said Old Glory, "but you are not to blame. Do you see that open transom?" he went on. "Go through it into the street, put your staffs into the hands of any little boys you find and bring them here."

"Yes, captain," called the flags, as they fluttered away.

Last of all, Old Glory pulled his silken stripes into the hallway and waited for the flags to come back. "It's much too cold for little girls," he said to himself. "Their pretty noses might freeze."

By and by the flags came back, each bringing a small boy. Old Glory looked at them.

"What's the matter?" said he; "you don't seem pleased."

No one spoke, the little boys stared with round eyes at Old Glory, but held tightly to the flags.

At last one of the flags said: "Please, captain, these are the only little boys we could find."

"Well!" said Old Glory.

"And we think they don't belong to Uncle Sam," was the answer.

"Why not?" said Old Glory.

"Some of them are ragged," called one flag.

"And some are dirty," said another.

"This one is a colored boy," said another.

"Some of them can't speak English at all."

"The one I found, why, he blacks boots!"

"And mine is a newsboy." [Pg 321]

"Mine sleeps in a dry goods box."

"Mine plays a violin on the street corner."

"Just look at mine, captain!" said the last flag proudly, when the rest were through.

"What about him?" asked Old Glory.

"I'm sure he belongs to Uncle Sam; he lives in a brown-stone house and he wears such good clothes!"

"Of course I belong to Uncle Sam," said the brown-stone boy quickly, "but I think these street boys do not."

"There, there!" said Old Glory; "I'll telephone to Washington and find out," and Old Glory floated away.

The little boys watched and waited.

Back came Old Glory.

"It's all right," said he, "Uncle Sam says every one of you belongs to him and he wants you to be brave and honest, for some day he may need you for soldiers; oh, yes! and he said, 'Tell those poor little chaps who have such a hard time of it and no one to help them, that Mr. Lincoln was a poor boy too, and yet he was the grandest and best of all my sons.'"

The moon was just rising.

It made the snow and ice shine.

"It's almost time," said Old Glory softly.

"Hark! you must not wink, nor cough nor sneeze nor move for three-quarters of a minute!"

That was dreadful!

The newsboy swallowed a cough. [Pg 322]

The boot-black held his breath for fear of sneezing.

The brown-stone boy shut his eyes so as not to wink.

They all stood as if turned to stone.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, came a faint sound of bells.

Nothing else was heard but the beating of their own hearts.

In exactly three-quarters of a minute, Old Glory said, "What do you think of that?"

Behold! a wonderful fairy sleigh, white as a snowdrift, and shining in the moonlight as if covered with diamond dust.

It was piled high with softest cushions and robes of fur.

It was drawn by thirteen fairy horses, with arching necks and flowing manes and tails.

Each horse wore knots of red, white and blue at his ears and the lines were wound with ribbons of the same.

"Jump in," said Old Glory.

Into the midst of the cushions and furs they sprang.

Crack went the whip, tinkle went the bells. Over the house-tops, through the frosty air, among the moonbeams, up and away sailed fairy horses and sleigh, American flags and Uncle Sam's boys.

Santa Claus with his reindeer never went faster.

Presently the tinkling bells were hushed, and the fairy horses stood very still before the tomb of Abraham Lincoln. [Pg 323]

"Come," said Old Glory, and he led them inside.

You must get your father or mother to tell you what they saw there.

Just before they left, a dirty little hand touched Old Glory and a shrill little voice said: "I'd like to leave my flag here. May I?"

"And may I?" said another.

Old Glory looked around and saw the same wish in the other faces.

"You forget," said he, "that the flags are not yours. It would not be right to keep them. What did the people call Mr. Lincoln? You don't know? Well, I'll tell you. It was 'Honest Old Abe,' and Uncle Sam wants you to be like him."

Again the merry bells tinkled, again the proud horses, with their flowing manes and tails, sprang into the air, and before the moon had said "good-night" to the earth, they were back at the flag shop.

The very moment they reached it, horses and sleigh, cushions and robes, melted away and the children saw them no more.

TWO FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

(Exercise for the Schoolroom)

BY LIZZIE M. HADLEY AND CLARA J. DENTON

FOR EIGHT BOYS.

This dialogue, or exercise, is to be given by eight boys. While they and the school are singing the first song the boys march upon the stage and form into a semicircle, the four boys speaking for Washington on the right, the other four (for Lincoln) on the left. Portraits of Washington and Lincoln should be placed in a convenient position on the stage beneath a double arch wreathed with evergreens. The portraits should be draped with American flags. Each one of the boys should wear a small American flag pinned to his coat. [Pg 324]

SONG. TUNE, *Rally 'Round the Flag*

We are marching from the East,
We are marching from the West,
    Singing the praises of a nation.
That all the world may hear
Of the men we hold so dear,
    Singing the praises of a nation.

CHORUS

For Washington and Lincoln,
    Hurrah, all hurrah,
Sing as we gather
    Here from afar,
Yes, for Washington and Lincoln,
    Let us ever sing,
Sing all the praises of a nation.

Yes, we love to sing this song,
As we proudly march along,
    Singing the praises of the heroes.
Through this great and happy land,
We would sound their names so grand.
    Singing the praises of our heroes.

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CHORUS

ALL: We have come to tell you of two men whose names must be linked together as long as the nation shall stand, Washington and Lincoln. They stand for patriotism, goodness, truth and true manliness. Hand in hand they shall go down the centuries together.

FIRST SPEAKER ON THE WASHINGTON SIDE: Virginia sends you greeting. I come in her name in honor of her illustrious son, George Washington, and she bids me tell you that he was born in her state, Feb. 22, 1732.

ALL: 'Twas years and years ago.

First Speaker: Yes, more than a hundred and seventy, nearly two centuries.

All: A long time to be remembered.

First Speaker: Yes, but Washington's name is still cherished and honored all over the land which his valor and wisdom helped save, and, for generations yet to come, the children of the schools shall give him a million-tongued fame.

Second Speaker: Virginia bids me tell you that as a boy, Washington was manly, brave, obedient and kind, and that he never told a lie.

Song: (Either as solo or chorus). Air, *What Can the Matter Be?*

Dear, dear, who can believe it?
Dear, dear, who can conceive it?
Dear, dear, we scarce can believe that
Never did he tell a lie.

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O, surely temptation must oft have assailed him,
But courage and honor we know never failed him,
So let us all follow his wondrous example,
And never, no never tell lies.
And never, no never, tell lies.

Third Speaker: A brave and manly boy, he began work early in life, and, in 1748, when only sixteen years old, he was a surveyor of lands, and took long tramps into the wilderness. In 1775 came the Revolutionary War, and he was appointed commander-in-chief of the American Army. In 1787 he was elected president of the convention which framed the constitution of our country.

Fourth Speaker: In 1789 he was chosen first president of the United States. He was re-elected in 1793 and, at the close of the second term he retired to private life at his beautiful and beloved home, Mt. Vernon. He died there, Dec. 14, 1799, honored and mourned by the whole nation, and leaving to the world a life which is a "pattern for all public men, teaching what greatness is and what is the pathway to undying fame," and richly deserving the title, "Father of his country."

All: "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life.

Boys Representing Lincoln: Washington was a great and good man, and so, too, was the man whom we delight to honor, whose title, "Honest Abe," has passed into the language of our times as a synonym for all that is just and honest in man.

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First Speaker on the Lincoln Side: Kentucky is proud to claim Abraham Lincoln as one of her honored sons, and she bids me say that he was born in that state in Hardin County, Feb. 12, 1809. Indiana, too, claims him, he was her son by adoption, for, when but seven years old, his father moved to the southwestern part of that state. Illinois also has a claim upon him. It was there that he helped build a log cabin for a new home, and split rails to fence in a cornfield. Afterwards he split rails for a suit of clothes, one hundred rails for every yard of cloth, and so won the name, "The Rail-splitter."

Second Speaker: In 1828 he became a flat-boatman and twice went down the river to New Orleans. In 1832 he served as captain of a company in the Black Hawk War. After the war he kept a country store, and won a reputation for honesty. Then, for a while, he was a surveyor, next, a lawyer, and in 1834 he was elected to the Legislature of Illinois.

Third Speaker: In 1846 he was made a member of Congress, in 1860 he was elected president of the United States.

Fourth Speaker: The Civil War followed, and in 1864 he was elected president for the second term. On April 14 he was shot by an assassin and died on the morning of the 15th.

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SONG BY SCHOOL: AIR, *John Brown's Body*

In spite of changing seasons of the years that come and go,
Still his name to-day is cherished in the hearts of friend and foe,
And the land for which he suffered e'er shall honor him we know,
While truth goes marching on.

CHORUS

Both Groups Together: To both these men, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, we, the children of the nation, owe a debt of gratitude which we can only repay by a lifetime of work, for God, humanity, and our country. Both have left behind them words of wisdom, which, if heeded, will make us wiser and better boys and girls, and so wiser and better men and women.

Two Boys from the Washington Group: Washington said, "Without virtue and without integrity, the finest talents and the most brilliant accomplishments can never gain the respect or conciliate the esteem of the most valuable part of mankind."

Two Boys from the Lincoln Group: Lincoln said, "I have one vote, and I shall always cast that against wrong as long as I live."

TWO BOYS FROM WASHINGTON GROUP: "If to please the people we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterwards defend our work?" [Pg 329]

TWO BOYS FROM LINCOLN GROUP: Lincoln said, "In every event of life, it is right makes might."

ALL: O, wise and great!
Their like, perchance, we ne'er shall see again,
But let us write their golden words upon the hearts of men.

SONG: TUNE *"America"*

Turn now unto the past,
There, long as life shall last,
Their names you'll find.
Faithful and true and brave,
Sent here our land to save.
Men whom our father gave,
Brave, true, and kind.

(*Exeunt*) [Pg 330]

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VIII
LINCOLN'S PLACE IN HISTORY

[Pg 333]

THE THREE GREATEST AMERICANS

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

As the generations slip away, as the dust of conflict settles, and as through the clearing air we look back with keener vision into the Nation's past, mightiest among the mighty dead, loom up the three great figures of Washington, Lincoln and Grant. These three greatest men have taken their places among the great men of all nations, the great men of all times. They stood supreme in the two great crises of our history, in the two great occasions, when we stood in the van of all humanity, and struck the most effective blows that have ever been struck for the cause of human freedom under the law.

HIS CHOICE AND HIS DESTINY

BY F. M. BRISTOL

As God appeared to Solomon and Joseph in dreams to urge them to make wise choices for the power of great usefulness, so it would appear that in their waking dreams the Almighty appeared to such history-making souls as Paul and Constantine, Alfred the Great, Washington, and Lincoln. [Pg 334] It was the commonest kind of a life this young Lincoln was living on the frontier of civilization, but out of that commonest kind of living came the uncommonest kind of character of these modern years, the sublimest liberative power in the history of freedom. Lincoln felt there, as a great awkward boy, that God and history had something for him to do. He dreamed his destiny. He chose to champion the cause of the oppressed. He vowed that when the chance came he would deal slavery a hard blow. When he came to his high office, he came with a character which had been fitting itself for its grave responsibilities. He had been making wise choices on the great questions of human rights, of national union, of constitutional freedom, of universal brotherhood.

FROM "REMINISCENCES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN"[28]

BY ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

Strange mingling of mirth and tears, of the tragic and grotesque, of cap and crown, of Socrates and Rabelais, of Æsop and Marcus Aurelius, of all that is gentle and just, humorous and honest, merciful, wise, laughable, lovable and divine, and all consecrated to the use of man; while through all, and over all, an overwhelming sense of obligation, of chivalric loyalty to truth, and upon all the shadow of the tragic end.

Nearly all the great historic characters are impossible monsters, disproportioned by flattery, or by calumny deformed. We know nothing of their peculiarities, or nothing but their peculiarities. About the roots of these oaks there clings none of the earth of humanity. Washington is now only a steel engraving. About the real man who lived and loved and hated and schemed we know but little. The glass through which we look at him is of such high magnifying power that the features are exceedingly indistinct. Hundreds of people are now engaged in smoothing out the lines of Lincoln's face—forcing all features to the common mold—so that he may be known, not as he [Pg 335]

really was, but, according to their poor standard, as he should have been.

Lincoln was not a type. He stands alone—no ancestors, no fellows, and no successors. He had the advantage of living in a new country, of social equality, of personal freedom, of seeing in the horizon of his future the perpetual star of hope. He preserved his individuality and his self-respect. He knew and mingled with men of every kind; and, after all, men are the best books. He became acquainted with the ambitions and hopes of the heart, the means used to accomplish ends, the springs of action and the seeds of thought. He was familiar with nature, with actual things, with common facts. He loved and appreciated the poem of the year, the drama of the seasons.

[Pg 336] In a new country, a man must possess at least three virtues—honesty, courage and generosity. In cultivated society, cultivation is often more important than soil. A well executed counterfeit passes more readily than a blurred genuine. It is necessary only to observe the unwritten laws of society—to be honest enough to keep out of prison, and generous enough to subscribe in public—where the subscription can be defended as an investment. In a new country, character is essential; in the old, reputation is sufficient. In the new, they find what a man really is; in the old, he generally passes for what he resembles. People separated only by distance are much nearer together than those divided by the walls of caste.

It is no advantage to live in a great city, where poverty degrades and failure brings despair. The fields are lovelier than paved streets, and the great forests than walls of brick. Oaks and elms are more poetic than steeples and chimneys. In the country is the idea of home. There you see the rising and setting sun; you become acquainted with the stars and clouds. The constellations are your friends. You hear the rain on the roof and listen to the rhythmic sighing of the winds. You are thrilled by the resurrection called Spring, touched and saddened by Autumn, the grace and poetry of death. Every field is a picture, a landscape; every landscape, a poem; every flower, a tender thought; and every forest, a fairy-land. In the country you preserve your identity—your personality. There you are an aggregation of atoms, but in the city you are only an atom of an aggregation.

[Pg 337] Lincoln never finished his education. To the night of his death he was a pupil, a learner, an inquirer, a seeker after knowledge. You have no idea how many men are spoiled by what is called education. For the most part, colleges are places where pebbles are polished and diamonds are dimmed. If Shakespeare had graduated at Oxford, he might have been a quibbling attorney or a hypocritical parson.

Lincoln was a many-sided man, acquainted with smiles and tears, complex in brain, single in heart, direct as light; and his words, candid as mirrors, gave the perfect image of his thought. He was never afraid to ask—never too dignified to admit that he did not know. No man had keener wit or kinder humor. He was not solemn. Solemnity is a mask worn by ignorance and hypocrisy—it is the preface, prologue, and index to the cunning or the stupid. He was natural in his life and thought—master of the story-teller's art, in illustration apt, in application perfect, liberal in speech, shocking Pharisees and prudes, using any word that wit could disinfect.

He was a logician. Logic is the necessary product of intelligence and sincerity. It cannot be learned. It is the child of a clear head and a good heart. He was candid, and with candor often deceived the deceitful. He had intellect without arrogance, genius without pride, and religion without cant—that is to say, without bigotry and without deceit.

[Pg 338] He was an orator—clear, sincere, natural. He did not pretend. He did not say what he thought others thought, but what he thought. If you wish to be sublime you must be natural—you must keep close to the grass. You must sit by the fireside of the heart; above the clouds it is too cold. You must be simple in your speech: too much polish suggests insincerity. The great orator idealizes the real, transfigures the common, makes even the inanimate throb and thrill, fills the gallery of the imagination with statues and pictures perfect in form and color, brings to light the gold hoarded by memory, the miser—shows the glittering coin to the spendthrift, hope—enriches the brain, ennobles the heart, and quickens the conscience. Between his lips, words bud and blossom.

If you wish to know the difference between an orator and an elocutionist—between what is felt and what is said—between what the heart and brain can do together and what the brain can do alone—read Lincoln's wondrous words at Gettysburg, and then the speech of Edward Everett. The oration of Lincoln will never be forgotten. It will live until languages are dead and lips are dust. The speech of Everett will never be read. The elocutionists believe in the virtue of voice, the sublimity of syntax, the majesty of long sentences, and the genius of gesture. The orator loves the real, the simple, the natural. He places the thought above all. He knows that the greatest ideas should be expressed in the shortest words—that the greatest statues need the least drapery.

[Pg 339] Lincoln was an immense personality—firm but not obstinate. Obstinacy is egotism—firmness, heroism. He influenced others without effort, unconsciously; and they submitted to him as men submit to nature, unconsciously. He was severe with himself, and for that reason lenient with others. He appeared to apologize for being kinder than his fellows. He did merciful things as stealthily as others committed crimes. Almost ashamed of tenderness, he said and did the noblest words and deeds with that charming confusion—that awkwardness—that is the perfect grace of modesty. As a noble man, wishing to pay a small debt to a poor neighbor, reluctantly offers a hundred-dollar bill and asks for change, fearing that he may be suspected either of making a display of wealth or a pretense of payment, so Lincoln hesitated to show his wealth of goodness,

even to the best he knew. A great man stooping, not wishing to make his fellows feel that they were small or mean.

He knew others, because perfectly acquainted with himself. He cared nothing for place, but everything for principle; nothing for money, but everything for independence. Where no principle was involved, easily swayed—willing to go slowly, if in the right direction—sometimes willing to stop, but he would not go back, and he would not go wrong. He was willing to wait. He knew that the event was not waiting, and that fate was not the fool of chance. He knew that slavery had defenders, but no defense, and that they who attack the right must wound themselves. He was neither tyrant nor slave. He neither knelt nor scorned. With him, men were neither great nor small,—they were right or wrong. Through manners, clothes, titles, rags and race he saw the real —that which is. Beyond accident, policy, compromise and war he saw the end. He was patient as Destiny, whose undecipherable hieroglyphs were so deeply graven on his sad and tragic face. [Pg 340]

Nothing discloses real character like the use of power. It is easy for the weak to be gentle. Most people can bear adversity. But if you wish to know what a man really is, give him power. This is the supreme test. It is the glory of Lincoln that, having almost absolute power, he never abused it, except upon the side of mercy.

Wealth could not purchase, power could not awe this divine, this loving man. He knew no fear except the fear of doing wrong. Hating slavery, pitying the master—seeking to conquer, not persons, but prejudices—he was the embodiment of the self-denial, the courage, the hope, and the nobility of a nation. He spoke, not to inflame, not to upbraid, but to convince. He raised his hands, not to strike, but in benediction. He longed to pardon. He loved to see the pearls of joy on the cheeks of a wife whose husband he had rescued from death.

Lincoln was the grandest figure of the fiercest civil war. He is the gentlest memory of our world.

[Transcriber's Note: Part of this was omitted in original.] [Pg 341]

[28] *By permission of Mr. C. P. Farrell.*

LINCOLN[29]

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Hurt was the Nation with a mighty wound,
And all her ways were filled with clam'rous sound,
Wailed loud the South with unremitting grief,
And wept the North that could not find relief.
Then madness joined its harshest tone to strife:
A minor note swelled in the song of life
Till, stirring with the love that filled his breast,
But still, unflinching at the Right's behest
Grave Lincoln came, strong-handed, from afar,—
The mighty Homer of the lyre of war!
'Twas he who bade the raging tempest cease,
Wrenched from his strings the harmony of peace,
Muted the strings that made the discord,—Wrong,
And gave his spirit up in thund'rous song.
Oh, mighty Master of the mighty lyre!
Earth heard and trembled at thy strains of fire:
Earth learned of thee what Heav'n already knew,
And wrote thee down among her treasured few!

[29] *By permission of Mrs. Mathilde Dunbar.*

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THE GRANDEST FIGURE[30]

BY WALT WHITMAN

Glad am I to give even the most brief and shorn testimony in memory of Abraham Lincoln. Everything I heard about him authentically, and every time I saw him (and it was my fortune through 1862 to '65 to see, or pass a word with, or watch him, personally, perhaps twenty or thirty times), added to and annealed my respect and love at the passing moment. And as I dwell on what I myself heard or saw of the mighty Westerner, and blend it with the history and literature of my age, and conclude it with his death, it seems like some tragic play, superior to all else I know—vaster and fierier and more convulsionary, for this America of ours, than Eschylus or Shakespeare ever drew for Athens or for England. And then the Moral permeating, underlying all! the Lesson that none so remote, none so illiterate—no age, no class—but may directly or indirectly read!

Abraham Lincoln's was really one of those characters, the best of which is the result of long trains of cause and effect—needing a certain spaciousness of time, and perhaps even remoteness,

to properly enclose them—having unequaled influence on the shaping of this Republic (and therefore the world) as to-day, and then far more important in the future. Thus the time has by no means yet come for a thorough measurement of him. Nevertheless, we who live in his era—who [Pg 343] have seen him, and heard him, face to face, and in the midst of, or just parting from, the strong and strange events which he and we have had to do with, can in some respects bear valuable, perhaps indispensable testimony concerning him.

How does this man compare with the acknowledged "Father of his country?" Washington was modeled on the best Saxon and Franklin of the age of the Stuarts (rooted in the Elizabethan period)—was essentially a noble Englishman, and just the kind needed for the occasions and the times of 1776-'83. Lincoln, underneath his practicality, was far less European, far more Western, original, essentially non-conventional, and had a certain sort of out-door or prairie stamp. One of the best of the late commentators on Shakespeare (Professor Dowden), makes the height and aggregate of his quality as a poet to be, that he thoroughly blended the ideal with the practical or realistic. If this be so, I should say that what Shakespeare did in poetic expression, Abraham Lincoln essentially did in his personal and official life. I should say the invisible foundations and vertebrae of his character, more than any man's in history, were mystical, abstract, moral and spiritual—while upon all of them was built, and out of all of them radiated, under the control of the average of circumstances, what the vulgar call horse-sense, and a life often bent by temporary but most urgent materialistic and political reasons. [Pg 344]

He seems to have been a man of indomitable firmness (even obstinacy) on rare occasions, involving great points; but he was generally very easy, flexible, tolerant, respecting minor matters. I note that even those reports and anecdotes intended to level him down, all leave the tinge of a favorable impression of him. As to his religious nature, it seems to me to have certainly been of the amplest, deepest-rooted kind.

Dear to Democracy, to the very last! And among the paradoxes generated by America not the least curious, was that spectacle of all the kings and queens and emperors of the earth, many from remote distances, sending tributes of condolence and sorrow in memory of one raised through the commonest average of life—a rail-splitter and flat-boatman!

Considered from contemporary points of view—who knows what the future may decide?—and from the points of view of current Democracy and The Union (the only thing like passion or infatuation in the man was the passion for the Union of these States), Abraham Lincoln seems to me the grandest figure yet, on all the crowded canvas of the Nineteenth Century. [Pg 345]

[30] *By permission of David McKay.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY LYMAN ABBOTT

To comprehend the current of history sympathetically, to appreciate the spirit of the age, prophetically, to know what God, by His providence, is working out in the epoch and the community, and so to work with him as to guide the current and embody in noble deeds the spirit of the age in working out the divine problem,—this is true greatness. The man who sets his powers, however gigantic, to stemming the current and thwarting the divine purposes, is not truly great.

Abraham Lincoln was made the Chief Executive of a nation whose Constitution was unlike that of any other nation on the face of the globe. We assume that, ordinarily, public sentiment will change so gradually that the nation can always secure a true representative of its purpose in the presidential chair by an election every four years. Mr. Lincoln held the presidential office at a time when public sentiment was revolutionized in less than four years.... It was the peculiar genius of Abraham Lincoln, that he was able, by his sympathetic insight, to perceive the change in public sentiment without waiting for it to be formulated in any legislative action; to keep pace with it, to lead and direct it, to quicken laggard spirits, to hold in the too ardent, too impetuous, and too hasty ones, and thus, when he signed the emancipation proclamation, to make his [Pg 346] signature, not the act of an individual man, the edict of a military imperator, but the representative act of a great nation. He was the greatest President in American History, because in a time of revolution he grasped the purposes of the American people and embodied them in an act of justice and humanity which was in the highest sense the act of the American Republic.

LINCOLN THE IMMORTAL

'ADDRESS FOR LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY'

ANONYMOUS

From Cæsar to Bismarck and Gladstone the world has had its soldiers and its statesmen, who rose to eminence and power step by step through a series of geometrical progression, as it were, each promotion following in regular order, the whole obedient to well-established and well-understood laws of cause and effect. These were not what we call "men of destiny." They were men of the time. They were men whose career had a beginning, a middle and an end, rounding off a life with a history, full, it may be, of interesting and exciting events, but comprehensible and

comprehensive, simple, clear, complete.

The inspired men are fewer. Whence their emanation, where and how they got their power, and by what rule they lived, moved and had their being, we cannot see. There is no explication to these lives. They rose from shadow and went in mist. We see them, feel them, but we know them not. They arrived, God's word upon their lips; they did their office, God's mantle upon them; and they passed away God's holy light between the world and them, leaving behind a memory half mortal and half myth. From first to last they were distinctly the creations of some special providence, baffling the wit of man to fathom, defeating the machinations of the world, the flesh and the devil until their work was done, and passed from the scene as mysteriously as they had come upon it; Luther, to wit; Shakespeare, Burns, even Bonaparte, the archangel of war, havoc and ruin; not to go back into the dark ages for examples of the hand of God stretched out to raise us, to protect and to cast down. [Pg 347]

Tried by this standard and observed in an historic spirit, where shall we find an illustration more impressive than in Abraham Lincoln, whose life, career and death might be chanted by a Greek chorus as at once the prelude and the epilogue of the most imperial theme of modern times.

Born as low as the Son of God in a hovel, of what real parentage we know not; reared in penury, squalor, with no gleam of light, nor fair surroundings; a young manhood vexed by weird dreams and visions, bordering at times on madness; singularly awkward, ungainly, even among the uncouth about him; grotesque in his aspects and ways, it was reserved for this strange being, late in life, without name or fame or ordinary preparation, to be snatched from obscurity, raised to supreme command, and entrusted with the destiny of a nation. [Pg 348]

The great leaders of his party were made to stand aside; the most experienced and accomplished men of the day, men like Seward and Chase and Sumner, statesmen famous and trained, were sent to the rear; while this comparatively unknown and fantastic figure was brought by unseen hands to the front and given the reins of power. It is entirely immaterial whether we believe in what he said or did, whether we are for him or against him; but for us to admit that during four years, carrying with them such a pressure of responsibility as the world has never witnessed before, he filled the measure of the vast space allotted him in the actions of mankind and in the eyes of the world, is to say that he was inspired of God, for nowhere else could he have acquired the enormous equipment indispensable to the situation.

Where did Shakespeare get his genius? Where did Mozart get his music? Whose hand smote the lyre of the Scottish plowman? and stayed the life of the German priest? God alone; and, so surely as these were raised up by God, inspired by God was Abraham Lincoln, and, a thousand years hence, no story, no tragedy, no epic poem will be filled with greater wonder than that which tells of his life and death. If Lincoln was not inspired of God, then were not Luther, or Shakespeare, or Burns. If Lincoln was not inspired by God, then there is no such thing on earth as special providence or the interposition of divine power in the affairs of men. [Pg 349]

THE CRISIS AND THE HERO

BY FREDERIC HARRISON

The great struggle which has for ever decided the cause of slavery of man to man, is, beyond all question, the most critical which the world has seen since the great revolutionary outburst. If ever there was a question which was to test political capacity and honesty it was this. A true statesman, here if ever, was bound to forecast truly the issue, and to judge faithfully that cause at stake. We know now, it is beyond dispute, that the cause which won was certain to win in the end, that its reserve force was absolutely without limit, that its triumph was one of the turning-points in modern civilization. It was morally certain to succeed, and it did succeed with an overwhelming and mighty success. From first to last both might and right went all one way. The people of England went wholly that way. The official classes went wholly some other way.

One of the great key-notes of England's future is simply this—what will be her relations with that great republic? If the two branches of the Anglo-Saxon race are to form two phases of one political movement, their welfare and that of the world will be signally promoted. If their courses are marred by jealousies or contests, both will be fatally retarded. Real confidence and sympathy extended to that people in the hour of their trial would have forged an eternal bond between us. To discredit and distrust them, then, was to sow deep the seeds of antipathy. Yet, although a union in feeling was of importance so great, although so little would have secured it, the governing classes of England wantonly did all they could to foment a breach. [Pg 350]

A great political judgment fell upon a race of men, our own brothers; the inveterate social malady they inherited came to a crisis. We watched it gather with exultation and insult. There fell on them the most terrible necessity which can befall men, the necessity of sacrificing the flower of their citizens in civil war, of tearing up their civil and social system by the roots, of transforming the most peaceful type of society into the most military. We magnified and shouted over every disaster; we covered them with insult; we filled the world with ominous forebodings and unjust accusations. There came on them one awful hour when the powers of evil seemed almost too strong; when any but a most heroic race would have sunk under the blows of their traitorous kindred. We chose that moment to give actual succour to their enemy, and stabbed

them in the back with a wound which stung their pride even more than it crippled their strength. They displayed the most splendid examples of energy and fortitude which the modern world has seen, with which the defence of Greece against Asia, and of France against Europe, alone can be [Pg 351] compared in the whole annals of mankind. They developed almost ideal civic virtues and gifts; generosity, faith, firmness; sympathy the most affecting, resources the most exhaustless, ingenuity the most magical. They brought forth the most beautiful and heroic character who in recent times has ever led a nation, the only blameless type of the statesman since the days of Washington. Under him they created the purest model of government which has yet been seen on the earth—a whole nation throbbing into one great heart and brain, one great heart and brain giving unity and life to a whole nation. The hour of their success came; unchequered in the completeness of its triumph, unsullied by any act of vengeance, hallowed by a great martyrdom.

LINCOLN[31]

BY JOHN VANCE CHENEY

The hour was on us; where the man?
The fateful sands unfaltering ran,
And up the way of tears
He came into the years,

Our pastoral captain. Forth he came,
As one that answers to his name;
Nor dreamed how high his charge,
His work how fair and large,—

[Pg 352]

To set the stones back in the wall
Lest the divided house should fall,
And peace from men depart,
Hope and the childlike heart.

We looked on him; "'Tis he," we said,
"Come crownless and unheralded,
The shepherd who will keep
The flocks, will fold the sheep."

Unknightly, yes; yet 'twas the mien
Presaging the immortal scene,
Some battle of His wars
Who sealeth up the stars.

Not he would take the past between
His hands, wipe valor's tablets clean,
Commanding greatness wait
Till he stand at the gate;

Not he would cramp to one small head
The awful laurels of the dead,
Time's mighty vintage cup,
And drink all honor up.

No flutter of the banners bold,
Borne by the lusty sons of old,
The haughty conquerors
Sent forward to their wars;

Not his their blare, their pageantries,
Their goal, their glory, was not his;
Humbly he came to keep
The flocks, to fold the sheep.

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The need comes not without the man;
The prescient hours unceasing ran,
And up the way of tears
He came into the years,

Our pastoral captain, skilled to crook
The spear into the pruning hook,
The simple, kindly man,
Lincoln, American.

[31] *By permission of 'The Interior,' Chicago.*

MAJESTIC IN HIS INDIVIDUALITY

Human glory is often fickle as the winds, and transient as a summer day, but Abraham Lincoln's place in history is assured. All the symbols of this world's admiration are his. He is embalmed in song; recorded in history; eulogized in panegyric; cast in bronze; sculptured in marble; painted on canvas; enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen, and lives in the memories of mankind. Some men are brilliant in their times, but their words and deeds are of little worth to history; but his mission was as large as his country, vast as humanity, enduring as time. No greater thought can ever enter the human mind than obedience to law and freedom for all. Some men are not honored by their contemporaries, and die neglected. Here is one more honored than any other man while living, more revered when dying, and destined to be loved to the last syllable of recorded time. He has this three-fold greatness,—great in life, great in death, great in the history of the world. Lincoln will grow upon the attention and affections of posterity, because he saved the life of the greatest nation, whose ever-widening influence is to bless humanity. Measured by this standard, Lincoln shall live in history from age to age.

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Great men appear in groups, and in groups they disappear from the vision of the world; but we do not love or hate men in groups. We speak of Gutenberg and his coadjutors, of Washington and his generals, of Lincoln and his cabinet: but when the day of judgment comes, we crown the inventor of printing; we place the laurel on the brow of the father of his country, and the chaplet of renown upon the head of the saviour of the Republic.

Some men are great from the littleness of their surroundings; but he only is great who is great amid greatness. Lincoln had great associates,—Seward, the sagacious diplomatist; Chase, the eminent financier; Stanton, the incomparable Secretary of War; with illustrious Senators and soldiers. Neither could take his part nor fill his position. And the same law of the coming and going of great men is true of our own day. In piping times of peace, genius is not aflame, and true greatness is not apparent; but when the crisis comes, then God lifts the curtain from obscurity, and reveals the man for the hour.

Lincoln stands forth on the page of history, unique in his character, and majestic in his individuality. Like Milton's angel, he was an original conception. He was raised up for his times. He was a leader of leaders. By instinct the common heart trusted in him. He was of the people and for the people. He had been poor and laborious; but greatness did not change the tone of his spirit, or lessen the sympathies of his nature. His character was strangely symmetrical. He was temperate, without austerity; brave, without rashness; constant, without obstinacy. His love of justice was only equalled by his delight in compassion. His regard for personal honor was only excelled by love of country. His self-abnegation found its highest expression in the public good. His integrity was never questioned. His honesty was above suspicion. He was more solid than brilliant; his judgment dominated his imagination; his ambition was subject to his modesty, and his love of justice held the mastery over all personal considerations. Not excepting Washington, who inherited wealth and high social position, Lincoln is the fullest representative American in our national annals. He had touched every round in the human ladder. He illustrated the possibilities of our citizenship. We are not ashamed of his humble origin. We are proud of his greatness.

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IX
LINCOLN'S YARNS AND SAYINGS

[Pg 359]

THE QUESTION OF LEGS

Whenever the people of Lincoln's neighborhood engaged in dispute; whenever a bet was to be decided; when they differed on points of religion or politics; when they wanted to get out of trouble, or desired advice regarding anything on the earth, below it, above it, or under the sea, they went to "Abe."

Two fellows, after a hot dispute lasting some hours, over the problem as to how long a man's legs should be in proportion to the size of his body, stamped into Lincoln's office one day and put the question to him.

Lincoln listened gravely to the arguments advanced by both contestants, spent some time in "reflecting" upon the matter, and then, turning around in his chair and facing the disputants, delivered his opinion with all the gravity of a judge sentencing a fellow-being to death.

"This question has been a source of controversy," he said, slowly and deliberately, "for untold ages, and it is about time it should be definitely decided. It has led to bloodshed in the past, and there is no reason to suppose it will not lead to the same in the future.

"After much thought and consideration, not to mention mental worry and anxiety, it is my opinion, all side issues being swept aside, that a man's lower limbs, in order to preserve harmony of proportion, should be at least long enough to reach from his body to the ground."

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A FAMOUS STORY—HOW LINCOLN WAS PRESENTED WITH A KNIFE!

"In the days when I used to be 'on the circuit,'" said Lincoln, "I was accosted in the cars by a stranger, who said:

"'Excuse me, sir, but I have an article in my possession which belongs to you.'

"'How is that?' I asked, considerably astonished.

"The stranger took a jack-knife from his pocket. 'This knife,' said he, 'was placed in my hands some years ago, with the injunction that I was to keep it until I found a man uglier than myself. I have carried it from that time to this. Allow me now to say, sir, that I think you are fairly entitled to the property.'"

"FOOLING" THE PEOPLE

Lincoln was a strong believer in the virtue of dealing honestly with the people.

"If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow-citizens," he said to a caller at the White House, "you can never regain their respect and esteem. [Pg 361]

"It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time."

LINCOLN'S NAME FOR "WEEPING WATER"

"I was speaking one time to Mr. Lincoln," said Governor Saunders, of Nebraska, "of a little Nebraskan settlement on the Weeping Waters, a stream in our State."

"'Weeping Water!'" said he.

"Then with a twinkle in his eye, he continued.

"'I suppose the Indians out there call it Minneboohoo, don't they? They ought to, if Laughing Water is Minnehaha in their language.'"

LINCOLN'S CONFAB WITH A COMMITTEE ON GRANT'S WHISKY

Just previous to the fall of Vicksburg, a self-constituted committee, solicitous for the morale of our armies, took it upon themselves to visit the President and urge the removal of General Grant. [Pg 362]

In some surprise Mr. Lincoln inquired, "For what reason?"

"Why," replied the spokesman, "he drinks too much whisky."

"Ah!" rejoined Mr. Lincoln, dropping his lower lip. "By the way, gentlemen, can either of you tell me where General Grant procures his whisky? because, if I can find out, I will send every general in the field a barrel of it!"

MILD REBUKE TO A DOCTOR

Dr. Jerome Walker, of Brooklyn, told how Mr. Lincoln once administered to him a mild rebuke. The doctor was showing Mr. Lincoln through the hospital at City Point.

"Finally, after visiting the wards occupied by our invalid and convalescing soldiers," said Dr. Walker, "we came to three wards occupied by sick and wounded Southern prisoners. With a feeling of patriotic duty, I said: 'Mr. President, you won't want to go in there; they are only rebels.'

"I will never forget how he stopped and gently laid his large hand upon my shoulder and quietly answered, 'You mean Confederates!' And I have meant Confederates ever since.

"There was nothing left for me to do after the President's remark but to go with him through these three wards; and I could not see but that he was just as kind, his hand-shakings just as hearty, his interest just as real for the welfare of the men, as when he was among our own soldiers." [Pg 363]

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X
FROM LINCOLN'S SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

LINCOLN'S LIFE AS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

[Pg 365]

The compiler of the "Dictionary of Congress" states that while preparing that work for publication in 1858, he sent to Mr. Lincoln the usual request for a sketch of his life, and received the following reply:

"Born February 12, 1809, in Hardin Co., Kentucky.

Education Defective. Profession a Lawyer. Have been a Captain of Volunteers in Black Hawk War. Postmaster at a very small office. Four times a member of the Illinois Legislature, and was a member of the Lower House of Congress.

Yours, etc.
A. Lincoln."

THE INJUSTICE OF SLAVERY

(*Speech at Peoria, Ill., October 16, 1854*)

This declared indifference, but, as I must think, covert zeal, for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself; I hate it because it deprives [Pg 366] our republic of an example of its just influence in the world; enables the enemies of free institutions with plausibility to taunt us as hypocrites; causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity; and, especially, because it forces so many really good men among ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty, criticising the Declaration of Independence and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest.

The doctrine of self-government is right,—absolutely and eternally right,—but it has no just application, as here attempted. Or, perhaps, I should rather say, that whether it has such just application depends upon whether a negro is not, or is, a man. If he is not a man, in that case he who is a man may, as a matter of self-government, do just what he pleases with him. But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say that he, too, shall not govern himself?

When the white man governs himself that is self-government; but when he governs himself, and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism.

What I do say is, that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent.

The master not only governs the slave without his consent, but he governs him by a set of rules altogether different from those which he prescribes for himself. Allow all the governed an equal [Pg 367] voice in the government; that, and that only, is self-government.

Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature—opposition to it, in his love of justice. These principles are an eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow.

Repeal the Missouri Compromise—repeal all compromise—and repeal the Declaration of Independence—repeal all past history—still you cannot repeal human nature.

I particularly object to the new position which the avowed principles of the Nebraska law gives to slavery in the body politic. I object to it, because it assumes that there can be moral right in the enslaving of one man by another. I object to it as a dangerous dalliance for a free people,—a sad evidence that feeling prosperity, we forget right,—that liberty as a principle we have ceased to revere.

Little by little, but steadily as man's march to the grave, we have been giving up the old for the new faith. Near eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but now from that beginning we have run down to the other declaration that for some men to enslave others is a 'sacred right of self-government.' These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and Mammon.

Our republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us purify it. Let us turn and wash it [Pg 368] white, in the spirit, if not in the blood, of the Revolution.

Let us turn slavery from its claims of 'moral right' back upon its existing legal rights, and its arguments of 'necessity.' Let us return it to the position our fathers gave it, and there let it rest in peace.

Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and the practices and policy which harmonize with it. Let North and South—let all Americans—let all lovers of liberty everywhere, join in the great and good work.

If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union, but shall have so saved it, as to make and to keep it forever worthy of saving. We shall have so saved it that the succeeding millions of free, happy people, the world over, shall rise up and call us blessed to the latest generations.

SPEECH AT COOPER INSTITUTE, FEBRUARY 27, 1860

I defy anyone to show that any living man in the whole world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century), declare that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. [Pg 369]

To those who now so declare, I give, not only 'our fathers who framed the government under which we live,' but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed, among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them.

I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so would be to discard all the lights of current experience, to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is, that if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and argument so clear, that even their authority, fairly considered and weighed, cannot stand; and most surely not in a case whereof we ourselves declare they understood the question better than we.

Let all who believe that 'our fathers, who framed the government under which we live,' understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now, speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it.

It is exceedingly desirable that all parts of this great confederacy shall be at peace, and in harmony, one with another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill-temper.

Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can. Judging by all they say and do, and by the subject and nature of their controversy with us, let us determine, if we can, what will satisfy them. [Pg 370]

Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation. But can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States?

If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored—contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and wrong, vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of 'don't care' on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and calling, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did.

Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty, as we understand it. [Pg 371]

FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS, MARCH 4, 1861

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States, that by the occasion of a Republican administration, their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed, and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you.

I do but quote from one of those speeches, when I declared that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery, in the States where it exists."

I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so. Those who nominated and elected me did so with the full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. I now reiterate these sentiments, and in doing so, I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming administration.

I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservations, and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules; and, while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed, than to violate any of them, trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional. [Pg 372]

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a president under our national constitution. During that period, fifteen different and very distinguished citizens have in succession administered the executive branch of the government. They have conducted it

through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with this scope for precedent, I now enter upon the same task, for the brief constitutional term of four years, under great and peculiar difficulties.

I hold, that in the contemplation of universal law and the Constitution, the union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our national Constitution, and the Union will endure forever.

To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak? Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be well to ascertain why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while any [Pg 373] portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from? Will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right plainly written in the Constitution has been denied? I think not. Happily, the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this.

All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions, in the Constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provision for all possible questions.

Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by National or by State authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. Must Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease. There is no alternative for continuing the government but acquiescence [Pg 374] on the one side or the other.

If the minority will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which, in turn, will ruin and divide them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such a minority. For instance, why should not any portion of a new confederacy, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it?

All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this. Is there such perfect identity of interest among the States to compose a new union as to produce harmony only, and prevent renewed secession? Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate; we cannot move our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face; and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them.

Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical questions as to terms [Pg 375] of intercourse are again upon you.

Why should there not be patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of nations with His eternal truth and justice be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of government under which we live, this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief, and have with equal wisdom provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon the whole subject—nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you, in hot haste, to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time, but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new administration will have no immediate power if it wanted to change either. If it were admitted [Pg 376] that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulties.

In your hands, my dissatisfied countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it.

I am about to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle field and patriot grave, to every loving heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

LETTER TO HORACE GREELEY

The Administration, during the early months of the war for the Union, was greatly perplexed as to the proper mode of dealing with slavery, especially in the districts occupied by the Union forces. In the summer of 1862, when Mr. Lincoln was earnestly contemplating his Proclamation [Pg 377] of Emancipation, Horace Greeley, the leading Republican editor, published in his paper, the New York Tribune, a severe article in the form of a letter addressed to the President, taking him to task for failing to meet the just expectations of twenty millions of loyal people. Thereupon Mr. Lincoln sent him the following letter:—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,
AUGUST 22, 1862.

HON. HORACE GREELEY.

Dear Sir: I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed to myself through the New York Tribune. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not now and here controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not now and here argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend, whose heart I have always supposed to be right. As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the National authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be "The Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not [Pg 378] either to save or destroy Slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about Slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less, whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more, whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views. I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free.

Yours,
A. LINCOLN.

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

(*Issued January 1, 1863*)

Now therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power vested in me as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, in a time of actual armed rebellion against the authority of the Government of the United States, as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one [Pg 379] thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the date of the first above-mentioned order, designate as the States and parts of States therein the people whereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, La Fourche, St. Mary, St. Martin and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued; and by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within designated States, or parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free, and that the Executive

Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of the said persons; and I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to [Pg 380] them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages. And I further declare and make known that such persons, of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION

(*Issued October 3, 1863*)

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful Providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequaled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to invite and provoke the aggression of foreign states, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has [Pg 381] prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict.

The needful diversion of wealth and strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense has not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship.

The ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made by the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human council hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out, these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverentially, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice, by the whole American people.

I recommend too, that, while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and [Pg 382] fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity, and union.

ADDRESS ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF GETTYSBURG

(*At the Dedication of the Cemetery, November 19, 1863*)

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but [Pg 383] it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

REMARKS TO NEGROES IN THE STREETS OF RICHMOND

The President walked through the streets of Richmond—without a guard except a few seamen—in company with his son "Tad," and Admiral Porter, on the 4th of April, 1865, the day following the evacuation of the city. Colored people gathered about him on every side, eager to see and thank their liberator. Mr. Lincoln addressed the following remarks to one of these gatherings:

My poor friends, you are free—free as air. You can cast off the name of slave and trample upon it; it will come to you no more. Liberty is your birthright. God gave it to you as he gave it to [Pg 384] others, and it is a sin that you have been deprived of it for so many years.

But you must try to deserve this priceless boon. Let the world see that you merit it, and are able to maintain it by your good works. Don't let your joy carry you into excesses; learn the laws, and obey them. Obey God's commandments, and thank Him for giving you liberty, for to Him you owe all things. There, now, let me pass on; I have but little time to spare. I want to see the Capitol, and must return at once to Washington to secure to you that liberty which you seem to prize so highly.

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS, MARCH 4, 1865

Fellow-countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented.

The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as [Pg 385] to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this, four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgents' agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide its effects by negotiation.

Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

The prayer of both could not be answered—those of neither have been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."

If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. [Pg 386]

Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

THE END.

Transcriber's Notes:

Table of Contents Part VI:
A section of Tributes beginning on Page 191 is not included in the table. Unchanged.

Table of Contents Part VII:
A section called 'Lincoln, The Tender-Hearted' by H. W. Botton should be by H. W. Bolton. Changed.

Table of Contents Part IX:
A section called "'Fooling' the People" on page 360 is not included in the table of contents. Unchanged.

Table of Contents Part IX:
A section called 'Lincoln's confab with a Committee on Grant's Whisky' is not included in the

table of contents. Unchanged.

Page 3:
more definite than a similarity of Christain names
Typo: Changed to [Christian].

Page 82:
answer inpregnable with facts.
Spelling of inpregnable is probably correct for that time. Unchanged.

Page 95:
buy and exhibit him as a zoological curriosity.
Likely misspelling. Changed to curiosity

Page 278:
fac-simile
Spelled as in original. Unchanged.

Hyphenation appears as either option in original:

- careworn/care-worn.
- deathblow/death-blow
- dooryard/door-yard
- lifelong/life-long
- masterpiece/master-piece
- stepbrother/step-brother

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