

Class \_\_\_\_\_.

Book \_\_\_\_\_.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT







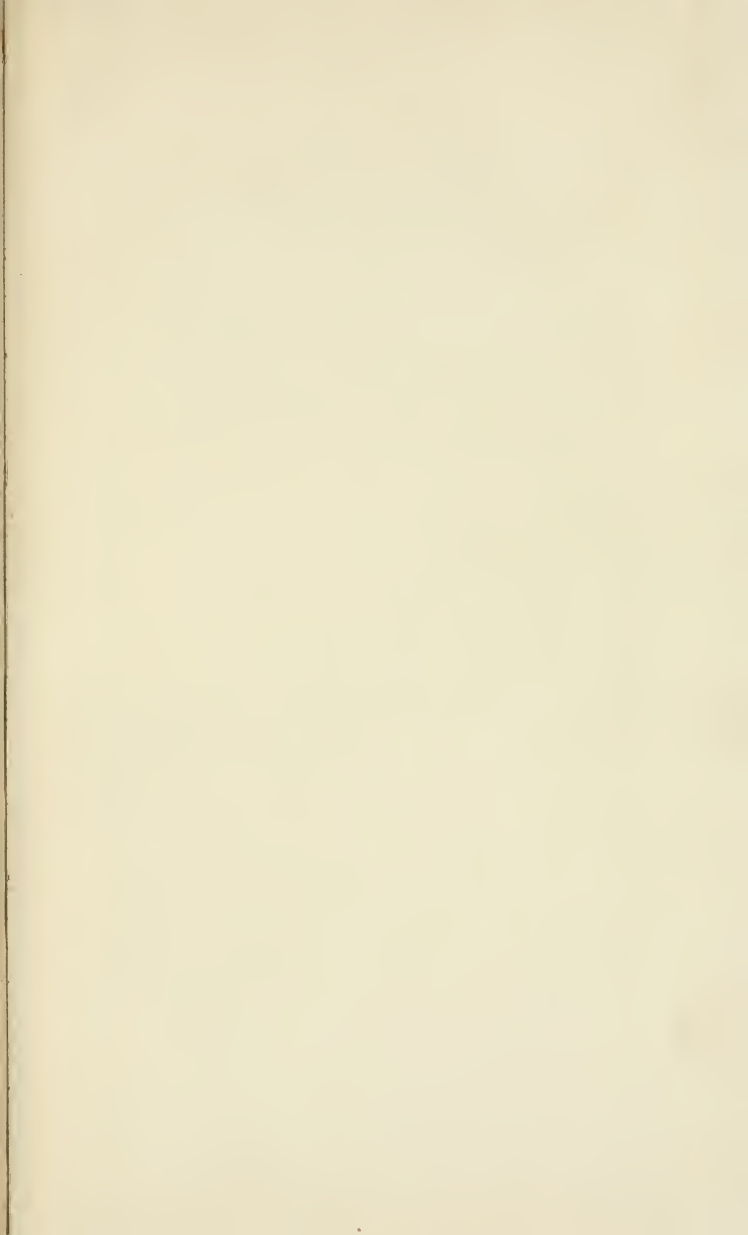
LIFE AND WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
"

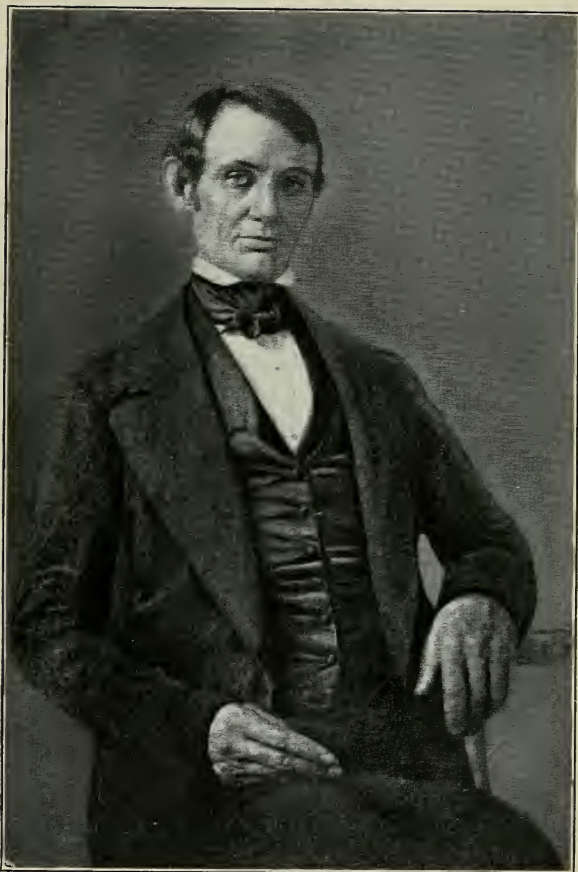
CENTENARY EDITION

EDITED BY MARION MILLS MILLER, LITT. D.  
(PRINCETON)

IN NINE VOLUMES: VOLUME I







FROM DAGUERRETYPE OWNED BY ROBERT T. LINCOLN. COURTESY OF M'CLURE'S MAGAZINE

## THE EARLIEST PORTRAIT OF LINCOLN

At the age of thirty-nine (1848)

# LINCOLN THE CITIZEN

(FEBRUARY 12, 1809, TO MARCH 4, 1861)

BY

HENRY C. WHITNEY

AUTHOR OF "LIFE ON THE CIRCUIT WITH LINCOLN"

---

NEW YORK

THE CURRENT LITERATURE PUBLISHING CO.

1907

E 457  
.91  
1907  
2d set

LIBRARY of CONGRESS  
Two Copies Received  
NOV 9 1907  
Copyright Entry  
Nov 7, 1907  
CLASS A XXo. No.  
192368  
COPY A.

Copyright, 1892, by Henry C. Whitney

Copyright, 1907, by William H. Lambert



THE QUINN & BODEN CO. PRESS  
RAHWAY, N. J.



# Fold-out Placeholder

This fold-out is being digitized, and will be inserted at a future date



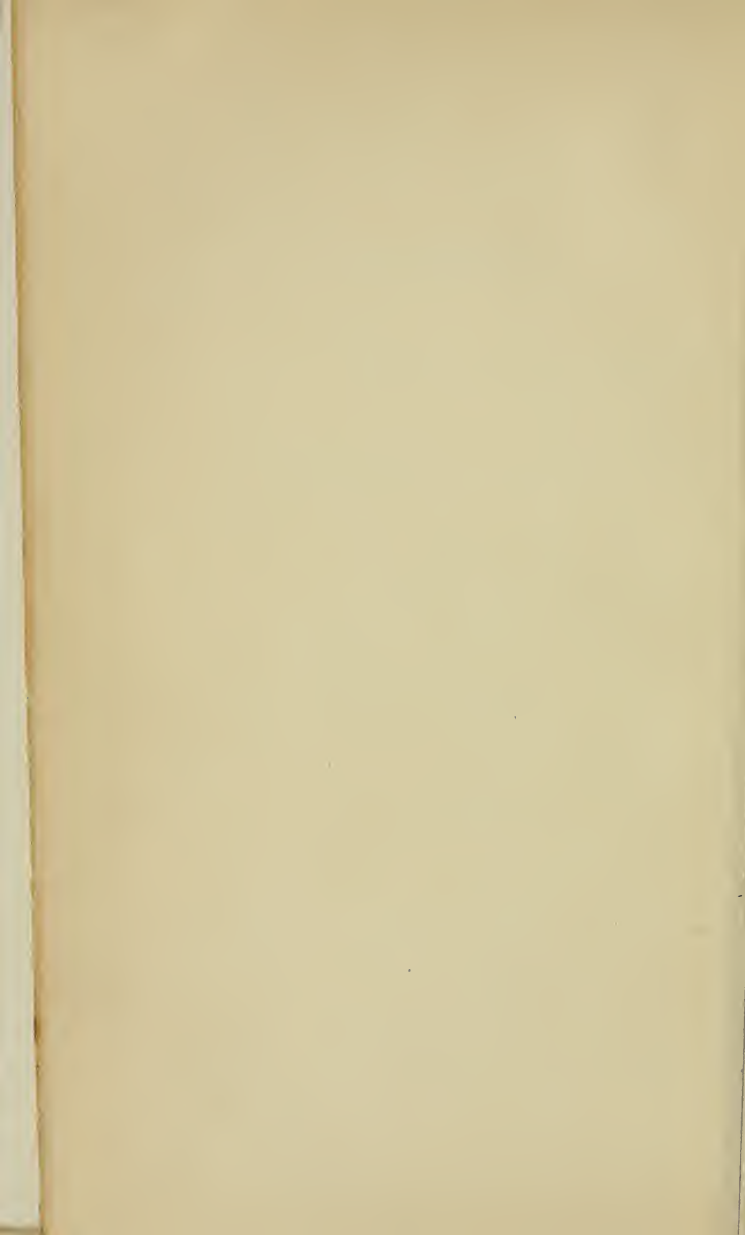
# Fold-out Placeholder

-out is being digitized, and will be inserted at a future date.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
THE PARENTS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN . . . . .	ix
By IDA M. TARBELL	
CHAPTER	
I. LINEAGE, PARENTAGE, AND CHILDHOOD . . . . .	1
II. YOUTH . . . . .	24
III. LINCOLN AS A LABORER . . . . .	49
IV. LINCOLN AS A STOREKEEPER . . . . .	78
V. SOLDIER, SURVEYOR, AND POSTMASTER . . . . .	93
VI. LINCOLN'S EARLY LOVE ROMANCE . . . . .	107
VII. STATE LEGISLATOR . . . . .	122
VIII. CONGRESSMAN . . . . .	151
IX. CITIZEN AND NEIGHBOR . . . . .	161
X. LAWYER . . . . .	172
XI. LINCOLN'S RELIGION . . . . .	201
XII. LINCOLN'S MENTAL AND MORAL NATURES . . . . .	208
XIII. FREE-SOIL ADVOCATE . . . . .	241
XIV. ATTAINMENT OF THE PRESIDENCY . . . . .	254
XV. INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT . . . . .	294



## PREFACE

No claim is made for the present edition that it is unabridged or definitive. The desire has been to make a reading and, indeed, *working* edition suited to the needs of the average American, to whom everything which reveals the character of the great President is of interest, and anything which does not afford such revelation, even though penned with Lincoln's hand, and signed with his name, is without real associational value.

For practical considerations the chronological sequence of the definitive editions has been subordinated to logical sequence. Speeches are arranged by themselves, state papers by themselves, etc.; the items of each class being arranged in chronological order. Letters are docketed alphabetically by the names of addressees. The edition is thus made self-indexing, a desirable characteristic of a working library.

For further explanation of the method of book-making employed, the reader is referred to the prefaces of each volume. Here, or in the immediate text concerned, will be found the various acknowledgments to publishers, collectors, and authors for the derivation of material.

It suffices to say in this preface that Mr. Francis D. Tandy has generously given the editor general permission to make liberal use of any material in his Gettysburg Edition to which others than himself have no prior rights.

For permission to use the biography of Lincoln in the present volume thanks are due to William H. Lambert, President of the Lincoln Fellowship. He is the owner of the voluminous MS. on Lincoln left by the late Henry C. Whitney, one of Lincoln's legal associates and personal and political friends. From this the present work on "Lincoln the Citizen" has been extracted. It is confidently expected that the public will find in this character study a personal view of that most human of great men, which is second in general interest only to the life of Lincoln by his law partner, William H. Herndon, and surpasses this in many particular points of keen insight and generous appreciation. Mr. Whitney's "Life" ends at Lincoln's inauguration. After that the biography of the President merges into the history of his country, to the many works upon which the reader is referred.

Thanks are extended to The Lincoln Farm Association, and particularly to its secretary, Richard Lloyd Jones, for permission to use Miss Tarbell's article, "The Parents of Abraham Lincoln" as an introduction to "Lincoln the Citizen."

The mutual helpfulness of these Lincoln associations and publications is the best of tributes to the beneficent influence of that great man to whom "charity" in the broad sense of loving aid and consideration extended to all men was the dearest of words and things. In the hope that we, too, may share in the honor of promoting the fraternal movement which is preparing to inaugurate a new century of the higher patriotism represented by Abraham Lincoln, we present this Centenary Edition of his Life and Works.

# THE PARENTS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

IDA M. TARBELL

AMONG the many wrongs of history—and they are legion—there is none in our American chapter at least which is graver than that which has been done the parents, and particularly the mother, of Abraham Lincoln. Of course, I refer to the widespread tradition that Lincoln was born of that class known in the South as “poor whites,” that his father was not Thomas Lincoln, as his biographers insist on declaring, but a rich and cultured planter of another State than Kentucky, and that his mother not only gave a fatherless boy to the world, but herself was a nameless child. The tradition has always lacked particularity. For instance, there has been large difference of opinion about the planter who fathered Abraham, who he was and where he came from. One story calls him Enloe, another Calhoun, another Hardin, and several different States claim him. Only five years ago a book was published in North Carolina to prove that Lincoln’s father was a resident of that State. The bulk of the testimony offered in this instance came from men and women who had been born long after Abraham Lincoln, had never seen him, and never heard the tale they repeated until long after his election to the Presidency. Of the truth of these state-

ments as to Lincoln's origin no proof has ever been produced. They were rumors, diligently spread in the first place by those who for political purposes were glad to belittle a political opponent. They grew with telling, and, curiously enough, two of Lincoln's best friends helped perpetuate them—Messrs. Lamon and Herndon—both of whom wrote lives of the President which are of great interest and value. But neither of these men was a student, and they did not take the trouble to look for records of Mr. Lincoln's birth. They accepted rumors and enlarged upon them. Indeed, it was not until perhaps twenty-five years ago that the matter was taken up seriously and an investigation begun. This has been going on at intervals ever since, until I venture to say that few persons born in a pioneer community, as Lincoln was, and as early as 1809, have their lineage on both sides as clearly established as that of Abraham Lincoln. It takes, indeed, a most amazing credulity for any one to believe the stories I have alluded to after having looked at the records of his family. Lincoln himself, backed by the record in the Lincoln family Bible, is the first authority for the time and place of his birth, as well as the names of his father and mother. The father, Thomas Lincoln, far from being a "poor white," was the son of a prosperous Kentucky pioneer, a man of honorable and well-established lineage who had come from Virginia as a friend of Daniel Boone, and had there bought large tracts of land and begun to grow up with the country, where he was killed by the Indians. He left a large family. By the law of Kentucky the estate went mainly to the oldest son, and the youngest, Thomas Lincoln, was left to shift for

himself. This youngest son grew to manhood, and on June 10, 1806, was married, at Beechland, Ky., to a young woman of a family well known in the vicinity, Nancy Hanks. There is no doubt whatever about the time and the place of their marriage. All the legal documents required in Kentucky at that period for a marriage are in existence. Not only have we the bond and the certificate, but the marriage is duly entered in a list of marriage returns made by Jesse Head, one of the best-known early Methodist ministers of Kentucky. It is now to be seen in the records of Washington County, Kentucky. There is even in existence a very full and amusing account of the wedding and the fanfare which followed, by a guest who was present, and who for years after was accustomed to visit Thomas and Nancy. This guest, Christopher Columbus Graham, a unique and perfectly trustworthy man, a prominent citizen of Louisville, died only a few years ago.

But while these documents dispose effectually of the question of the parentage of Lincoln, they do not, of course, clear up the shadow which hangs over the parentage of his mother. Is there anything to show that Nancy Hanks herself was of as clear and clean lineage as her husband? There had been nothing whatever until, a few years ago, through the efforts of Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock of Cambridge, Mass., who had in preparation the genealogy of the Hanks family in America, a little volume was published, showing what she had established in regard to Nancy Hanks. Mrs. Hitchcock had begun at the far end of the line—the arrival of one Benjamin Hanks in Massachusetts in 1699.

She discovered that one of his sons, William, moved to Virginia, and that in the latter part of the eighteenth century his children formed in Amelia County of that State a large settlement. All the records of these families she found in the Hall of Records in Richmond. When the migration into Kentucky began, late in the century, it was joined by many members of the Hanks settlement in Amelia County. Among others to go was Joseph Hanks with his wife, Nancy Shipley Hanks, and their children. Mrs. Hitchcock traced this Joseph Hanks, by means of land records, to Nelson County, Kentucky, where she found that he died in 1793, leaving behind a will, which she discovered in the records of Bardstown, Ky. This will shows that at the time of his death Joseph Hanks had eight living children, to whom he bequeathed property. The youngest of these was "My daughter Nancy," as the will puts it.

Mrs. Hitchcock's first query, on reading this will, was: "Can it be that this little girl—she was but nine years old when her father died—is the Nancy Hanks who sixteen years later became the mother of Abraham Lincoln?" She determined to find out. She learned from relations and friends of the family of Joseph Hanks still living that, soon after her father's death, Nancy went to live with an uncle, Richard Berry, who, the records showed, had come from Virginia to Kentucky at the same time that Joseph Hanks came. A little further research, and Mrs. Hitchcock found that there had been brought to light through the efforts of friends of Abraham Lincoln all the documents to show that in 1806 Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln were married at Beechland, Ky. Now,



one of these documents was a marriage bond. It was signed by Richard Berry, the uncle of the little girl recognized in the will of Joseph Hanks. Here, then, was the chain complete. The marriage bond and marriage returns not only showed that Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln were married regularly three years before the birth of Abraham Lincoln, thus forever settling any question as to the parentage of Lincoln, but they showed that this Nancy Hanks was the one named in the will. The suspicion in regard to the origin of Lincoln's mother was removed by this discovery of the will, for the recognition of any one as his child by a man in his will is considered by the law as sufficient proof of paternity.

Now what sort of people were Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks? It has been inferred by those who have made no investigation of Thomas Lincoln's life that Nancy Hanks made a very poor choice of a husband. The facts do not entirely warrant this theory. Thomas Lincoln had been forced from his boyhood to shift for himself in a young and undeveloped country. He is known to have been a man who in spite of this wandering life contracted no bad habits. He was temperate and honest, and his name is recorded in more than one place in the records of Kentucky. He was a church-goer, and, if tradition may be believed, a stout defender of his peculiar religious views. He held advanced ideas of what was already an important public question in Kentucky, the right to hold negroes as slaves. One of his old friends has said of him and his wife, Nancy Hanks, that they were "just steeped full of notions about the wrongs of slavery and the rights of men, as ex-

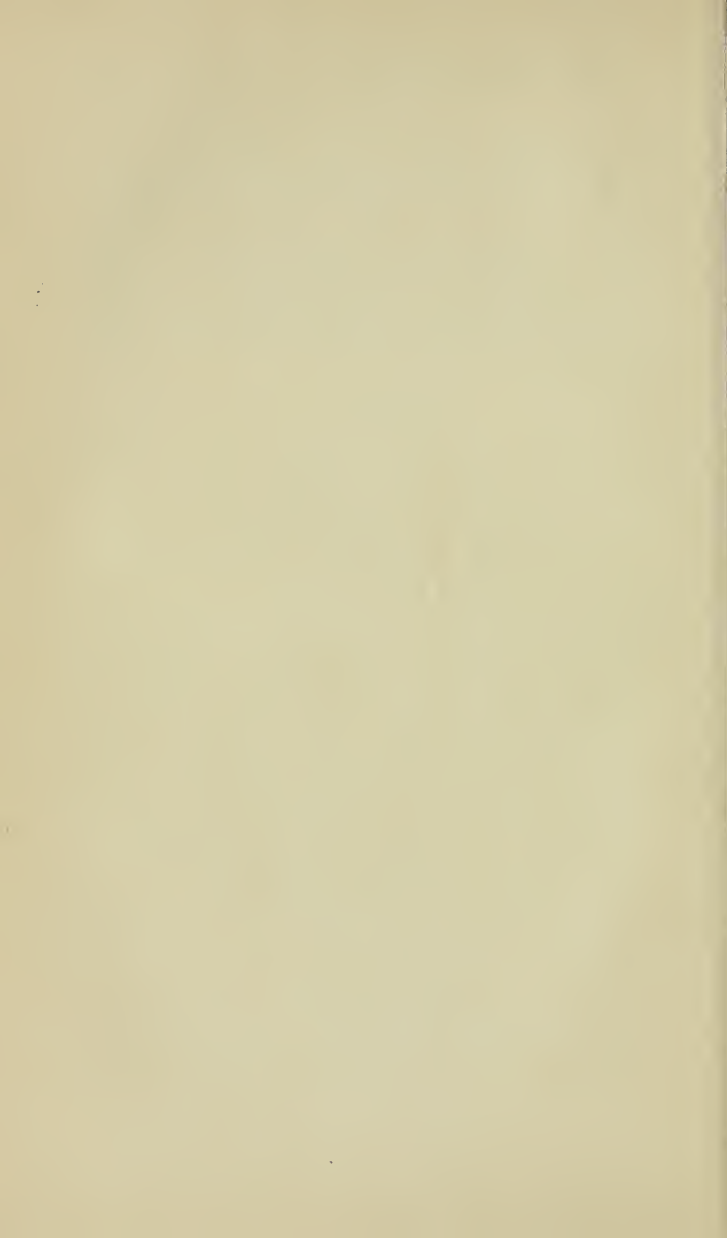
plained by Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine." These facts show that he must have been a man of some natural intelligence. He had a trade and owned a farm.

As for Nancy Hanks, less that is definite is known of her. In nature, in education, and in ambition she was, if tradition is to be believed, far above her husband. She was famous for her spinning and her household accomplishments, it is said.

It was to these two people, then, that Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809. His birthplace was a farm Thomas Lincoln owned, and near Elizabeth, Ky. The home into which the little chap came was the ordinary one of the poorer Western pioneer—a one-roomed cabin with a huge outside chimney. Although in many ways it was no doubt uncomfortable, there is no reason to believe it was an unhappy or a squalid one. The log house, with its great fireplace and heavy walls, is not such a bad place to live in—some of us are thankful to get away into the country to one now and then even in winter. Its furniture was simple, and no doubt much of it home-made. The very utensils were of home manufacture. The feathers in the beds were plucked from the geese Nancy Lincoln raised. She patched her own quilts, spun her own linsey-woolsey. No doubt Thomas Lincoln made Abraham's cradle and Nancy Lincoln spun the cloth for his first garments. They raised their own corn, dried their own fruit, hunted their own game, raised their own pork and beef. It was the hard life of the pioneer where every man provides for his own needs. It had discomforts, but it had, too, that splendid independence and resourceful-

ness which comes only from being sufficient to your own needs.

That the two people who endured its hardships and made in spite of them a home where a boy could conceive and nourish such ideals and enthusiasms as inspired Abraham Lincoln from his early years should have their names darkened by unfounded suspicions is a cruel injustice against which every honest and patriotic American ought to set his face.



# LINCOLN THE CITIZEN

## CHAPTER I

### LINEAGE, PARENTAGE, AND CHILDHOOD

IN the year 1619, in the then considerable, rudely built, and socially isolated city of Norwich, the shire town of Norfolk County, England, in one of the humble families, was born a child who, in due course of time, received the baptismal appellation of SAMUEL LINCOLN.

During the same year, at Jamestown, a newly founded hamlet in the wilderness of North America, a vessel, in stress of want, cast anchor in the river and offered in exchange for supplies, as their sole vendible property, sundry human chattels, which the Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony, then in command, chiefly from considerations of humanity to the destitute sailors, accepted, and the transaction was deemed of sufficient consequence to be thus jotted down in the sober chronicles of a town gossip: "*About the last of August came in a Dutch man of warre that sold us twenty negass.*" The vessel, thus relieved, proceeded home, and, coincident with its arrival in Holland, an incident occurred in a neighboring harbor, which is thus narrated by the local historian:

So they left that goodly and pleasant City of Leyden, which had been their resting place for above eleven

years: but they knew that they were pilgrims and strangers here below, and looked not much on these things, but lifted up their eyes to Heaven, their dearest Country where God had prepared for them a City (Heb. xi. 16) and therein quieted their spirits. When they came to Delfs-Haven, they found the ship and all things ready, and such of their friends as could not come with them, followed after them, and sundry came from Amsterdam to see them shipt, and to take their leavs of them. . . . But the tide (which stays for no man) calling them away that were thus loathe to depart, their reverend pastor falling down on his knees, and they all with him, with watery cheeks, commended them with most fervent prayers unto the Lord and his blessing; and then, with mutual embraces and many tears, they took their leavs one of another, which proved to be the last leave to many of them.

These several events did not appear to have any interrelation, but to be as remote in their moral as in their geographical association; but a retrospective glance reveals the truth that these incidents were acts in the same drama, cantos in the same epic, complementary in the moral world, the bane and antidote of the greatest moral offence of modern days.

When Samuel Lincoln attained the age of eighteen, he joined in the migration to New England then rife, and landed at Salem in Massachusetts, where he became an apprentice to Francis Lawes, a weaver, remaining until he attained his majority, when he shouldered his bundle and made his way on foot through the wilderness where now are Swampscott, Lynn, Chelsea, Boston, Braintree, and Quincy, to the hamlet of Hingham, which had been founded in the fall of 1635. In this same little hamlet, there had settled, in the year 1636, Thomas Lincoln, the miller, Thomas Lincoln, the cooper, and Thomas Lincoln, the weaver, the latter being a brother

to Samuel; and in 1638, Thomas Lincoln, the farmer, and his brother Stephen, settled there. All came from the county of Norfolk, England: Thomas, the weaver, from Hingham, Samuel from Norwich, Thomas, the farmer, and Stephen from Windham.

A great-grandson of Thomas, the cooper, was Benjamin, a Major General in the Revolutionary War, the same who received the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, who also quelled "Shays'" Rebellion in Western Massachusetts in 1787, and to whom, when Knox retired, was tendered the position of Secretary of War in Washington's Cabinet, which honor he declined. Another descendant of Samuel Lincoln was Levi Lincoln, who was a member of Congress and Attorney General of the United States in Jefferson's Cabinet from March 5, 1801, to December 23, 1805. President Madison appointed him a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, but Lincoln was obliged to decline the appointment on account of a failure of his eyesight. A son of this Lincoln was named Levi also. He filled many high offices, including that of Governor of Massachusetts from 1825 to 1834, and Member of Congress from 1835 to 1841, and was prominently mentioned as a candidate for President of the United States. He had a brother, Enoch, who was a Member of Congress from 1818 to 1826, and Governor of Maine from 1827 till his death. These illustrious men were cousins of Abraham Lincoln in a remote degree. The similarity of their Hebraic names to those of the immediate ancestry of the President cannot fail to be noticed.

Samuel Lincoln had ten children, one of whom was Mordecai, who was born at Hingham in 1657, and became a blacksmith at Hull, where he married, and in 1704 removed to the neighboring town of Scituate, where he established a furnace for the smelting of ore. He was a man of substance, and in his will bequeathed lands in both Hingham and Scituate, a saw- and grist-mill, iron works, and considerable money; he also made provision for a collegiate education for three grandsons. Of his five children, Mordecai Jr. the eldest removed from Scituate, when his eldest son, John, was born, to Monmouth County, New Jersey, and afterwards to Chester, Penn., and Berks County in Pennsylvania in due succession.

The son, John, had five sons, named respectively John, Thomas, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, together with daughters. In 1758 he removed to the northern part of Augusta County, Virginia, which county was, in 1779, detached and joined to Rockingham County.

The son, Abraham, migrated to the northwest part of North Carolina, to the waters of the Catawba River, where he married Miss Mary Shipley, by whom he had three several sons, named, respectively, Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas; and, during or about the year 1780, emigrated with several families of the Berrys and Shipleys to Kentucky, which, though known as "the dark and bloody ground," by reason of the many Indian massacres, was at that time attracting much attention through reports of its extreme fertility made by such explorers as Boone, Newton, and Clark, the explorations of the former commencing in 1769.



There were eight families in all, and these, when they arrived to within twenty-five or thirty miles southeast of Crab Orchard, were attacked by Indians, and some of the party were wounded, and one woman taken prisoner. These immigrants settled in Jefferson and Washington Counties, Kentucky, but the specific settlement of Abraham Lincoln is somewhat obscured by doubt. One excellent biographer fixes the location in Mercer County, but his authority therefor does not appear. Several others, repeating each other, name Floyd's Creek in what is now known as Bullitt County, and, in point of fact, Abraham Lincoln did on May 29, 1780, enter four hundred acres of land on Long Run, a branch of Floyd's fork of Salt River, whence there is reason to suppose that upon that land he made his settlement. Hon. J. L. Nall, a great-grandson of the pioneer, and a grandson of his daughter Nancy, who married William Brumfield, avers \* that his ancestor settled at the present site of Louisville, and adduces in support of his statement the concurrent evidence of his great-grandmother, the wife of the pioneer, and who lived to the great age of one hundred and ten years, and of his grandmother; also of his great-uncle, Mordecai Lincoln, all of whom he has heard talk of the subject frequently.

After settling in Kentucky, there were added to his family two daughters, Mary, who afterwards married Ralph Crume, and Nancy, who thereafter married William Brumfield; and in 1784, while he was at work in the clearing, attended only by his youngest son, Thomas, the father of the President, he was fatally shot by an

\* This history was written in 1892.

Indian. The eldest son, Mordecai, shot and killed the savage just as he picked up little Thomas and was starting to make off with his prize, and so the boy was saved to become the father of the President.

There is a dispute about the location of the scene of the tragedy. Mr. Nall writes:

The newspaper article stating that my great-grandfather Lincoln was killed on Lincoln's Run is altogether wrong: he was killed at "Beargrass" fort, as I got it directly from my grandmother, who was in the fort at the time, and knew what she was talking about. While he lived in the fort, he entered four hundred acres of land on Floyd's fork of Salt Run in what is now Bullitt County, Kentucky. . . . My great-grandmother, Mary Shipley Lincoln, moved with my grandfather, William Brumfield, who married her daughter Nancy, to Hardin County, Kentucky, and lived the balance of her long life with them, and died, when I was a good big boy, at the age of one hundred and ten years.

The grandmother and great-grandmother were both present at this tragedy, which must have impressed itself deeply upon their minds. So likewise must it have been ever present to the mind of his grand-uncle, Mordecai, who was one of the chief actors in that frontier tragedy; and the writer of the above, a highly intelligent and, in all respects, honorable man, professes to have heard it often talked of in the family circle. Under ordinary circumstances this would be historically conclusive, and certainly as well attested as historical facts usually are; while nobody fixes authoritatively any different locality.

As militating against the above theory is the following: Abraham Lincoln was killed in 1784. In May, 1780, the town of Louisville was chartered by the Virginia Legislature, and a tract of

one thousand acres plotted into half-acre lots, the boundaries of the thousand acres being First and Twelfth Streets, and Main and Chestnut Streets. A large number of the lots were immediately sold at auction; and in 1782 there were a hundred householders there, and in 1783 a general store was established. In 1782 a fort was erected and designated "Fort Nelson," but nowhere spoken of as the "Beargrass" Fort; and in all the histories of Louisville which profess to include all names of the early pioneers, no mention whatever is made of Abraham Lincoln.

Indeed, in 1784, the date of the pioneer's death, a prosperous village of between 500 and 1,000 inhabitants was located at or near the alleged site of the murder.

The Washington County *Herald* (Springfield, Ky.), deriving its information from old citizens, fixes the site of the tragedy at "Lincoln's Run," about five miles northwest of Springfield. I incline to think this is correct, although I have great faith in Mr. Nall and his general accuracy about these matters.

At this time the Virginia law of primogeniture was in force, and the four hundred acres on Floyd's Creek, became vested in Mordecai, the eldest son. The widow, with her three sons, Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas, and two daughters, Mary and Nancy, removed to Washington County, and, settling on a creek which from that circumstance took the name of "Lincoln's Run," remained there till all the children reached the age of maturity.

Mordecai, as I was informed by President Lincoln himself, married a Miss Mudd, who belonged to one of the best families of Kentucky.

He afterwards became Sheriff of Washington County and likewise represented the same county in the Legislature. He then removed to Grayson County, Kentucky, and ultimately to Hancock County, Illinois, where he died.\* Josiah, the second of this name, removed early in life to Harrison County, in southern Indiana, the second county east of that in which his brother Thomas afterwards settled and there died. The eldest daughter, Mary, married Ralph Crume in Washington County, and removed to Breckenridge County in Kentucky, where they finally died. Nancy, the youngest daughter, married William Brumfield in Washington County and thereafter removed to Hardin, where they ultimately died.

The widow of Abraham Lincoln Sr. took up her abode with her youngest daughter, Nancy (Lincoln) Brumfield, and removed with her to Hardin County, Kentucky, where she died at the age of one hundred and ten years, being buried at Old Mill Creek burying-ground. Mordecai's descendents I have no trace of, except Mrs. Levi Smith, who lived a few years since near Springfield, Ky. The Hon. J. L. Nall, a grandson of the youngest daughter, Nancy (Lincoln) Brumfield, has been a member of the Kentucky Legislature and is now a merchant in southwestern Missouri. A granddaughter of the eldest sister, Mary (Lincoln) Crume, has been an inmate of Mr. Nall's family for thirty-six years past.

While Mr. Lincoln was a Member of Congress

\* "Old men who personally knew Uncle Mordecai said that he was a very smart man and exceedingly popular; but was a sporting man and somewhat reckless."—*Nall*.

in 1848, in reply to inquiries made as to his pedigree, he thus wrote to Hon. Solomon Lincoln of Hingham (since deceased): "My father's name was Thomas, my grandfather's was Abraham, the same as my own. My grandfather went from Rockingham County, in Virginia, to Kentucky about the year 1782. And two years afterwards was killed by the Indians. We have a vague tradition that my great-grandfather went from Pennsylvania to Virginia, and that he was a Quaker. Further than that, I have never heard anything. It may do no harm to say that Abraham and Mordecai are common names in our family." And in a subsequent letter written during the same year, he says: "I have mentioned that my grandfather's name was Abraham. He had, as I think I have heard, four brothers, Isaac, Jacob, Thomas, and John."\*

Thomas Lincoln, the youngest son, who was with his father when the latter lost his life, was by this circumstance, as well as from the paucity of common schools, deprived of an opportunity to acquire an education, and never attended school in his entire life. The era of childhood was to him one of almost unrestrained liberty, privation, and adventure. He was born and spent his entire life on the frontier; had no culture and was ignorant of the restraints and refinement of enlightened society. He was, however, a man of good native abilities and kindly instincts, but with no system, progress, or normal business qualities; hence he made but little provision for the future and took little thought of the morrow.

William G. Greene, who spent one day with

\* See also autobiographical data, sketches, etc., in Letters (to Fell, Hicks, *et al.*) in present edition.

him, and felt interested to make a study of him, avers that he was a man of great native reasoning powers and fine social magnetism, reminding him of his illustrious son; but that, having received no education, drill, or discipline, he knew nothing of persistency of effort in a continuous line, nor of the laws of thrift or financial cause and effect; that he evidently was industrious, though shifting rapidly from one thing to another; that he was candid and truthful, popular with his neighbors, and brave to temerity. He was very stoutly built, about five feet ten inches high, and weighed nearly two hundred pounds; his desire was to be on terms of amity and sociability with every one. He had a great stock of border anecdotes and professed a marvellous proclivity to entertain by "spinning yarns" and narrating his youthful experiences.\* He was an inveterate hunter, as, indeed, were most of the pioneers. In both Kentucky and southern Indiana, in the vicinage of his homes, every man and boy owned a rifle, and it was unsafe and also unusual to go through the woods unarmed. Game, particularly deer, was one of the chief staples of existence. Before Thomas had attained his majority, he wended his way on foot across the Cumberland Mountains, to eastern Tennessee, where he worked on a farm for his uncle Isaac, who had settled on one of the affluents of the Holstein River. Upon his return to Kentucky, he entered as an apprentice to learn the cabinetmaker's trade

\* "I have known several old men who knew Thomas Lincoln intimately. They said he had (as they termed it) good strong horse sense and was an excellent man. He was a cabinet maker and was thrifty when he lived in Kentucky."—*Nall*.

in the shop of one Joseph Hanks, in Elizabethtown, and while thus engaged, he became enamored of a niece of his employer by the name of Nancy Hanks.

It would appear that there were four families which had been closely and intimately associated in geographical propinquity in at least two States, if not in three or four, and were also equally associated in marital bonds. They were the Lincolns, Hankses, Berrys, and Shipleys. They probably were all of Quaker proclivities, and among that worthy class there is a spiritual intimacy unknown in other clanships. The Lincolns and Hankses had been neighbors in Berks County, Pennsylvania. The Berrys, Shipleys, Lincolns, and Hankses had owned a common tie of spiritual community in Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky. One Richard Berry had emigrated from North Carolina to Kentucky in the same party with Abraham Lincoln Sr. They were connected by the fact of both having married sisters of the name of Shipley. A daughter of Richard Berry Sr. had married into the Hanks family in Virginia, the issue being one child, a girl, named Nancy. When the father died the widow, Lucy (Berry) Hanks, migrated with her brothers-in-law to Kentucky, where she married a second time, this husband being one Henry Sparrow, brother to Thomas Sparrow who had espoused her first husband's sister. Prior to this second marriage, the widow and child had found a temporary home with Thomas Sparrow's family, and after the marriage, Nancy, being greatly endeared to her aunt, continued to live there for a time. Dennis Hanks, a cousin, being a child of still another Hanks, was also an in-



mate of the same household. The child Nancy was indifferently called by her true name of Hanks and by her mother's new name, it being also her aunt's name, of Sparrow, and by the latter name both John and Dennis Hanks knew her, and Mrs. Hanaford, in her interesting sketch of Mr. Lincoln's life, so designates her, on the authority of the two Hankses.

After living with her Aunt Sparrow for a while she made a visit to her maternal grandfather, Richard Berry, then living at Mattingly's Mills, on Beech fork, in Washington County, and was induced by him to maintain her abode there, which she did till she was married.

It may be mentioned that, prior to the betrothal of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, he had courted another girl in Hardin County, one Sallie Bush, but that for some reason the courtship either did not mature into an engagement, or else the engagement was broken off; for both parties entered into other matrimonial alliances. Thomas Lincoln's marriage with Nancy Hanks was a highly respectable one, but his alliance with Sallie Bush would have been more *recherché*, for the latter was connected with the *élite* of that part of Kentucky, as I shall hereafter show. No especial reasons are disclosed by history why Nancy did not make her home with her mother, but it is probable that, when she had so many acceptable homes, she selected that which was most agreeable; that in the depressing poverty incident to the frontier families in those days, the step-father might have found it a relief to be disencumbered of the charge and expense of a child to whom he was bound by only a conventional tie. So it is not strange that



this forlorn child was reared in the home of an aunt, and her grandfather committed her destiny to the keeping of this uncouth apprentice, who was as ignorant as a cave-man of the duties and responsibilities of civilized life. At this time Nancy was in her twenty-third year. She was narrow-chested, and of consumptive tendencies. Her complexion was sallow, indicative of bad nutrition. Her hair was dark, her eyes were gray, her forehead was high, and her demeanor was reserved and sad. Moreover, in that primitive region, where there were scarcely any schools even for the better order of people, she had somehow picked up considerable education. She was intellectual in her ambition and tendencies, and she had an excellent memory, good judgment, and a fine sense of propriety. Her nature seems to have been conservative rather than aggressive. Although her ambition was above her surroundings and apparent destiny, she seems to have considered her humble lot and condition in life to be inevitable, and to have made no radical effort to change it, resting content in faithfully performing her wifely and motherly duties. While biographers have not hesitated to shake the genealogical tree vigorously, in order to bring down all possible fruit availing in connection with the *paternal* ancestry of the martyred President, scarcely more than a passing glance has been bestowed upon the pendent boughs which could illustrate the pedigree of the *maternal* line; the general statement being that the mother's name was Nancy Hanks, a daughter of Lucy Hanks. The President himself states it somewhat differently thus: "My parents were both born in Virginia of undistin-

guished family—second families, perhaps, I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks." (This, in its normal and natural sense, implies that his mother was born in a *family*, of course.)

All persons are aware that there is a tendency either of adulation or detraction to locate the origin of notable persons, either in the Elysium of the blest or the limbo of the infernal. In the infinite stretch and realms of the imagination, it is not allowable that a man of unique history should have other than a unique origin. (Romulus and Remus were suckled by a she-wolf; Cæsar descended from Anchises and Venus; and Napoleon from Agamemnon or Achilles.) Despite all fable, Mr. Lincoln had an origin, on both the maternal and paternal line, common to mankind in general. No fact is better avouched than that Richard Berry Sr., the grandfather of the Richard Berry Jr. who became surety on Thomas Lincoln's marriage bond, was also the grandfather of Nancy Hanks. It was so thoroughly well understood in Washington County, Kentucky, as never to have been questioned. It was once disputed whether Abraham Lincoln was born in Washington or Hardin County; but the fact above given was never, and is not now, in question among an entire community who were in a position to know; and if confirmation is needed, the facts that she made her home there as one of the family, that Richard Berry Jr., her cousin, became her guardian and also became surety on the marriage bond, confirm it.

Equally conclusive is the testimony of Hon. J. L. Nall, a grandson of Thomas Lincoln's sister

Nancy, and by far the most intelligent archæologist and genealogist of that branch of the Lincoln family which includes the President. He says absolutely, and with emphasis and circumstance, that Nancy Hanks was an orphan girl at a tender age, her father being a Hanks and her mother a *Berry*, daughter of old Richard Berry. The latter and Abraham Lincoln Sr. married sisters by the name of Shipley, which made the President and his wife remote cousins, having the same great-grandfather and great-grandmother. Mr. Nall says specifically :

Nancy Hanks's mother was a Berry, and she married a Hanks, who was the father of Nancy; he died in Virginia and his widow married Sparrow, and Richard Berry raised Nancy. I had an uncle John N. Hill who died in Hardin County in 1883 at the age of one hundred years. He was one of the most intelligent and best posted men in Kentucky history I ever knew in my life, and this was his version of the relationship, as well as that of my grandfather William Brumfield and grandmother Nancy (Lincoln) Brumfield. Uncle Hill was not related to the Lincoln family, and, of course, had nothing to cover up or conceal. He lived in Washington County in his younger days, right by the side of the Lincoln and Berry family; and was at the wedding when Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married. . . . When Lincoln was nominated for President, there were quite a number of old men living in Hardin County, among whom was old Mr. Riney, to whom the President went to school, and they knew the Lincoln and Berry families and took delight in rehearsing matters they knew in connection with them, and this was their version and understanding. It indeed was not disputed and was not discussed adversely—simply assumed as a well-known fact.

One of the most prominent citizens of Springfield, Ky., Squire R. M. Thompson, feeling the honor of his own family trenched upon by the

innuendo in Lamon's Life of Lincoln concerning Lincoln's parents, himself searched for and found the marriage certificate of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks; and in testifying under oath about it, embraced this paragraph: "The mother of Nancy (Hanks) Lincoln, who was the mother of President Abraham Lincoln, was an own cousin of affiant's mother." This was on the theory that she was a Berry. I repeat, the general and the particular repute that Lucy Hanks was a Berry is as firmly grounded as any fact in Washington County. The *Herald* of that county once stated that she was a Shipley. This was a natural mistake, her grandmother being a Shipley, and the Shipleys and Berrys being closely interrelated; her grandmother and President Lincoln's grandmother were sisters, and, of course, their great-grandparents in that time were identical.

I am not unaware that John and Dennis Hanks call her a *Sparrow*, but they also call the President's grandfather *Mordecai*. There is no real basis for either statement, except as I have stated, nor am I unaware that a higher authority than the Hankses does not concur in my arrangement of the pedigree of Nancy Hanks; but it is a maxim in equity that "what ought to be done is considered as done," and inasmuch as this statement, well known to close students of Lincolnian biography, ought not to have been made, or, if made, ought not to be printed, it should be treated as not made at all; and besides, however wise or interested a party might be in general, it does not follow that he knew any more (or even as much) about such a matter than others. In addition to all, in a conflict of evidence, that

which is most weighty, probable, and convincing, and especially if cumulative, should prevail.

The masterpiece of Lincoln biography, Nicolay's, accepts Mr. Nall's version of Lincoln's paternal grandmother's identity as conclusive over that of Secretary Welles, who was related to the New England branch of the Lincoln family, and, by reason of his coign of vantage, should know whereof he affirmed. This distinguished and accurate kinsman had equal opportunities to know the pedigree in the maternal line, and his comments in that matter are as reliable as are the others. Superimposed upon all is the universal knowledge of the fact at the paternal home of the party herself, and which is cumulative and no wise dependent upon the clear and otherwise derived knowledge of Mr. Nall. I think I have read all that has been published on this subject; and, while it is of none but speculative interest, it is due to history as well as to the memory of a woman who should be revered by the civilized world everywhere, that her own and her mother's honor and reputation should be assured. Mr. Lincoln says his mother was born of an undistinguished *family*, and I claim no more, nor should the world believe any less.\* I myself know one member of the family to have been the wife of a United States Judge and another to have been the wife of a Governor of Kansas and a United States Minister. It was an humble but respectable family in all respects.

All things being ready, as well in the pro-

\* Secretary Welles states that he has heard President Lincoln say, more than once, that when he laid down his official life he would endeavor to trace out his genealogy and family history.

gram of destiny as in the few crude arrangements of the parties directly involved, Thomas Lincoln journeyed in a primitive way to the home of Richard Berry, the prospective bride's grandfather, at Mattingly's Mills, and, together with Richard Berry Jr., cousin to the bride-elect, visited the county-seat of Washington County, and executed a marriage bond of the following tenor and import, viz.:

Know all men by these presents, that Mr. Thomas Lincoln and Richard Berry are held and firmly bound unto his excellency the Governor of Kentucky in the just and full sum of Fifty pounds current money; to the payment of which well and truly to be made to the said Governor and his successors, we bind ourselves, our heirs, *etc.*, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents. Sealed with our seals and dated this 10th day of June 1806. The condition of the above obligation is such that whereas there is a marriage shortly intended between the above bound Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks for which a license has been issued. Now if there be no lawful cause to obstruct the said marriage, then this obligation to be void, else to remain in full force and virtue in law.

THOMAS LINCOLN [SEAL]

RICHARD BERRY [SEAL]

Witness: JOHN H. PARROTT.

And the Rev. Jesse Head, D. M. E. C., certifies that on June 12, 1806, he joined Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks in marriage. According to an article published in *The American*, a Philadelphia magazine published a few years since, it would appear that one John Hank lived on what is now the Perkiomen turnpike, six miles east of Reading in Exeter Township, in Pennsylvania, and within half a mile of the residence of Mordecai Lincoln, who would be the great-great-grandfather of the President, and that Hank emi-

grated to Augusta County in Virginia with John Lincoln, the great-grandfather of the President. In 1711, in Berks County, Pennsylvania, John Hank married one Sarah Evans and they had a son born the next year, who was living as late as 1730, as his father mentions him in his will that year. The Friends' (Quakers') record in Baltimore, still extant, mentions one John Hanke as living in Rockingham County, Virginia, probably the same who emigrated from Berks County, and in 1787 Hannah, a daughter of John Hanke, married one Asa Lupton. The only significant fact about this information is that the Lincolns and Hankses were alike Quakers and neighbors, and if this Hanke was the progenitor of Nancy Hanks, it is a coincidence that the ancestors of both should have been close neighbors, and that a century or more afterwards two members of the same families should have united their destinies with such mighty results.

The only basis in my view to avouch this John Hanke as being the progenitor of the President's mother is that the Kentucky Hankses came from Virginia, and the rarity of the name, superadded to the further fact of the Hankses' and Lincolns' intimacy, and the quite seeming probability that they might seek the same new home. Thomas Lincoln was a second cousin of his wife, as I show; possibly the families also had in another branch several generations of neighborhood intimacy.

It has been assumed by biographers generally that immediately upon his marriage Thomas Lincoln brought his bride to Hardin County, and that in that county all three of their children were born. The President himself, in his brief



sketches of his life, says he was born in Hardin County.\*

\* It is a trait common to all men to be interested in the place of their birth, and therefore there is every reason to believe that the President knew his own birthplace. He had reached the age of clear mind and sound memory before his mother died, and it is most unbelievable that he would have received any confusing instruction on this point from her. Moreover, his stepmother was an intimate friend of his own mother at the time of his birth, and she lived until long after he had reached manhood, and in all these years she supported the mother's story of his birth. This ought to be authority enough for any biographer. Indeed, no biographer has so far ventured to set up a counter claim. But in spite of this authority and that of nearly nine hundred copyrighted biographies of President Lincoln, there are still a few people in Washington County, Kentucky, who claim that Abraham, the second child of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, was born in that county. It is a matter of record that the first child—Sarah—was born in Elizabethtown, which is in Hardin County, and that Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln moved from there to the farm near Hodgenville, then also in Hardin County, and now in LaRue County, where Lincoln, his mother, and his stepmother all claimed he was born, and where a second son, named William Brumfield Lincoln after his uncle Brumfield, probably began his short life, which ended at the age of four or five years. In the summer of 1906, the founders of the Lincoln Farm Association, a patriotic body organized to preserve the Lincoln birthplace farm as a national park, made a thorough investigation of the Washington County claims. Their lawyers found in all that county but four people who claimed to have any knowledge of the matter, and each of these stated upon oath that his belief arose from the statement made some twenty years before by an old citizen over ninety years of age, (who had made no assertions as to Lincoln's birthplace until his memory had become frail through age,) that as a youth he had seen Nancy Hanks Lincoln in Washington County with a babe in her arms whom he supposed to be Abraham Lincoln.—M. M. M.



It is an undisputed fact that Thomas Lincoln, within a year or so after his marriage, being prompted by a roving disposition, and the land hunger which he had inherited from his forbears, especially his father, removed his family to a patch of ground on which a little clearing had been made and a cabin erected, situate on the south branch of Nolin's Creek, three miles from the present village of Hodgenville, county-seat of LaRue County, and that in this rude cabin, in this neglected spot, on the twelfth day of February, 1809, the most illustrious man of his era was born.

The cabin was of the rudest kind even for those days. It is needless to attempt to describe it, for the present comfortably housed generation would deem such description to have been woven in the loom of the imagination. It suffices to say, which I do reverently, that our Saviour, who was born in a stable, had a birthplace scarcely less decent than the typical cabin of the "poor white" of the South a century ago, and that the advents respectively of the despised Nazarene and of the Kentucky carpenter's son, the one the Saviour of the world, and the other the liberator of a race, were achieved alike amid the most desolate surroundings, even for the primitive conditions of the time.

In this rude cabin the little stranger lived until he had attained his fourth year. As there were no immediate neighbors, the parents and the two little children were compelled to be company for each other, and we can only imagine—for history was then engaged on statelier themes, such as the career of Napoleon—what their daily life could have arrayed of current happiness, as a

solace for prosaic and uneventful poverty and privation. That the mother, with an ambition and enterprise far above her situation, could read and write, is a basis of fact from which we may reasonably infer that she was wont to gather her little progeny at her knee and instil into their infant minds the rudiments of education which would lead them to a better condition of life than she had ever known.

Circumstances rendered it expedient for Thomas Lincoln to remove from this uninteresting place to one more desirable on the banks of Knob Creek, an affluent of Rolling Fork, about six miles distant from Hodgenville, which removal occurred in the spring of 1813, when young Abraham was four years of age.

Both father and mother appreciated the value and necessity of their children's education, the former superficially, the latter substantially and practically, and the only means and opportunities the country afforded for any means of education were eagerly embraced. One Zachariah Riney taught in the immediate neighborhood, and to his school Abraham and his sister faithfully went. He was a man of an excellent character, deep piety, and a fair education. He had been reared as a Catholic, but made no attempt to proselyte, and the still existing town of Rineysville in Hardin County is a tribute to the estimation in which his family is held. He was extremely popular with his scholars, and the great President always mentioned him in later years in terms of grateful respect. At a later period, Caleb Hazel, a youth with a little smattering of education, "took up" a school some four or five miles distant, and the faithful and ambi-

tious mother would fix up her little ones the best she could and send them diurnally on the long journey. She was persistent in her determination to inculcate education in their youthful minds. The father's enthusiasm was spasmodic and unreliable; still he would occasionally glow with pride in his educational plans for his bright, intelligent boy. At the age of forty-five Lincoln told Swett that the *summum bonum* of his father's ambition was to give his boy a *first-rate* education, and that his *ne plus ultra* of such an education was to "larn to cipher clean through the 'rithmetic."

In 1816 the land hunger which Thomas Lincoln had inherited from his father, the Virginia emigrant, led him to barter his imperfect title to his farm for ten barrels of rye whiskey and twenty dollars in cash, and go to Indiana on a prospecting tour, with a view to emigration. Such is the usual explanation of modern scientific biographers, who find the springs of momentous events in human impulses rather than in divine foreordination. An ancient chronicler would have said: "And the Angel of the Lord came to Thomas, and commanded that he take the young child and his mother and depart out of that country."

## CHAPTER II

### YOUTH

ON the Kentucky shore, below Louisville, in the midst of Nature's unkempt, umbrageous, and solemn solitudes, there debouches into the Ohio an affluent whose pellucid waters gave no token of the broken hopes, withered ambitions, blasted reputations, and shattered political careers which its name suggests to the American ear. For this is the renowned Salt River of our political mythology, the stream to whose headwaters are annually consigned the defeated aspirants for elective office, and which is more melancholy than the classic Styx in that every political ghost that journeys upon it to oblivion must serve as his own Charon.

It was on the "rolling fork" of Salt River that Thomas Lincoln, in the fall of 1816, embarked in quest of a new home; and he pursued that stream through its various sinuosities until it joined Salt River proper. This stream, however, had not yet acquired its baleful reputation, and did not have to live up to a bad character. So Thomas Lincoln safely steered himself and cargo down its course to the great Ohio. Per-versely enough, this river belied the favorable name by which the early French *voyageurs* had christened it, "La Belle Rivière." Coming out on its turbid tide, Lincoln's boat foundered, and

the bulk of his liquid fortune found a watery grave. He rescued a portion of it, however, with much exertion, and, getting afloat again with his cargo of whiskey, succeeded in navigating the Ohio River to a point in Indiana called Thompson's Ferry. Here he left his goods at a cabin, and started through the trackless forest on foot, in quest of a site whereon to found his new home. Sixteen miles distant, he came to a place which suited his fancy, although it is not unlikely that the setting sun and the cravings of hunger, warning him to seek a shelter, had some bearing upon his choice of a location.

The "numbers" of his claim were Southwest quarter of Section Thirty-two, Town Four South, Range Five West. The place thus selected was near to both Big and Little Pigeon Creek, in what was then Perry, but thereafter became Spencer County. Having "notched" the trees upon the boundaries of his claim, and made the improvement required by "squatter" law, viz.: to pile up brush as an inchoate clearing, and thus completed his "claim," he returned to Knob Creek on foot. Loading his bedding, kitchen utensils, and other portable property on two borrowed horses, and gathering his little family about him, he then began his *hegira* from a State where the aristocracy of negro ownership was the passport of respectability, to a State where

The honest man, though e'er sae puir,  
Is king o' men, for a' that!

Many scenes, replete with pathos, are presented in the realistic drama of the American pioneer; and this was one of them. The fall had set in; the nights were cold, and the adjuncts to

comfort while camping-out were meagre. The father and mother were compelled to walk. The two little children, aged respectively nine and seven, were uncomfortably disposed among the packs with which the horses were loaded. Arrived at the Ohio River, the horses were sent back and the goods, augmented by those which had been transported by means of the river, were loaded on a hired wagon and hauled out to the claim, where they were deposited. Without a single domestic animal, three miles from any neighbor, with no protection from the approaching winter storms but the now leafless trees, no defence from the cold but an open brush fire, and no shelter from the rude weather but the few ragged clothes they chanced to have, they present to the imagination a picture more pitiable than that of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, or, indeed, of any of the more spectacular scenes of pioneer life.

The first essential enterprise was to construct a shelter for his family, and the father went resolutely at work to fabricate not anything arising to the dignity of a cabin but a *camp*. Of this the mode and style of construction were as follows: A slightly sloping patch of ground was selected where two straight trees stood about fourteen feet apart, east and west of each other. The pioneer then cut down a number of small straight trees, and cut the tops off, so that the finished product would be fourteen feet long. Then the helpful wife would trim off the superfluous branches, and the entire family, two at each end of a log, would somehow tug the logs to the place needed. Two-thirds of these logs would be notched at one end and flattened at the other;

and the remaining third would be notched at each end. The two trees which had been selected as corner posts for the structure were denuded of their bark on the sides facing each other, and the prepared logs placed in position by building three sides of a crib, pinning the flat ends of the logs to the trees by wooden pins, to receive which an auger hole had been previously bored through the log and into the tree itself. Thus the series of three logs superimposed upon each other formed three sides of the primitive camp, leaving the south side exposed to the weather. A roof of small poles and branches, brush, dried grass, and any other suitable material which could be gathered up, completed the camp, into which their little furniture was disposed, and dried leaves gathered and arranged in the two corners for the four occupants to repose on when night should spread her sable mantle over the quiet solitude. The gaps were at leisure filled up with branches, mud, and anything which could be procured. A log fire kindled and kept up, night and day, in front of the camp, completed the establishment. Such an aboriginal structure as this served for an entire year as a home for the family that included the most famous man of modern times. This species of home was not inapt for a pioneer and his family in the summertime or, in good weather; but when drenching storms came, or a south wind drove the smoke into the camp so as to compel evacuation by the inmates, it was extremely uncomfortable, if not, indeed, intolerable.

It was, in fact, a hunter's camp, such as city men even now are wont to occupy for a habitation during a few weeks of good weather, for the



novelty of a change from civilized life. For a mother and young children, during foul and fair weather alike, it was, however, the most cruel travesty of a home that can well be conceived.

Indiana had just been admitted as a State, and the new dignity was alluring settlers from the neighboring States of Kentucky and Ohio. So Thomas Lincoln, the pioneer of Pigeon Creek, made a journey to Vincennes to make his land entry from the government. He walked all the way, going and coming. Southern Indiana was then a dense virgin forest, having every variety of the hard woods indigenous to that zone. "Var-mints," as the early settlers termed them—wild-cats, opossums, raccoons, etc.—abounded; likewise deer, wild turkeys, grouse, quails, and pheasants. Indeed, most of the animal food was procured by the rifle.

Nearby the Lincoln settlement was a famous "deer lick"—a low place where saline water exudes from the ground, and to which wild animals were wont to repair for the salt, they themselves forming in turn objects of the hunter's quest. From this lick the Lincolns derived the chief part of their provender.

Here, in the forest primeval, on the backwater of civilization, this little family of four pursued their dull round of existence without a solitary bubble of the zest of life. They rose with the robin and commenced their weary round of drudgery. The father felled trees; the mother lopped off the branches; the little ones piled brush, hoed away weeds, and walked a mile to the nearest source of water supply, bearing back the heavy burden between them. There was not a pair of shoes among the four. Home-made



moccasins served to ward off the snows and frosts of winter.

The united efforts of all the members of this little family served to keep the wolf from the door and also to show some progress toward a more comfortable state of existence; and in one year from the date of the first unpromising settlement in this virgin wilderness, a log cabin, situated a few rods distant from the camp, offered a better shelter, and gave token of Thomas Lincoln's ambition, and of his advancement towards a higher condition of life.

This cabin was formed of undressed logs, about eighteen feet square, with a "stick-and-mud" chimney; a hole for egress and ingress, in which was hung an untanned deer's hide, to defend, in some sort, against the assaults of the weather; and the only exterior light was acquired through the imperfect media of the broad chimneyplace and the cracks between the logs. The table was the flat surface of a bisected log, termed a *puncheon*, into which were inserted four legs by means of an auger. In lieu of chairs, there were small puncheons resting upon three legs. In lieu of bedsteads, stout poles were inserted in the spaces between the logs which formed the cabin, the two outer ends being supported by a crotched stick, driven into the ground floor of the wretched abode. The bedding and bedclothes, dishes and cooking utensils were in harmony with the cabin and its rustic furniture; and stout pins inserted in the logs constituted a substitute for the staircase or the "elevator" of civilization. This miserable abode was embosomed in brush, and unadorned with any suggestion of refined rusticity or halo of romance.

Lincoln's report of the new country, being roseate, probably more than facts warranted, induced some of his Kentucky neighbors to migrate thither; and accordingly Mrs. Lincoln's aunt and uncle, Betsy and Thomas Sparrow, arrived at the Lincoln place in November, 1817, bringing with them Dennis Hanks, who was a cousin-german to Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and, of course, a second cousin to the future President. This family camped in the recently deserted camp of the Lincolns, where they remained till they, too, could get up in the world as their kinsman had done.

For some time after the settlement in Indiana, there was no school in that primitive, sparsely settled neighborhood, but when Abraham was eleven years of age there was a school opened in a log shanty about one and a half miles distant from his home, by one Hazel Dorsey,—the term "Hazel," which formed a component part of the teacher's name, being supposed to refer to a species of twig whose use in the rude schoolroom was auxiliary to good scholarship. Andrew Crawford was Abraham's next teacher, his ministrations occurring in the winter of 1822-3, as nearly as can be defined. Finally one Swaney opened a school, pronounced by him *skule*, about five miles from the Lincoln home in 1826, which Lincoln attended for a very short time, and these three schools in Indiana, and two in Kentucky, comprise all that he ever attended; the total time consumed (as Lincoln told Swett) being about four months in all. And such schools! If erudition was ponderable, all that the entire five teachers knew could have been compassed in a thimble. The future President himself said:

"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."

At the time when Thomas Lincoln settled in Indiana, the county was named Perry, and its county-seat was known as Troy, on the Ohio River, but the country settled so rapidly that a new county was formed called Spencer, the county-seat of which was Rockport. A few years after the advent of the Lincolns, a little trading-post was established within less than two miles of their home, which, taking its name from its principal settler, was denominated Gentryville. Corydon, the county-seat of Harrison County, was then also the State capital, it having been so selected when the State was admitted into the Union. There was but one county between Harrison and Perry counties.

Although Thomas Lincoln had changed his residence from a *camp* to a *cabin*, it was not an extremely radical change from discomfort to comfort, for the cabin had neither a door nor windows; egress and ingress were had through an opening which was designed ultimately to accommodate a door. The house was likewise innocent of a floor, save the bare and naked earth. These omissions appeared all the more significant and objectionable from the better order of things in that line, inherent in the surroundings of other settlers, who were rapidly settling in the

neighborhood. Poor children! Young Abe and his sister could not but observe with longing eyes the newly erected cabins of the newcomers rejoicing in puncheon floors, doors from boards hewed out of a straight-grained log, with occasionally a glazed sash to admit light.

This beautiful Pigeon Creek valley, like all sublunary pleasures, had its sting, its fly in the ointment. A disease equally to be dreaded with the cholera, and very similar alike in its manifestations and fatality, brooded like a spell over it, making it "a valley of the shadow of death." It prevailed in the wooded regions of both Indiana and Illinois, and was called, in the homely and inaccurate vernacular of those regions, "*milk sick*." It was a mysterious disease, and baffled science and medicine alike. In less than two years from the settlement of Thomas Lincoln on Pigeon Creek, his wife, and her uncle and aunt, all succumbed to this dread disease and died; and Thomas Lincoln by the aid of a neighbor constructed with a whipsaw from the native timber coffins for each of these three victims. In the primeval forest, the remains of Nancy Hanks Lincoln were placed in a rude box, made from native lumber, a very much coarser receptacle than fruit trees are transported in by nurserymen at this day; and in the presence and by the aid of a mere handful of the neighbors, without ceremony, unanointed and unaneled, were committed to the grave. Even the grave remained without the slightest attempt at culture or adornment until 1879, when Mr. P. E. Stuebaker of South Bend, Ind., having heard of it, proposed to Hon. Schuyler Colfax to head a subscription with fifty dollars in order to mark

the spot with a suitable monument. Colfax assured him that the sum of fifty dollars alone would provide a monument sufficient and in harmony with the surroundings. The philanthropist thereupon caused to be erected a very neat marble monument, although the exact spot where the inanimate body crumbled into dust is involved in some doubt. It bears this inscription: "NANCY HANKS LINCOLN, *mother of President Lincoln*. Died October 5th, A.D. 1818, aged 35 years. Erected by a friend of her martyred son, 1879."

The mother thus commemorated was a woman "of sorrows and acquainted with grief." She was a child of the frontier, whose whole brief life was employed in removing from one frontier post to another, and carving out from the rude wilderness a frontier home.

In the little group which followed the body of this most faithful wife and mother to its last abode was one who was not satisfied with this heathen burial; and he set himself resolutely at work to retrieve this neglect, and to secure to the burial of his revered mother an *ex post facto* ceremony and semblance of a Christian interment. In those days, in the frontier, stated and periodical ministrations from the sacred desk were not an institution on account of the paucity and poverty of the people. The pioneers, however, were content to accept the pious offices of such migratory clergymen as might chance to sojourn over Sunday in the neighborhood, in their wanderings. And thus a few years after his mother's death, young Abraham with considerable diplomacy for a lad of ten years, contrived to have an itinerant preacher named Daniel Elkin deliver

a funeral discourse, commemorative of the merits and humble and unobtrusive virtues of this modern Mary—the mother of one charged with a mission akin to the Divine!

Meanwhile, the desolation of that little humble household aroused the sympathy of the few neighbors, who “took turns” in aiding the youthful housekeeper, but a little turned of eleven years of age, to maintain in semi-comfort this semblance of a home. Sarah Lincoln, however, possessed the heroism and resolution of her departed mother, and entered with fidelity into the duties of the little household, now increased by the presence of Dennis Hanks, whose home had been broken up by the death of his uncle and aunt.

As must be apparent, a house presided over by a child of eleven years could not be expected to be strongly suggestive of home comforts.

That Thomas Lincoln himself was not oblivious of this is evident from the fact that he gathered together what little capital he could, spruced up a little, and in the ensuing fall set off on a visit to the scenes of his youth in Kentucky, to procure a wife to solace his lonely hours and to serve as a mother to his neglected children.

As I have said, when he formed his alliance with Nancy Hanks, he had paid attention to Sallie Bush. Sallie had married one Johnston, who afterwards became the jailer of Hardin County, an office then held in higher honor than it is now. Now Mrs. Johnston was not only a rare woman, as the sequel fully attests, but she also was a most excellent housekeeper, and a faithful and devoted mother. Thomas was a shrewd observer, and the death of Johnston about the time

he had lost his own companion giving him opportunity, with characteristic energy and directness of purpose he resolved to lay close siege to the affections of the widow and force an early capitulation. Accordingly, upon his arrival in Elizabethtown, he at once repaired to the home of the fair widow, who lived with her two girls and one boy. He must have arranged matters satisfactorily in one interview, for the next day he married the widow. As a wedding present he paid all her small debts, the amount being about twelve dollars. On the succeeding day the second-hand bride, the second-hand bridegroom, three children, and a comfortable load of furniture and bedding were *en route* to the new home, where the two neglected, motherless, and lonely children were doing the best they could, painfully to wear out the time till the father should return with the "surprise" that he had probably promised them.

Sallie Bush, who was thus predestined to be a second mother to the great President, came from one of the most numerous and most respectable families in that part of Kentucky. One of her nephews is Hon. W. P. D. Bush, a leading lawyer of Frankfort, Ky., who was the State reporter from 1866 to 1878. Another was Hon. S. W. Bush, one of the leading lawyers of Hardin County, and a third, Hon. Robert Bush, holding a similar rank at Hawesville. A niece was the wife of Hon. Martin H. Cofer of Elizabethtown, who was a Circuit Judge of that Circuit, and became Judge of the Court of Appeals in August, 1874, for the term of eight years, serving also as Chief Justice from 1879 till his death. This distinguished family were very devoted to



their aunt, and also have a high respect for the memory of Thomas Lincoln. They resent even now any imputation upon his moral worth. He was not eminent as a financier, so neither was his illustrious son. A granddaughter of one of the Elizabethtown merchants has her grandfather's account books, which attest that Thomas Lincoln was an excellent and prompt customer, if not, indeed, an extravagant one, for living in a community that used hickory bark for suspenders, he at one time indulged in "one pair silk suspenders, \$1.50."

Abraham's inner life was a desert of sorrow with an occasional oasis watered by well-springs of happiness. And probably the greenest spot in his memory was the sight of his father, returning after a week's absence, driving a four-horse team hitched to a heavily loaded wagon, which, on its arrival, disclosed a quantity of homely and substantial household goods, and, what was even more joy-inspiring, a considerate, motherly-looking woman, who, clasping the neglected boy and girl to her heart, and calling them *Abe* and *Sallie*, told them that henceforth she was to be their *mother*, and that the three children who had climbed down from the load and were shyly hiding behind her, were also to be their brother and sisters. How Abe's tender heart glowed with gladness and gratitude as he saw feather-beds and blankets, coverlids and tablecloths, chairs and "stand tables" loaded into the small cabin, usurping nearly the whole space!

Joy reigned supreme in the little Lincoln cabin that evening as the augmented family sat down to the first good meal which had graced the little puncheon table since Nancy Hanks had taken



to her bed with the fatal "milk sick." And as, at a late hour, Abe climbed into the loft with a companion whom he had already learned to call "John," and sank into the tender embrace of the most comfortable bed he had ever known, and compared notes and experiences with his new brother till a late hour, it is safe to assert that no such fine and unadulterated happiness ever visited him afterwards.

Mr. Lincoln once told me (in 1856) that John D. Johnston, his foster-brother, was about his own age, and that he loved him as if he had been his own brother; and yet John grew up to be one of the laziest and most shiftless of mortals. He constantly appealed to Lincoln for aid for himself and his progeny. I myself once strained a point, for Lincoln's sake, to save Johnston's son William from the penitentiary. And it is to the infinite credit of the great President that he adhered to, and came to the assistance of, not only his father and step-mother, and never deserted them, but that his fidelity even to the utterly worthless child of this remote connection was equally tenacious.

Almost the last act he performed in Illinois was to visit his step-mother. On the morning he started, he urged me to go with him, and, in fact, I went with him part way, and I have always since regretted that I did not accompany him during the entire journey.

His deep and earnest affection for his step-mother was returned in full measure by her. "Abe was the *best* boy I ever saw or ever expect to see," was her summing-up of his character. As she parted with him at Charleston, Ill., on the third day of February, 1861, this old lady, whose whole life had been one of unobtrusive

goodness, embracing the President-elect, had a presentiment that it was their last meeting—a premonition which was afterwards so completely fulfilled. She had dimly known by the loose talk in her little rustic neighborhood of the mighty issues involved in her loved stepson's election, and she already saw, in her prophetic vision, the collision of a mighty people, and in this mighty conflict she felt that the central and pivotal figure could not escape.

And Abraham Lincoln experienced the maternal solicitude, sympathy, and kindness of his second mother in all ways. This most excellent woman and model step-mother brought comfortable things and essential domestic reforms to pass, without any jar or apparent effort. First a "shutter" appeared in the opening for a door; next, a puncheon floor was laid, and, anon, a half-glazed sash admitted light. Clean beds, clean clothes, clean towels, clean tablecloths were all in place. The wash-day came regularly, good fare graced the table, order was enthroned. The family altar was inaugurated, and the family hearth assumed a sacredness begotten of prevalent good cheer, happiness, and the amenities which sweeten existence. The dooryard was cleaned of unsightly litter, a brood of fowls lent animation to the scene, and material comfort dissipated the soul's melancholy. If Nancy Hanks Lincoln were conscious of the rare fidelity with which Sarah Bush Lincoln executed the trust of maternal solicitude to her children, her perturbed spirit at last found rest.

New settlers flocked into the neighborhood; a store was instituted nearby; stated religious services followed; systematic social intercourse

among the young folks ensued; and ere long, in all directions, the ruddy and cheerful blaze of hearth-fires, gleaming through clear window panes instead of oiled paper, attested the advent of real civilization. To the genial requirements of this new order of life, Abraham Lincoln was no delinquent. The entertaining qualities which were captivating in his manhood's prime, found exuberant vent in his youthful glow. Boylike, he was frivolous rather than sedate, reckless rather than responsible, and the mental vigor and volume which evolved the Cooper Institute speech or yielded the Emancipation Proclamation, were expended in satirical poems and coarse pasquinades, which had no apparent range or objects beyond diversion or petty social revenges, and were confined to the fleeting moment and to the little backwoods coterie which was wont to gather in the store or blacksmith's shop at Gentryville, or in the "corn-huskings" or "log-rollings" thereabouts.

Abe was no empty-headed country beau, however. He was even then more of a student than gallant. A story is told of a conversation he had, under idyllic circumstances, with a pretty girl of fifteen, where his playing the schoolmaster instead of the lover was rather resented by his fair companion. As the two young people sat barelegged on a log and dangled their feet in the limpid waters of Little Pigeon Creek, and talked the light and frothy chatter of their age, the sun sank low in the west, and the little miss exclaimed: "See, Abe, the sun's going down!" "No," returned Abe with the importance of superior knowledge, "the sun doesn't go down; it's *we* that do the sinking." But the pert auditor

ended the explanation with the conclusive rejoinder, "Abe, you're a fool."

At the age of seventeen, he was six and a third feet high, his feet and hands were unusually large, and his legs and arms disproportionately long; his head was small and phrenologically defective; his body very diminutive for one of his height. His walk was awkward; his gestures still more so; his skin was of a dirty yellowish brown, and shrivelled and baggy, even at that age. He was attired in buckskin pants which failed to conceal his blue shinbones; his shirt was of a fabric known to pioneer, and to no other life, as linsey-woolsey; and in winter he was clad in what is known as a *warmus*; and finally, a coon-skin cap, home-made, and moccasins, also home-made, protected and decorated respectively his upper and nether extremities. He was *bizarre-looking*, even in that primitive community.

Abraham Lincoln, whether as boy or man, was not enamoured of steady, hard work; he preferred a variety of tasks, chiefly mental labor. He was by no means lazy, but was fond of frequent change. Accordingly, throughout his youthful career, he is seen to select such engagements and avocations as allowed him to interweave variety with industry and mental labor or recreation with muscular labor. "Going to mill" was a favorite avocation with him, as it had been with Henry Clay, "the Mill-boy of the Slashes." Abe rode seven miles to a treadmill, into which, on his arrival, he put his horse to furnish the power for grinding. On one of these occasions young Abe's horse kicked him, so that he was unconscious for quite a while. On recovering his senses, he completed a sentence that he was in

the midst of uttering when the accident took place. In after life he was fond of speculating upon this psychological phenomenon.

One of the early settlers paints the moral portrait of this region in the primitive days of its settlement in sombre colors. "The settlers were very sociable and accommodating, but there was more drunkenness and larceny on a small scale, more immorality, less religion, less confidence."

One of Mr. Lincoln's youthful characteristics, and one which adhered to him through life, was his uniform kindness to any and all living things. A favorite pastime with boys of Pigeon Creek was to catch a mud "terkle," and put a live coal on his back in order to enjoy the diversion of witnessing him writhe with pain. The youthful humanitarian was wont to inveigh, in emphatic terms, against this barbarism; sometimes putting his thoughts and monitions on paper, and reading them to the boys. Another peculiarity of his youth and manhood alike was a habit of superficial and desultory reading. A short book he might read entirely through; a long one he would read conscientiously for a few chapters, and then skim through the rest. Such books as Weems's "Washington" he would read through consecutively; "Robinson Crusoe" he would not read by rote, but would select chapters to suit his fancy, and ultimately, perhaps, read all; "Æsop's Fables" and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" he would read in patches.

He was inordinately fond of books, but was not fond of consuming a great amount of time with any particular one, at any one time. A specifically verbose book he never read clear through, unless at wide intervals of time. He was prone

to jot down anything of philosophy, poetry, or history which arrested his attention strongly. This was not done so much to preserve it, as to fix the thought embodied or fact narrated firmly in his memory. After writing it he would study it, then lay it aside for a time, then recur to it; if, on consideration and reconsideration, it struck him as superlatively valuable, he would try to retain it. And he had unused sheets of paper, copybooks, fly-leaves of books, etc., on which he preserved these memoranda, sticking them in out-of-the-way places. Books were rare and scarce in the days of his youth. Thomas Lincoln owned literally none but the Bible. His illustrious son's early acquaintance with any literature beyond the domain of primary schoolbooks was derived from those which he could borrow from neighbors. The sources of supply, however, were of an extremely attenuated character. A neighbor named Josiah Crawford possessed a copy of Weems's "Washington," a highly spiced, mendacious, and stupid string of anecdotes of the early days in Virginia and elsewhere, euphemistically termed "a Life of Washington." Abraham readily borrowed it, and read and studied it of evenings. One night it was ruined by rain, and Lincoln at once sought the lender, and reported the loss, and the superfluous fact that he had not the wherewithal to pay. An agreement was therefore made that young Abe should pull fodder for three days in repayment. There does not appear anything out of the way in all this; wages were very low then and books very rare; there was no bookstore nearer than Louisville, and the loss of a needed book in that neighborhood was well-nigh irreparable. It is even



doubtful if Crawford would voluntarily have exchanged the book for three days' labor of a lad, but Lincoln, somehow, took great umbrage at Crawford's animus in the matter, as well as at the conditions exacted; and thereafter was wont, for the amusement of the neighborhood to satirize the offender in the coarsest and most suggestive doggerel, using Crawford's physical shortcomings as a text. This reprehensible trait of character did not adhere to Mr. Lincoln beyond his youthful prime; he abandoned it, as he grew and expanded in intellect, together with sundry other foibles, and as a man was as magnanimous and charitable as he was revengeful and satirical as a youth.

Lying down was Lincoln's favorite attitude while reading or studying. This remained a habit with him throughout life. He also was fond of reading while at table. He always enjoyed reading aloud, or commenting on a book to a companion, whoever he might be. I once knew of his making a pupil of a hostler in his study of Euclid on the circuit. He did not, like Archimedes, run through the streets crying "Eureka!" but he was so joyous at his geometrical lesson that he must share his happiness, even though he could find no better auditor than a stableman.

In his youth, Lincoln might have been encountered in a cabin loft, or under a tree, or anywhere in the shade, or in some out-of-the-way place, intent on his book. He would record his lucubrations on a wooden fire shovel, then shave it off with a draw-knife, and repeat the performance. While in the field at work he would be immersed in deep thought. As soon as he reached his home or his shelter, he would resume his book, if he had

one, or his charcoal sketches, if he had none. If he could not obtain manual possession of a book by borrowing, he would repair to the place where it was and thus use it. Among other books which he read in that way was the "Statutes of Indiana," which one Turnham, a constable, possessed, *ex officio*. This gave him an inclination toward the profession of law.

Abraham exhibited a proclivity for public speaking at an early age; anywhere that he could gather a crowd he was ready with a speech. His addresses were generally germane to the surrounding conditions, and "sometimes turned out a song, and sometimes turned out a sermon." Not infrequently, of a Sabbath when the old folks were at "meetin'," the youthful orator would edify the young folks at home by an improvised sermon. Upon such occasions, he would adopt the usual order of religious exercises, the prayer alone being omitted. A hymn would be selected and sung by the juvenile audience. His preaching frequently drew tears from his sympathetic auditory, in which, occasionally, he would join.

In the cornfield, his oratorical powers frequently were in demand. Often when a resting spell came, Abe would mount half-way of the fence, and steadying himself on the remainder, would thrill or amuse his hearers by a speech, sometimes political, sometimes polemical, sometimes jocular. He never failed to create an interest; in fact, his oratory was a great nuisance to employers who were interested that the work should be speedily performed. Another quality which adhered to him during his entire life was his good humor, leading to a personal popularity with those with whom he came in close contact.



Wherever he worked, he would find his way speedily to the kitchen, where he would rock the cradle, or draw water, wash dishes, or empty slops; meanwhile amusing all present with drollery or humor. Some of the men were inimical to him, but there was not a woman but who was extravagant in her laudations, even including Josiah Crawford's wife, whose husband he had so mercilessly lampooned.

His step-mother thought quite as much of him as of her own children; his step-brother and sisters were as devoted to him as to each other, while his own sister idolized him. The closer the attrition with Lincoln, the more ardent and close the cordiality of the friendship. He was ever the best of boys and men, and had always

. . . a tear for pity,  
And a hand open as day for melting charity.

When he was sixteen years old, he entered into the service of one Taylor, who owned and operated a ferry franchise across the Ohio at the mouth of Anderson Creek. Here Lincoln remained as a boy-of-all-work, for nearly a year, earning six dollars a month; and at another time both he and his sister were hired out to Josiah Crawford, the former as a field hand, the latter as kitchen-maid. There is hardly a field within a radius of two miles of Gentryville in which the great Emancipator has not wrought at the humblest of labor for what would now be deemed insignificant wages.

It was noticeable to companions that, when Abraham had attained the age of eleven years or thereabouts, he fell into that habit of abstraction,

absent-mindedness, and self-introspection which constituted so marked and prominent a feature in his character in his later days. Whereas he presented no appearance of gravity or decorum theretofore, he suddenly awoke to a deep sense of responsibility; and gravity of manner usurped the former characteristics of frivolity and mental vacuity.

Mr. Lincoln was a versatile genius, whether as man or boy. His mind was constantly on the *go*; he hopped about from one thing to another, never adhering to one thing long. He wrote doggerel poetry of no merit whatever; it was sometimes didactic, occasionally philosophical, but generally satirical. A single day's labor was a composite of story-telling, studying all the primitive studies then known to his *locale*, writing Chronicles (as he called them) in derision of some one who exhibited ludicrous phases of character, doing chores from choice and more robust work from compulsion, with occasional lapses into earnest and sombre reflection.

Gentryville was a little world by itself. No circus or lecturer ever came within its borders. Its inhabitants lived within themselves, and entertained each other the best they could in a social style, and while Lincoln was in great demand as an entertainer and otherwise, he yet had to endure rebuffs which he took as seriously to heart as if he had been fashioned in an ordinary mould of humanity. A noted instance of the truth of the Scriptural adage that "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the headstone of the corner," appeared in the great double wedding of two sons of Reuben Grigsby, which important occurrence was closed by a gor-

geous infare. To this great social demonstration Abraham was not invited, although every other young person in the neighborhood, including his own sister, was. And he took a terrible social revenge, for he put in commission his heaviest batteries of wit and satire, and churned up a social convulsion whose effects remained, like festering sores, for a long time thereafter. Lincoln certainly wielded a *free lance* in those days. An exuberance of animal spirits had to be worked off in some way, and Lincoln was the Douglas Jerrold and Sydney Smith, combined, of the neighborhood about Gentryville.

The satirical element clove to him through life, though he suppressed it generally in his responsible years. I have known him, however, in the privacy of a judicial circle (but very rarely) to impale an object disagreeable to him on a sarcastic lance quite as effectually, and in better style than in his youthful days.

Although there was little in common between Lincoln and his father, yet they were alike in possessing prodigious strength. The stories which are told of Abraham's power in this line are doubtless exaggerated, but the fact remains that in all the fights in which either he or his father engaged, they prevailed every time, and that Abraham was especially sought for when feats of muscle were in demand.

Abraham did, indeed, venture beyond his own bailiwick both in the moral and physical world. Thus he wrote an elaborate essay on "Our Government," when he was but a little turned of seventeen years old, in which he betrayed a knowledge which could hardly be deemed indigenous to Gentryville. He also wrote an article on

"Temperance," which was published in a weekly paper.

A village lyceum was one of the institutions of the little hamlet of Gentryville. The sessions were held in Jones's store, where the auditors and disputants sat on the counter, on inverted nail kegs, or lolled upon barrels or bags, while the wordy contest raged. The questions selected for discussion were not concrete. At one time there would be a debate upon the relative forces of wind and water; at another, upon the comparative wrongs of the Indian and the negro; the relative merits of the ant and the bee; also of water and fire. Then, as later, Lincoln would enforce his views largely by comparison and by illustrations, by sallies of wit and homely anecdotes. It was always understood that fun was ahead when "Abe Linkern" took the floor.

Upon one occasion Abraham walked to Booneville, fifteen miles, to attend a session of the circuit court. One Breckenridge, a lawyer with merely a local fame, made a speech in a murder case which captivated the youthful aspirant; and as he walked home after dark, his vivid fancy wrought like scenes of forensic glory for himself.

## CHAPTER III

### LINCOLN AS A LABORER

As time wore on, and Abraham got from newspapers and elsewhere an idea firmly lodged in his mind, that there was a world outside of and beyond Gentryville, he longed to carry his wits and energy to a larger market. Accordingly, he applied to Mr. William Wood, who was quite willing to aid him, for a recommendation as a hand of some sort on a steamboat. Wood declined this favor on the ground that Abe was still in his minority and owed his services to his father. But an opportunity to see the outer world soon offered in this wise: About March 1, 1828, when Abraham was nineteen years of age, he was in the employment of James Gentry, whose son Allen Gentry was about to start on a flatboat trip to New Orleans to trade off a load of country produce. Needing a hand to aid, the Gentrys readily induced young Lincoln to go along at eight dollars per month and board.

The flatboat of early days was simply built of sufficient strength to last one downward trip, after which it would be converted into fuel. Two flat pieces of timber from thirty to fifty feet in length, two to three feet in breadth, and a foot in thickness were hewed out of a poplar log; one edge was level, the other two were bevelled at each end. These pieces were called gunwales—pronounced *gunnels*. Into these gunwales, at

suitable distances, were mortised cross-pieces of oak, fourteen feet long, six inches wide, and three inches thick, in addition to head blocks at each end, six or eight inches square. A stout frame being thus made, two-inch oak planks were fastened longitudinally to the oak cross-pieces by means of wooden pins an inch square, systematically cut out from a tough species of timber termed "pin oak," and driven by a heavy maul through an auger hole bored through both planks. The bottom, consisting of two-inch oak plank, was then fastened on to these longitudinal planks and rabbeted into the gunwales, the same being made water-tight by oakum and pitch. Thus far, no iron was used in the construction, and no iron tools employed beyond a crosscut saw, a mill saw, an axe, a broad-axe, an auger, and a draw-knife.

This boat was launched by simply turning it over by two windlasses and levers so as to lie bottom side down in the river. Uprights consisting of 4 x 4 scantling were then mortised into the upper edge of the gunwales, and one-and-one-half-inch poplar plank securely fastened longitudinally thereon, and the seams caulked with oakum, and pitched. When produce was to be her cargo, a false bottom was put in, as it was impossible to construct such boats so that they would be entirely water-tight. Finally, a ridge-pole was placed longitudinally, and a roof was added. A cabin was improvised in one corner by the use of rough boards, and four huge oars were rigged, two on the sides, one at the bow, and one at the stern. A "check post" and coil of rope were then provided, and the craft was in commission.

The mode of navigating such an unwieldy craft was thus: Being loaded, the line is cast loose, and impelled as far from shore as is practicable by means of a setting pole, to which the junior navigator sets his shoulder. When that auxiliary fails, then resort is had to the side oars, known otherwise as "sweeps." By their aid the craft is impelled into the current, which impels it down stream at the rate of from four to six miles per hour. Skill is required to pilot the boat around bends in the river; as, left to itself, it would sweep in toward shore, and possibly be beached. This is avoided by the pilot setting the bow towards the centre of the stream, and plying the side sweeps, so as to attain and retain that position in the crooked stream. Nevertheless, a severe wind would frequently blow the boat towards the bank, and the crew be compelled to land, and in such case, the junior navigator must put off in a small boat, as the shore came near, with a rope around his body which he would quickly secure to some riparian object, when the senior navigator would take a turn around the check post, and, by checking the momentum by degrees, finally bring the boat to a stop without disaster. While at shore a watch was necessary against the incursions of predatory visitors, as well as to prevent the boat from grounding by the recession of the river. Sometimes the two navigators would run night and day, in which case but one would be constantly on watch. At night, in addition to keeping the boat in the current, signals must be given to passing steamers, which was done by the waving of a lantern or a firebrand. The cooking usually fell to the lot of the junior. Thus, in one way



and another, a flatboat trip, under the management of but two persons, was a constant succession of hardships and novelties. Mr. Lincoln has himself described his flatboat experiences to me. In fact, as I, too, once made a flatboat trip, we compared experiences. On Gentry's and Lincoln's trip they commenced to barter away their load after they had fairly embarked on the Mississippi, receiving cotton, tobacco, and sugar in exchange for potatoes, bacon, apples, and jeans. This sort of river commerce was very common from the year 1820 to the period of the war, and thrives to some extent even now.

Lincoln returned home from this, his first trip, in June, 1828, and fell into the same weary round of existence which he had pursued before, but with an evident longing for pursuits of a more ambitious and dignified character than those to which his existence had theretofore been consecrated.

In two years more he would arrive at the age of conventional manhood. Thomas Lincoln, even with the wages of Abraham and Sarah, had not greatly bettered his condition. The farm (so-called) had been purchased entirely on credit, and was then only partially paid for. The father had no title or muniment of title to his farm; only to a right thereafter to acquire it, provided he paid for it. From a few lean acres some corn was gleaned, as the product of the least culture possible. Thomas Lincoln had no vices, nor yet any economic virtues, and he was a poor calculator, and being in the economical "slough of despond," saw no means by which he might emerge therefrom.

The community of which he formed part was



somewhat more provident, but yet very primitive. The most luxuriant growth was religion; to attend "meetin'," the settlers would journey eight or ten miles on foot, or horseback, or however they could. The females would be attired in their husbands' overcoats, while the latter would protect themselves from the weather by hunting shirts and moccasins. They met in schoolhouses, private houses, or in the woods. The preachers were apt to be more zealous than consistent, more polemical than charitable. Not only were their "meetin's" employed as an agency by which they might obtain the priceless boon of eternal life, but they served the more worldly and less meritorious object of neighborly reunions, when social amenities were cultivated, friendships cemented, mutual acquaintance fostered, and the general welfare discussed and adjudicated. Instead of formal sanctimony brooding over the gathering, joyousness and *bonhomie* prevailed. They lived too remote from each other to "run in and out" daily, and when they did meet, mix, and mingle on the Lord's Day, it was used as a medium by which to secure attrition and hold converse with their kind. The women wore "calash," or scoop-shovel bonnets, linsey-woolsey frocks gathered just under the armpits, coarse underwear, and brogans. The "dress" suit of the men was composed of jeans of close and economical fit, with the waist high up in the back, buckskin trousers, and coonskin cap. Their manners were bluff and hearty; all door-strings were hung outside, a sincere welcome was accorded to strangers, locks and bolts were unknown. While entire families were at "meetin'" on Sunday, or at a "hoedown," or

“quiltin’,” or “corn-schuckin’,” or “house-raisin’” on a week-day, an ill-disposed person might have ransacked the whole neighborhood without let or hindrance. That this never occurred indicates that this neighborhood was a veritable Arcadia.

While there was no especial spirit of caste, there was, nevertheless, a spirit of criticism and disparagement; and the social gamut had both a bass and treble clef, upon which the merits of all were hung. The conventional standing of Abraham Lincoln was not a product of the family tree. His father’s extreme poverty and inability to extricate himself therefrom, prevented any social standing, but Abe, by his own individual merit, achieved a place for himself and sister, and likewise for his foster-brother and sisters, in the social life of the neighborhood.

Still another mental idiosyncrasy of that primitive community was its proneness to all varieties of superstition; no explanation can be vouchsafed why this habit and peculiarity was more rife here than elsewhere under like conditions, but so it was.

They performed various matters according to the phases of the moon; planted esculents by the *dark* of this luminary, and products of the vine by its *light*. They dug for water by the guidance of the hazel fork in the hands of the water-witch, and had a general belief in witchcraft. They had faith in the healing virtues of the madstone. They believed in dreams, signs, and omens, and were terrified at the chirping of the “death watch.” They would commence no journey or undertaking on Friday. They were deceived by charlatans who plied the healing art

by means of the secret processes of the cabbala, and saw their future husbands, wives, or destinies in the kaleidoscopic groupings of the tea-grounds in their cups. An accident, which to the unimaginative mind was obviously attributable to improvidence, they assigned to the genius of *bad luck*. A matrimonial match, propitious in its consequences, was made by the angels in the Elysium of light; one unfortunate in its *dé-nouement* was churned up by a dusky crowd in the other place, etc.

The prevalence of these foolish notions exercised a great influence on the plastic and susceptible mind of our hero, in the formative stage of his career. His vigor of mind and independence of thought in all other phases and manifestations could not triumph over these mental weaknesses. When his son Robert was bitten by a dog which it was feared was rabid, he journeyed with him, at great discomfort, to Terre Haute, to have a madstone which was there applied to the wound. While in the White House, he was known to steal out furtively and attend spiritualistic *séances*, and consult mediums as to his lines of duty, and to the prognostications of the future. He believed in dreams, as Napoleon did; he had faith in destiny. His whole manhood's life was one scene of misery because it was largely filled with dismal and shadowy forebodings.

Among these people, he grew to maturity of manhood, and while there imbibed and matured an ambition which brought forth fruit after many days. He lived there from the fall of 1816, when he was seven and a half years old, until the spring of 1830, when he was of age—a physical, political, and conventional man. Almost naked, he

came into that region. The value and price of property, and population increased an hundred-fold during his stay there, and although the house of "Lincoln" was augmented in substantial wealth by the generous contributions of Sallie Bush Lincoln, yet this family left that region, after over thirteen years' sojourn, as poor as it came.

Abraham's sister had married Aaron Grigsby at the age of eighteen, and had died, in childbed, within a year thereafter. It was a sad blow to her brother—he reflected upon the preceding burial. He had everything in common with his mother and sister, but little with his father, and as he heard the clods reverberate dully from the grave which contained the early companion of his few joys and many sorrows, the pent-up grief of his stricken soul found vent in convulsive sobs which brought tears to the little sympathetic assembly. There were but the least few cords that bound Abraham Lincoln to existence: one of them snapped at the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln; and yet another at the new-made grave in the weird forest. What have I to live for? he repeated to himself over and over. Even his foster-sisters, who had been company and companions to him, were hardly so longer, for Matilda, the eldest, had married his second-cousin, Dennis Hanks, and Sarah, the younger, had married another second-cousin, Levi Hall; and they each were rearing children. John D. Johnston, his foster-brother, alone remained, and was only apparently a companion to Abraham. In their common and mutual adolescence, they were closely allied in all things, but as the mind of one delved by self-introspection into the strata of the

moral world, the vacant mind of the other remained stranded on the bleak shores of mediocrity, and their intimacy was but of the most superficial character.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln, as has been stated, had an uncle who was a carpenter in Elizabethtown, and with whom Thomas Lincoln "larned" his trade of carpenter. He had a son John, as inflexibly honest and reliable as Abraham Lincoln himself. John had come to the Lincolns' settlement in Indiana, and lived in and about Gentryville for about two years, but during the fall of 1828 he had drifted into Macon County, Illinois, and was comfortably settled there. Thomas Lincoln, ever ready to change his uniformly indigent condition, inquired of John Hanks about the Illinois country, whether it offered sufficiently promising advantages to a poor immigrant such as himself. To these inquiries, Uncle John (as I always called him) returned very candid, and, on the whole satisfactory replies, with the result that, during the winter of 1829-30, it was determined in the family councils of the Lincolns to move to Macon County, Illinois, upon the first budding of spring.

The business arrangements were easily and quickly despatched. Gentry, who substantially had a title to the farm in a mortgage thereon, took over the equity. Turnham purchased the few hogs, and bought the small remnant of corn for ten cents a bushel. When the middle of February came, the season was deemed sufficiently advanced for the impatient family to start. There were really three families, to wit: Thomas Lincoln, his wife, Abraham, and John D. Johnston, his foster-brother; Levi and Sarah Johnston

Hall, and their son; and Dennis and Matilda Johnston Hanks, and their four children; thirteen persons in all. The day of departure approached. On the day before the start was to be made, Abraham, Dennis, and John visited the little hamlet of Gentryville and bade adieu to the Gentrys senior and junior, John Baldwin, the blacksmith, who was one of Lincoln's staunchest and most reliable friends, Jones, Lincoln's merchant friend, and the various neighbors who were casually there; they then visited and bade good-bye to Dan Turnham, the constable, at whose house Abraham commenced his studies in law by reading the "Revised Statutes of Indiana," then took affectionate leave of "Uncle" Wood, Stephen McDaniels, John Duthan, Mrs. Crawford, the Grigsbys (the *entente cordiale* having been reëstablished between them), John Romine, and the rest. And as the awkward and uncouth youth, all unconscious of the immortal career for which he was destined, lay down for the last time to sleep in the humble cabin which had sheltered him for thirteen years, we can well imagine that his sensibilities were profoundly stirred, and that his feelings found relief in tears.

The animating principle of Thomas Lincoln's migration is not difficult to divine: The part of Kentucky where manhood found him was sterile at best. The free laborer had little chance for social and material advancement; a *niggerless* white was regarded as a social pariah. Thomas Lincoln inherited rigid notions of humanity from a Quaker ancestry which recognized slavery as a crime; so he did what other conscientious men were doing in similar circumstances: he left a State where *caste* was securely enthroned for a



State where social, as well as political, equality prevailed. Migration is an American institution. Instances are not rare of men who have actually lived in a dozen different States; and California, Oregon, and Washington are largely peopled by men who commenced their tours of migration in the Atlantic States, and by slow approaches ultimately reached the ultimate limits of Western civilization. Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, and Benjamin Harrison were emigrants.

Thomas Lincoln likewise had abundant cause to leave Indiana. Milk-sickness is given as the cause by Dennis Hanks. Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and her uncle and aunt, had all died of it within two months of each other, and as Dennis naively says: "All of my relatives died of that disease on Little Pigeon Creek, Spencer County. . . . I was determined to leave and hunt a country where milk-sick was not; this is the reason for leaving Indiana."

Activity, bustle, and excitement reigned in and about the Lincoln cabin, near Gentryville, on the morning of February 15, 1830. An early breakfast had been hastily despatched by the light of some blazing fagots, by thirteen people, and each of them was engaged in guiding events toward an orderly and symmetrical exodus from the scene of so many melancholy experiences.

The two "gals" (as they were called) were tying up rough bedclothes, packing dishes, skillets, pots and pans, and "toting" bundles to an extremely shabby and primitive vehicle, in which the patriarch of the household was awkwardly storing them away. John D. Johnston, Dennis

Hanks, and Abraham Lincoln were corralling a few yearling cattle, and imposing the yoke upon eight of the least unpromising. Levi Hall was casting a wary eye at the storing of the cargo, tightening a wedge here, tying a bark knot there, or driving a peg yonder, and venturing sundry bits of advice, having in view the proper disposition of the crude freight so as not to endanger the safety of the rude craft. The mother of the tribe was viewing the animated scene with an anxious eye and directing matters with responsible consideration, issuing directions and uttering sundry warnings concerning the task then being wrought out. While the children, radiant with happiness at the novelty and commotion, were dancing about in everybody's way.

Finally the four yoke of frisky, half-broken steers, after much coercion on the part of four men, were attached to the wagon; the last rude article was loaded on, stuck in, or tied under the wagon; the good mother, with much protesting, was forced to mount on the load, and the little ones were stored away somewhere in the interstices. The few parting words were said to the few friends who stood tearfully and dejectedly around, and the leader propounded the final interrogation of, "All ready?" which being answered by half a dozen or more in the affirmative, the leader flourished his ox-whip vigorously, at the same time ejaculating, "Come, *Buck!* You, *Bright!* Go 'lang, *Jim!*" The team straightened out, the chains were tightly drawn, a creaking sound issued from four rebellious axles, a spasmodic activity was imparted to the load, the old lady clutched uneasily at some means to steady herself, the mercurial and excited young-



sters were warned to hang on, the load pitched forward, steadied, careened to one side, righted up, and jolted along to the dolorous creakings of a home-made vehicle. And thus the Tribe of Lincoln set out on its journey for the Promised Land, and thus also Abraham Lincoln, having been three days a conventional man, commenced to bear the burden of responsible life as an ox driver.

Can the imagination of these days of mechanical marvels reconstruct in fancy the rude vehicle which carried the fortunes of Abraham Lincoln from Gentryville, Ind., to Decatur, Ill.? Will the occupant of the modern railway coach or of an automobile credit the assertion that not a particle of iron or other metal entered into its composition except the narrow iron bands which bound the periphery of the wheels; that those wheels were solid blocks of wood made approximately circular by the broad-axe and drawknife, and that in lieu of bolts, straps, or other fastenings, hickory withes were used? So rude a vehicle does not exist to-day in any part of the world, not even in Tasmania or Zululand. The cargo consisted of a bureau, a chest of drawers, a table, two chairs bottomed with rawhide, some bundles of bedding, some bundles of clothing, a carpenter's chest of tools, and some very rude cooking utensils. The most unpropitious season of the year seems to have been selected for such a journey, inasmuch as the road froze at night and thawed by day, causing the heavy wagon to be mired daily.

So, too, the hardships of the journey were greatly increased by the not infrequent crossing of creeks upon whose surface a thin film of ice

would generally be formed, and which all parties would be compelled to ford. At length the emigrants crossed the Illinois line, and struck a north and south trail through the prairie, lying near to, if not, indeed, some of the way upon, the location of the main line of the Illinois Central Railway. This ultimately brought them to the then inconsiderable village of Decatur, through whose vacant streets they slowly defiled, an object of interest to the few stragglers whom they encountered, as well as to the inhabitants who, from the windows of comfortable rooms, gazed at the uncouth procession, little aware that the tall young ox driver who led it was destined to shed upon their community its most resplendent lustre—that within that little village he was to be enthusiastically nominated by delegates from the State of Illinois as the candidate for the most exalted office on earth, and so cause the name of their then inconsequential village to be handed down in imperishable fame.

Arrived in front of the courthouse, the wagon halted, and the various members of the little ragged and muddy coterie drew together in a circle, while the conventional head of the party went timidly into the courthouse and ventured to inquire of a boy who was recording deeds if he could inform him which road "mout" lead to John Hanks's place on the Sangamo. In point of fact, Hanks lived but four miles northwest of Decatur, and thither the humble procession wended its way, arriving there at nightfall, to receive the heartiest of welcomes from their kinsman. Faithful old John Hanks! He had not, could not have, an enemy on earth; he was homespun, matter-of-fact, and dull to a superlative

degree, but he was the very soul of generosity, truth, and probity. He made no pretensions to anything beyond mauling rails, plowing, husking corn, and other manual labors. As shall afterward be related, more than any other friend of Lincoln he aided in his election to the Presidency by fixing the epithet of "rail-splitter" upon him, a homely title that struck the popular fancy, and attracted ten voters to Lincoln for every one it repelled. And when Lincoln came into his glory, John Hanks displayed a sincerity of nature that only his ignorance saved from being presumption, by applying to the President for an office.

Procuring a new suit of blue jeans, he went to Washington and called on his youthful companion, his putative partner in the rail-splitting business (the prosaic fact is, Uncle John split all the *rails*, while Abe cut the logs into rail lengths). "I'll tell ye, Abe, what I come for," he bluntly said. "I want to be a Injun agent, and Dick Ogleby said as how you could give it to me sure." Lincoln was nonplussed. Uncle John was rigidly honest, but had no ability beyond the doing of farm drudgery. How would it look for "honest old Abe" to bestow an office which required business training on a rustic simpleton, simply because he was a friend and kinsman? Besides, John Hanks could neither read nor write, but then Uncle John had proposed his son, who could do both, for his clerk. "How will it do?" asked the President of me, ruminatingly. "Just the thing," I answered. "An honest man as an Indian agent will be a good send-off for you." "But the trouble is his ignorance." "Never mind; his honesty is better than knowl-

edge," I said. Other advisers concurred in my opinion. However, at the cost of a bitter struggle, the President refused Uncle John's request, as he also did that of Dennis Hanks, who came on to Washington later and asked that the President's foster-sister, his wife, might be appointed postmistress of Charleston, Ill. Would Abraham Lincoln have believed in the possibility of such a thing on the night of March 1, 1830, thirty-one years before, when he and Dennis and Matilda gathered about the humble board of old John in the Macon wilderness, and enjoyed the first square meal under a roof for two weeks?

Not until the wee sma' hours did Tom and Abe and John and Dennis and Levi and their good host lie down to rest; for the newcomers were homeless, and crops must be speedily planted; and a programme of inspection and selection had to be made out for the succeeding day.

Six miles further down the stream, John Hanks had selected a place for the settlement of his kinfolks, and had cut logs sufficient for a cabin. Thither all the men went the next morning; a site was selected for a field and the cabin, and the united energies of all were bent toward planting homes in the forest for the three families. Fifteen acres of river bottom were cleared for the use of Thomas Lincoln's family proper; it then consisting theoretically of his wife, Abraham, and John D. Johnston.

Abraham was now a legal MAN, having no claim for parental aid, and charged with all the responsibilities of budding and ambitious manhood. He was in a new State surrounded by the most primitive society of the frontier—a mere ad-

venturer, with nothing on earth but his right arm and uneducated brain as a capital with which to commence the journey of life. He was legally, but not morally, independent. His father had no financial ability, and, to put it plainly, was very liable to need the aid of his only son in the future as in the past. Faithful to all moral obligations then as thereafter, Abraham felt resting upon his shoulders, contingently, the burden of his father's and step-mother's support; and, all things considered, it would not be easy to find a more unenviable condition of American manhood than that which environed Abraham Lincoln when he cast off from the shores of dependent youth, and embarked on the uncertain voyage of independent and responsible life.

His home with his father thenceforth was but nominal. He really lived with families for whom he worked as a hired laborer. All that is known of his career during the first year in Illinois is that he worked at odd jobs when he could, in the immediate neighborhood. He probably did not visit Decatur once during all that time. His residence in Macon County was apparently a simple bridging over from the irresponsible and reckless career of a fanciful youth of uncertain instincts, to the incipient career of responsible life. His propensity to air his eloquence was not, however, in abeyance even then; for we learn that a candidate for the Legislature, by the convenient and conventional name of "Posey" (that name standing as the John Doe of Lincolnian biography), made a speech in the Hanks neighborhood on the then current political issue of the navigation of the Sangamo River. "Posey" seems to have been opposed to its im-

provement for navigation, and Lincoln in favor of it. Uncle John evidently knew his kinsman's views on the subject, for he at once took issue with "Posey," and avowed that "Abe" could beat it. So John brought out a box, which Abe mounted, and made his oratorical bow to the sovereigns of his adopted State in the advocacy of a subject which never had anything but a fictitious political standing, and which was soon overshadowed by the advent of the railway question, first as a political factor, and ultimately as a potential fact. It appears from Uncle John's statement that Abe beat "Posey" "to death" in the discussion, and that his discomfited antagonist, asking him where he had learned so much, encouraged him to assume the rôle of politician.

It will be recollected that Henry Clay, in addressing a class of students once, informed them that he had largely improved himself in the art of oratory by addressing imaginary audiences, represented by hencoops, stumps, trees, etc. The future hero of the "joint debate" underwent a similar self-imposed discipline, and alike in Spencer County, Indiana, and Macon County, Illinois, he was wont to convert the "deep, tangled wildwood" into an imaginary audience, and thus discipline his genius in the ways and graces of the effective orator.

It will be recollected that an especial reason why Thomas Lincoln removed from Indiana to Illinois was, as Dennis Hanks puts it, to get "where *milk-sick* was not." The new settlers did, indeed, escape the "milk sickness," but they encountered a disease which was nearly as bad. The fall of 1830 was an unusually severe season for chills and fever, and Thomas and his family were so sorely



afflicted with it as to become thoroughly discouraged. Their little sorry cabin presented a melancholy sight: the father and mother both shivering at once, and the married daughter, who came to minister to their sufferings, not much better off. So terribly did they suffer that the father vowed a vow that as soon as he got able to travel he would "*git out o' thar.*"

The winter season came on and was one of "ethereal mildness" up to Christmas, when a terrible and persistent snowstorm set in, and lasted without intermission for forty-eight hours, leaving between three and four feet on the ground on the level, a depth never attained before nor since, and remaining so for over two months. Its effect upon the rural districts was disastrous: the wheat crops were totally ruined; cattle, hogs, and even horses perished; all sorts of provisions gave out. There was no means of getting help from abroad. In some places teams would bear up on the crust of the snow; in others, there was no road communication at all, and athletic men would be compelled to journey on foot to neighbors for food. Many perished on the prairie from cold; some even perished in their houses from hunger. Selfishness was excoriated by the common calamity; charity was universal; the whole interior districts of the State were made akin by that one touch of nature, the "big snow."

That awful event was made a chronological era ever afterwards. Many a fireside gathering has, in the past generation of men, been thrilled by a recounting of the incidents of that drear and awful "winter of the deep snow."

This "Hanks" neighborhood was unusually

uninteresting; much more so than that which the emigrants had left behind in Indiana, and the twin calamities of "chills and fever" and the "deep snow," coming in succession, Thomas Lincoln emigrated in the succeeding spring to "Goose Nest" Prairie, in the southern part of Coles County, about one hundred miles southeast of Decatur. Here he lived until his death in 1851.

Flowing in a sinuous course, generally southwestwardly, through Champaign, Piatt, Macon, and between Christian and Sangamon counties, for a hundred miles, then turning abruptly to the northwest for about fifty miles, then pursuing a course due west until it finally reaches, and mingles its turbid current with that of the Illinois, is a river now known improperly as the "Sangamon." Its correct name, given by the Indians, is "Sangamo"—pronounced "*Sangamaw*"—and it was so called in Lincoln's early manhood. The Hanks neighborhood is on the right bank of this river, at a point near to where its course is changed from a southwesterly to a northwesterly one. It was in the river bottoms of this stream, in this neighborhood, that Lincoln passed the first year of his manhood.

In February, 1831, one Denton Offutt, a bibulous, "devil-may-care" sort of person, a combination of speculator and mountebank, drifted into this neighborhood, and casually met John Hanks, who had somehow achieved a local fame as a flatboatman. Offutt proposed to Hanks to transport a flatboat load of country produce to New Orleans. Hanks was not unwilling to go, but deferred a definite answer till he could con-



sult Lincoln and John D. Johnston, and ascertain if they could be induced to accompany him.

Now I have heretofore stated that one of Lincoln's mental traits of character was a propensity for a diversion of employment, a hopping about from one thing to another, rather than consecutive, steady, and monotonous labor. He was, moreover, not disinclined to adventure; to seeing the world; to achieving knowledge in the school of experience and variety; and thus it was that he entered promptly into a business engagement with Offutt by the terms of which Offutt was to provide a boat and cargo at the confluence of Sugar Creek and the south fork with the main Sangamo, a few miles east of the then obscure and ill-built village of Springfield. This boat Lincoln, John Hanks, and John D. Johnston were to navigate to New Orleans. The three argonauts met promptly at the appointed rendezvous, Lincoln and Hanks sailing down in a frail canoe, and their companion preferring the safer method of pedal locomotion. But they found neither boat nor cargo awaiting them. In point of fact, all that the energetic but erratic contractor had done was to engage to purchase sundry supplies of the few cross-road merchants. Thus the enterprise was, for the time being, suspended. However, the trio of prospective navigators, nothing daunted, but without a solitary cent, change of clothing, or anything corporeal except their bodies and the rude clothing which they wore, started on foot for Springfield, where they supposed some tidings of their employer might be obtained.

As I am not unfamiliar with the styles and

modes of life of our frontier people in primitive days and conditions, I can see in my mind's eye this loutish crowd as they entered into the precincts of this uninviting village, then a sparsely settled community of five hundred people, poorly built, and the streets almost totally impassable with deep, "sticky" mud.

It is not difficult for me to reproduce in fancy the supercilious stare which greeted these ragged searchers after light and knowledge, as they prosecuted their inquiries at the few stores for the whereabouts of "Denton Offutt." That their mission was supposed by those who took any interest in the matter to be a barren one was undoubted, for Offutt was generally known to be an irresponsible projector. Had not our adventurers followed the matter up, it is probable Denton would have done nothing further about it, but would have turned his attention to some other wild scheme. For this venture was not in the line of legitimate commerce or adventure; the Sangamo was not rated as a navigable stream; there was at least one mill-dam, and the river's availability for commerce and as a highway was then advocated, so far as was known, by only two individuals in the whole world, viz.: Abraham Lincoln in theory, and Denton Offutt in practice.

It was at the Buckhorn Tavern, the leading place of its kind in town, that Offutt was finally found. Although it was in the middle of the day, he was found lying in a corner fast asleep, and most decidedly drunk.

The presence of his boat's crew and the necessities of the occasion soon roused and stimulated the energies of the enterprising but erratic pro-

jector, and he gave *carte blanche* to his three employees to invade the government land and get out gunwales, and to repair to a rude mill managed by one Kirkpatrick (of whom more anon), in order to obtain the necessary lumber at Offutt's expense to construct the boat. The three accordingly improvised a camp and adopted an organization to consummate the project, in which to Lincoln was assigned the rôle of "*chief cook and bottle-washer.*" In thirty days hence the flat-boat was completed, and rode proudly on the bosom of the river, moored to the mud banks of the Sangamo—the pioneer of all water craft in that region.

I shall hereafter have occasion to note that Abraham Lincoln was always and ever ready to meet and master any of the real exigencies which lay in his pathway, and this incident furnished the first occasion for the exercise of his faculties in that line. He was the controlling spirit of the entire affair. It is even more than probable that Lincoln's advocacy of the practicability of navigating the Sangamo first induced Offutt to risk the venture, and it is also reasonably clear that his enthusiasm and spirit brought out of chaos and made practicable the carrying out of the enterprise. While engaged in building the boat a peripatetic prestidigitator came along, and gave an entertainment in a garret. This our boat-builders attended, and it was Lincoln's hat that the magician used in the manner of his craft to cook eggs in. This was the first public entertainment which we have any record that Lincoln attended. Throughout his subsequent career he was very fond of such amusements. That he was shot while gazing on a mimic scene has troubled many

good folk who disapprove of theatres, and they have sought various excuses for his presence at the fatal play, such as his desire to honor General Grant, who was expected there, etc. The fact is, Lincoln had from the first a keen interest in any public performance, and in time developed a critical appreciation of the highest form of entertainment, the drama.

Offutt's adhesion to the flowing bowl retarded the enterprise, but during his spasms of sobriety, the load was engaged, the boat was loaded, the parting signal was given, and this argosy under command of Lincoln was, in the middle of April, set on the raging tide. At a distance of thirty-seven miles as the river runs, on the 19th day of April, a mill-dam was encountered, on which the rude craft, after passing one-third of its length, stuck fast.

In the exigency thus presented, Lincoln was the directing and master mind. The forward end of the boat was tilted up, and the rear end submerged; a smaller boat was procured, and part of the load transferred. Lincoln then bored a hole in that part of the bottom of the boat which projected over the dam, and then rolled some heavy pork barrels forward, which gave a pitch to the boat and let the water run out, after which the hole was stopped up, and, by a skilful use of poles, the vessel was got over, reloaded, and sent forward on its course.

When the craft reached Beardstown, its odd appearance and wild-looking crew excited the derision of the inhabitants, who committed the undignified and inexcusable act of openly ridiculing them as they passed. The venture reached New Orleans at last, probably as rude

a craft with as awkward a crew as ever floated out of the wild forest.

While at New Orleans, Lincoln saw the institution of slavery in one of its most revolting and reprehensible aspects. Nothing was more common in those days than the traffic in slaves, and New Orleans was the greatest slave-market in the Union. One could not walk extensively in the streets without being an involuntary witness to the horror and infamy of the institution. Lincoln saw an octoroon girl offered for sale on the auction-block. As the auctioneer dilated on her physical perfections to the lecherous crowd of tobacco-chewers and whiskey-blossomed sots congregated in the market, and these passed ribald jests on the subject, the young Northerner was sickened by the scene, and hastily withdrew from it, prophetically remarking to Hanks: "If I ever get a chance at that thing, I'll hit it hard."

In June, the venture having been concluded, the party returned up the river on the deck of a steamer as far as St. Louis, where the three companions left Dennis, and started on foot for their several homes, so far as they had any. The companions followed the National Road as far as Edwardsville, where Hanks left them, taking a more direct road to his home in Macon County, and Lincoln and Johnston proceeded *via* the National Road, then extensively travelled, a few miles beyond Ewington, where they made a *dé-tour* north. Travel-stained and footsore, they finally presented themselves at the humble cabin door of Thomas and Sallie Bush Lincoln.

After seeing the world, the prospect of settling down in the Macon County cabin was not very inviting at best. The region was new, and the

people all poor. Thomas Lincoln's hut was as rude and uncomfortable as was possible, and there was no incentive to exertion, nothing to stimulate the ambition. Yet Thomas was cheery and stout of heart. His squalor, so apparent to every one else, was unobserved by him. In the dun surroundings of his rude abode, his spirits were jocund, and he was wholly unconscious that life held any greater happiness than that which animated his existence.

A few years after this time, William G. Greene was going to Kentucky on a visit, and as his way would lie near to where Thomas Lincoln lived, Abraham requested him to visit his father and deliver him a letter. Greene did so, and as he approached the cabin just before nightfall, his heart sank within him, for he beheld the most wretched hovel he had encountered in his journey. It was without a stable, outhouse of any kind, and not a shrub or tree was in sight. The proprietor appeared and, as soon as he learned the situation, exclaimed cheerily: "Get right down, Bill. You're welcome, heartily welcome. I'm right glad to see you. I'll make you and your beast so comfortable that you'll stay with me a week. Here's just the place to hitch your beast [indicating a log of the cabin with a projecting end]; I use it to dress deer-hides on; and I've got an iron kettle here; jest the thing for a feed-trough, and lots of shelled corn; so all you've got to do is to make yourself at hum as long as you like."

Greene said that Thomas was one of the shrewdest ignorant men he ever saw—that he took in, at a glance, the feelings of dismay which possessed the stranger as he rode up to the



wretched abode, and that his task was to dispel that feeling; and he did it by making the guest feel that the host, at least, thought everything about to be of prime excellence. Seated before the rude hearth, Thomas Lincoln said, "I suppose that Abe is still fooling hisself with eddication. I tried to stop it, but he has got that fool idea in his head, and it can't be got out. Now I hain't got no eddication, but I get along far better than ef I had. Take bookkeepin'—why, I'm the best bookkeeper in the world! Look up at that rafter thar. Thar's three straight lines made with a firebrand: ef I sell a peck of meal I draw a black line across, and when they pay, I take the dish-cloth and jest rub it out; and that thar's a heap better'n yer eddication," etc. (In point of fact, a part of his business was to superintend a small neighborhood mill.)

When Mr. Greene left his garrulous host the next morning, he said he felt as if he had gone out from the presence of an intellectually great, but entirely unpolished and uncultivated, man. Thomas Lincoln's rude methods of reasoning reminded him of the son, then likewise rude and unpolished.

After remaining at his father's home for four or five weeks, Abraham left it, never again to enter it as an inmate. He had but a very light mortgage on the future, and that not based upon a very substantial title. Offutt, with all his recklessness and frivolity, had a considerable fund of sagacity and discernment, and he saw in Lincoln the making of a great man, and he was desirous to ally himself as closely to him as he could; hence, before parting at St. Louis, he entered into an arrangement with the young man by the

terms of which Offutt was to tarry long enough there to gather up a stock of goods, and open a store at the place where the boat had stuck on the dam, and Lincoln was to act as clerk. The first of August succeeding was designated as the period for the commencement of this business arrangement. With this slender hold upon fortune, Lincoln packed his entire worldly effects in a cotton handkerchief, and, slinging the bundle across his shoulder, and bidding a dutiful good-bye to his father and a pathetic farewell to Sallie Bush Johnston, he set his face westward in quest of a livelihood, with as cheerless a prospect as ever attended a young man going out into the world.

During the year 1824, James Rutledge, Edward Rutledge, brothers, and John Miller Cameron, their brother-in-law, came from Henderson County, Kentucky, and settled in that portion of Sangamon County, Illinois, now known as Concord Township in Menard County. Cameron was a Cumberland Presbyterian preacher; the Rutledges belonged to the celebrated family of that name whose members were the political leaders of South Carolina in the auroral days of the republic.

Two years thereafter, James Rutledge and his brother-in-law, Cameron, built a rude dam across the Sangamon at a point ten miles distant from Concord, and established a very primitive saw- and grist-mill, known interchangeably as "Cameron's" or "Rutledge's" mill. It was upon this dam that the flatboat of Offutt's venture got fast.

Upon the brow of a rocky ridge overlooking the dam, Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Cameron each built a log dwelling-house, and installed their



families therein. Their neighbors were Bowlin Greene, who lived a half or three-quarters of a mile north; Bennett Able, whose house was a mile further on; "Billy" Greene, who lived three miles southwest; and a considerable settlement a few miles southwestward in "Clary's Grove."

Business at the mill prospered, and the economical exigencies demanded more commercial facilities than the original enterprise furnished. So Rutledge and Cameron added to their enterprise by purchasing the ridge adjacent to the mill and, on October 13, 1829, laying out a town there. This they called New Salem, a name indicative of their religious turn of mind. Cameron had already erected a log hotel of four rooms, and, immediately thereafter, two enterprising young men from the East, Samuel Hill and John McNamee, alias John McNeil, opened a small store there; a postoffice was established, and once a week the stage-coach, or "mud wagon," as it was termed, in its journey from Havana to Springfield, turned aside from the main road, ascended the ridge, and gladdened the few dwellers there with the weaving of a commercial and literary bond between them and the outer world.

The hamlet took on a slow, plodding, irregular growth; people came for fifty miles to acquire anything exotic to their farms, and, in natural course of trade, this supply soon came.

## CHAPTER IV

### LINCOLN AS A STOREKEEPER

WHEN Denton Offutt's boat stuck on the dam, New Salem was in the second year of its existence, and had then quite a population. So notable and unusual an occurrence as a flatboat, and especially one fast on their mill-dam, aroused the curiosity of the citizens, and brought the entire hamlet to the river banks, where Lincoln, in the rôle of commander, was the most conspicuous object. So he was not forgotten, when, in August thereafter, he walked into the town with a bundle in a handkerchief slung across his shoulder, and joined the little knot of idlers sitting on their haunches on the shady side of Hill's store. He opened out his Pandora's box of jokes, affiliated with the crowd at once, and, "as the setting sun cast his lengthened shadow athwart the little village, it showed no sign of his parting from them."

Lincoln gave no intimation as to what brought him there, but soon endeared himself to all by exhibiting great muscular strength, *bonhomie*, and his propensity to entertain by anecdote.

A local election coming on, and "scribes" being scarce, the village schoolmaster, Mentor Graham, asked him if he could write. He was cautious then as thereafter. "I can make a few rabbit-tracks," was the answer, and he acted as

clerk of election, in company with a young Mr. Nance. It should be noted that distrust did not prevail in those new regions in that early day. Decent-appearing strangers were taken into the hearts and homes of the people without criticism or inspection; if work was pressing, they were invited to buckle to; if they proved to be drones, they were stung from the hive. If work was slack, they were invited to join a fishing or a hunting party; to social life they must contribute their share. In that respect, Lincoln was a valuable acquisition; he knew no one when he came there except such persons as he had seen from the flatboat, yet in two days he was no longer a stranger.

In a day or so after the election, a Dr. Nelson, who had lived in the neighborhood, desired to migrate to Texas, and proposed to float with his family and effects, from below the dam at New Salem, to Beardstown; thence to the Mississippi, and, finally, down that majestic stream to the mouth of Red River by means of a small flatboat. Being in need of a pilot to convoy the outfit to Beardstown, he employed Lincoln to fill that responsible rôle. At Beardstown Lincoln encountered his employer, Offutt, who had just arrived with a part of his goods, the rest being due by the next steamer. Lincoln was left to await their arrival and to see to their proper storage while Offutt should repair to New Salem in order to rent or build a store, and engage teamsters to haul over the goods. Offutt employed one Potter and another man to transport the goods, and advised them that on the way they might meet Lincoln, from whom they should procure the necessary order for them. "How

will we know him?" queried Potter. "You can't mistake him," replied Offutt; "he's as long as a beanpole, and as awkward as he is long."

They met Lincoln on the highway, and he wrote an order for the goods on a blank leaf of a small memorandum book he had with him. Potter looked at it and observed, "You've spelled money, m-o-n-y." Lincoln glanced at it, and replied, "Well, they can't make anything else out of it." The goods came in due season, and Lincoln took charge of unboxing and putting them in position, after which he commenced his new career as the most awkward and ungainly store-clerk, probably, in the State of Illinois. Offutt, however, was perfectly satisfied with his clerk, and besides was enthusiastic in his praise of him as a man. Having had occasion, during his flat-boat trip, to witness his marvellous strength and to see his prowess satisfactorily tested, he admired Lincoln extravagantly, and there were in New Salem those who shared Offutt's admiration, though in a minor degree.

About three miles distant from New Salem was a large grove, termed Clary's Grove, which was inhabited by a wild lot of pioneers from Kentucky and Tennessee. Their early education and proclivities induced the habits of drinking, fighting, wrestling, horse-racing, shooting at a mark, etc., and their residence on the frontier with no attrition with any society or civilization except themselves, tended to foster and intensify the wild and uncivilized habits and tendencies of their youth. The Clary's Grove boys, as they were termed, when animated with bad whiskey, and decorated with shooting-irons of the rude patterns incident to the time, were so thoroughly

reckless and on mischief bent, as to be a source of the utmost terror to all well-disposed people who lived in the track of their bacchanalian forays. Prior to the advent of Cameron's mill, they had had no stated rendezvous, but when that was founded, it provided a sort of common rallying-point, which was made more definite and became more pronounced when Hill and McNeil started a store on the hill. In that era of the settlement of our frontier, all merchants kept cheap and bad whiskey as one of the chief and indispensable staples. This necessary article of merchandise was purchased in its fiery, untamed state and condition in Cincinnati and St. Louis at the stated and constant price of eighteen and three-quarters cents per gallon. A thrifty merchant could easily, after he got started, by the aid of a pump, perform the benefaction of causing three barrels to flow in the place of two.

One Jack Armstrong was the leader of these rowdy pioneers. Their mode of life was to waste the first five secular days of the week in farm or forest labor, then on Saturday to put on their best attire, mount their nags together, and consume the day and night in various modes and manifestations of frontier rowdyism. When any issue was joined with any other segment of mankind, the trial was by wager of battle, in which Jack was their champion.

The closest approach to organized opposition to the pretensions of the Clary Grove boys was a loose band known as the "River Timber boys," who inhabited the timber belts which skirted the river bottoms. The several issues of supremacy, as wrestling, fighting, scrub-racing, etc., had been settled between these two sets of "back-

settlement" rowdies before the advent of Lincoln, and "the cankers of a calm world and a long peace" held place in the settlement. It was then that Bill Clary, one of the "Clary Grove" boys, sounded a blast on his bugle-horn by proposing a little bet, at the close of a heated dispute with Offutt, that Jack Armstrong could throw Lincoln, "the best two out of three." This very greatly annoyed Lincoln; preëminently a man of peace, he abhorred personal conflict, or anything that savored of ill-feeling. He had gained the good-will of everybody in that little community, and deprecated aught that would disturb the *entente cordiale*. Besides, it could lead to no good results. What matters it if Jack or Abe was the stronger? Lincoln could see no utility in the contest proposed, and his whole soul rebelled against it. Of course Offutt's intentions were good; he supposed that Abe would come off conqueror, and that it would bring zest, if not satiety, to a great ambition.

However, the edict had gone forth, and Lincoln must pose a contestant, or be branded as a coward in a community where such an accusation was the foulest and most damnatory conceivable—social death, in fact.

The combatants and their respective allies adjourned to the scene of the coming fray, bye-bets of all conceivable kinds were made; dirk knives, horse pistols, "slick quarters," etc., were staked galore on the contest. No such excitement ever reigned within the peaceful precincts of New Salem before or since. Many of Lincoln's biographers have enlarged upon the prolific theme of this contest, but for some reason they have generally allowed the wings of their imagination

to exceed the tail-feathers of their judgment, and have woven a brilliant fabrication out of a very commonplace incident.

The most zealous friend whom Lincoln had on the field of conflict, aside from Offutt, was William G. Greene. He narrated the incident to me in this wise. It does not attest the strength of Samson to be a part of his friend's equipment, as other biographers do, but it does in a characteristic manner show his moral force. The two wrestlers caughts "*holts*," and the contest began;

Long time in even scale the battle hung.

In point of fact, the men were so easily balanced that not the slightest headway was made.

Lincoln took the sensible view of the case then, as always. "Let's quit," said he. "We are evenly matched, and we may as well quit even."

The Clary Grove crowd foolishly deemed this frank confession as an exhibition of the "white feather," and a huge yell of derision and defiance enforced the decree that the contest must go on.

Lincoln, now goaded to a sort of semi-desperation, profiting by his great strength, and roused to its highest pitch of achievement by the attendant excitement, fairly lifted his burly antagonist off his feet, but the dexterous wrestler, by an adroit movement of his supple legs, landed squarely on his feet, instead of on his back as Lincoln had intended, and, in his turn, by what is termed in sporting vernacular a *foul*, threw Lincoln. A victory thus achieved was only maintainable by the *ultima ratio regum*; in other words, by open war.

Lincoln rose from the ground with every feature indicative of vengeance. Said he, in a tone



and manner which struck consternation to all present: "That won't do; and I'll show any one who doubts it, that it won't do. You can't make that game work with me!" The crowd understood perfectly what Lincoln meant; and it was at once claimed that Jack took that mode of acceding to Lincoln's desire to end the contest by calling it a *draw*. So the *entente cordiale* was restored, and Lincoln and Jack Armstrong became thenceforth the closest of friends, which amity and concord bound and embraced the entire Armstrong family. In 1858 Lincoln saved a son of the family from the gallows, and during the war discharged him from service.

It need scarcely be added that Lincoln's prowess and manhood were put to no further test in that neighborhood; but I should add that at an election held one year thereafter, at which Lincoln was a candidate, every vote was cast for him from Clary's Grove—it would have been social ostracism to any one to do otherwise.

Offutt's restless ambition demanded other worlds to conquer than a small store, so he added to his list of mercantile ventures a lease of the mill, and he then employed William G. Greene, a son of a neighboring family, aged eighteen or nineteen years, as an assistant. Between the two clerks a friendship and cordiality sprang up which lasted as long as the life of the senior. In fact, Mr. Greene, still alive, and now a wealthy banker and capitalist, avers that even in those rude days he had a belief that Lincoln was the greatest man who ever lived, and it is a source of great satisfaction to him to find the opinion of the polite world of this enlightened day and generation rapidly crystallizing to his belief.

Each morning the two clerks, and sometimes the proprietor, would wend their way down the slanting road which led to the bottom land northward, and proceed up the State road for three-quarters of a mile to a primitive farmstead owned by one Bowlin Greene, where they would get their breakfast, generally of bread and milk. They would greet their motherly hostess as Aunt Nancy. At noon and evening they would repeat this custom, for their boarding-place was at this farm, and they slept on a narrow cot in the loft of the store.

Lincoln's morals were singularly chaste and pure for that day. Although the customs were wellnigh universal to drink, chew, smoke, and habitually swear, he indulged in none of these habits. Mr. Greene avers that he never saw him take a drink of liquor but once, and then he at once spat it out; that he never chewed or smoked, and that he never swore but once in his presence (which I shall refer to again).

Lincoln was also sedulous to impart moral instruction when it could be effectually done, without improper intrusion upon the prejudices of the delinquent. William Greene was, like ordinary youth in those days, addicted to petty gambling, betting, etc. Lincoln perceived it, and one day said to his fellow clerk: "Billy, you ought to stop gambling with Estep." Greene replied: "I'm ninety cents behind, and I can't quit till I've won it back." Said Lincoln: "If I'll help you win that back, will you promise never to gamble again?" Greene reflected a moment, and made the promise. Lincoln then said: "Here are hats which are on sale at seven dollars each, and you need one. Now, when Estep comes, you draw

him on by degrees, and finally bet him one of those hats that I can lift a full forty-gallon barrel of whiskey, and take a drink out of the bung-hole." Accordingly they fixed the barrel so that the bunghole would be in the right place, and when the victim appeared, after a little parleying and bantering, the bet was made; Lincoln then squatted down and lifted one end of the barrel on one knee, and then lifted the other end on the other knee, and, stooping over, actually succeeded in taking a drink out of the bunghole, which, however, he immediately spat out. Greene thus won the hat, and never gambled again.

Offutt soon "busted-up," and left his creditors in the lurch; and Lincoln did odd jobs when and as he could, for a time. He had an assured home at Bowlin Greene's, and another at Jack Armstrong's; and when under the stress of difficulties he wended his way to one or the other with perfect freedom, and was a welcome guest.

Ten years thereafter, Mr. William G. Greene encountered Offutt at Memphis, Tenn., posing as a veterinary surgeon, and also as a horse-tamer. He was fantastically arrayed and prone to garrulity, but seemed to be eking out an existence by his calling. Let us not disdain this wild product of frontier civilization, however, for we should cherish and honor any agency in the evolution of Abraham Lincoln. Offutt was his generous friend, and gave him his first start in life. Through his agency, Lincoln was transplanted from the sombre wilderness of Hanks's neighborhood to the more progressive conditions and more congenial surroundings of New Salem—his first living in an aggregate community.

As a merchant's clerk in New Salem had an abundance of leisure, Lincoln spent much time in reading and studying. He was never without a book. From Billy Greene he borrowed Kirkham's grammar, and from his brother, L. M. Greene, he also borrowed Lindley Murray's grammar; Ann Rutledge used to lend him her grammar to study of nights, and this same grammar is in possession of the Rutledge family with the name of the once fair owner on a fly-leaf, and that of the great Emancipator printed under it, both names inscribed by himself.

Lincoln recited his lessons in grammar to Greene, and in three weeks knew as much of the subject as Greene. At Washington, in after years, Greene was in the Executive Chamber, and Lincoln took pride and pleasure in introducing Greene to members of his Cabinet and others as his "grammar master."

New Salem was bounded on the south by a ravine, at the foot of which flowed a rugged, sprightly rivulet termed "Rock Creek," or "Greene's Rocky Branch," which could be readily crossed by pedestrians. At the top of the ridge beyond this branch was a log schoolhouse in which one Mentor Graham, a professional pedagogue, kept school, and to which the children and youth of New Salem, and the adjacent country, repaired. Graham was devoted to his calling, for he taught in log schoolhouses for fifty consecutive years.

Mentor lived at New Salem during his term of service on the adjacent hill, and to him Lincoln applied for private tuition, with the result that he made rapid progress in mathematics, geography, grammar, and spelling. A favorite

diversion of his was to visit the little rustic school at spelling time, and sit on the back bench and listen attentively as the lesson progressed. Occasionally he would make some comment, as: "I could almost spell that myself"; but his presence was always welcome, and his intrusion was never reprobated.

It was a marked characteristic of Lincoln that under all circumstances and in every condition, his mind was ever on the alert in pursuit of knowledge. Books were then very scarce, but he somehow obtained access to them and literally possessed himself of their contents, assimilating the knowledge to himself, and to his own needs. In reading his speeches and official documents, one can hardly conceive that their composer acquired his academical knowledge almost entirely out of school and without a teacher; his spelling was almost without flaw, and his syntax practically accurate. His faculty of composition was not only faultless, but embellished with the grace and adornment of *belles-lettres*.

After Lincoln had terminated his novitiate in mercantile life with the downfall of Offutt, his next mercantile venture and experience was achieved in a mode peculiar, and possible only, to the business methods, or lack of any, of the frontier.

It occurred thus: Reuben Radford brought a stock of goods to New Salem, and opened a store. He was duly warned against the idiosyncrasies of the "Clary's Grove boys," but incorrectly reasoned that he could keep them under control, if he limited their allowance of drinks to two each. It so happened, however, that upon the occasion of their first visit to New Salem after his settle-

ment there, he was on a visit in the country three miles distant, and his young brother was in charge.

After the crowd had drank twice around, the young clerk informed them that he had reached the limit of his orders, and that the faucet to the whiskey barrel was laid under an embargo till their next visit. That was an abnormal condition of affairs, and not in accordance with the theory of government and latitudinarianism of conduct for which their forefathers "fit," and they sought, but in vain, so to impress, by logical methods, the warden of the indispensable *spiritus frumenti*. But the youth was a rigid disciplinarian, and declined to yield; whereupon the crowd whipped out their horse pistols and made targets of the various alluring show bottles of whiskey which adorned the shelves, and in a few minutes spread chaos and devastation throughout the whole exterior. The "boys" then made good use of the exhilaration which an unlimited supply of whiskey superinduced, and riot reigned supreme in that neighborhood, extending into the "wee sma' hours" of the succeeding morning. Shortly before day, Radford's peaceful sleep was disturbed by the bacchanalian yelling of the rowdies *en route* for their homes, and fearing danger at his store, he mounted his horse and rode post-haste toward the little hamlet. Billy Greene, then still a boy, was on his pony going early to mill. Seeing Radford dash past him, his horse reeking with sweat, he followed at a breakneck pace to learn the cause of such excitement. Radford reached his store, and, hastily alighting, stood on the platform and gazed in at the open door with dismay upon the broken bottles and



other débris of the saturnalian debauch. Greene, reaching the store a minute later, rode up to the open window just as Radford in desperation exclaimed: "I'll sell out this whole 'shebang' at the first offer I get." Greene, at a venture, exclaimed, "I offer \$400." "Done," said Radford; "the concern's yours." "But I've got no money," said Greene. "Never mind about money," said the disgusted merchant. "Come right in and give me your note at six months," which Greene promptly and recklessly did. Radford bestrode his steed and left young Greene "monarch of all he surveyed." The store was located immediately opposite to the hotel (so-called) where Lincoln, at that time, abode. Just at this moment he appeared at the washstand out of doors. Seeing the youthful speculator, and divining his embarrassment of riches, Lincoln said cheerily: "Hold on, Bill, till I get a bite of breakfast, an' we'll take an inventory and see what you've got." "I doan' want any more inventory," was the reply. "The Clary Grovers have done all the inventoryin' I want." But after breakfast Lincoln and Greene went through the stock, and found that the stock was worth seven hundred and fifty dollars, at least. Lincoln was out of a job just then, and one William Berry was then also out of employment, but the possessor, just at that juncture, of two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and a good horse, saddle, and bridle. In less than an hour from the time the inventory was made, a trade had been made as follows: Berry and Lincoln formed a partnership and bought out Greene; Berry paid him two hundred and fifty dollars in cash and gave him the horse, saddle, and bridle, estimated at one hundred dollars, and



assumed payment of his debt to Radford, and Greene was to have the store receipts for that day. The new firm then went into possession and took in fifteen dollars and a Spanish shilling; and young Greene, highly elated by his first business venture, rode home that night with two hundred and sixty-five dollars twelve and one-half cents and a horse, saddle, and bridle as a result of his investment of a boy's pluck and enterprise.

The firm of Berry & Lincoln next absorbed the stock and business of a moribund firm entitled James and Rowan Herndon. The new enterprise was, however, greatly handicapped, first, by the lack of capital of the firm, and secondly, by the devotion of the senior partner to the whiskey jug, and of the junior partner to "star-eyed science."

While Lincoln does not seem to have been animated with any great ambition to achieve distinction as a clerk or miller, he yet was rigidly honest as to money matters and to representations made in course of trade. He would not dissemble, color the truth, or excite a customer's desire to buy unnecessarily or beyond his means; he frankly told good customers that the very whiskey which he drew for them would prove their ruin, and that the tobacco which he dealt out was nasty and unfit for use. If he knew nothing of the merits or quality of goods under review he frankly said so. His propensity to entertain by stories attracted customers to some extent, but the same tendency, likewise, obstructed business, for it was no unusual spectacle of a Saturday to behold sales arrested, while Lincoln was regaling a crowd in the store by incidents, "airy nothings," but to which he gave

“a local habitation and a name.” Upon such occasions uproarious laughter was heard from one end of the little hamlet to the other. Mrs. Hill says that she could always tell when Lincoln had let himself loose. She adds that his stories seemed never to lose interest, that his entertainments were apparently as fully appreciated in the fourth year of their run as during the first.

So far as appeared, Lincoln did not seem to have any exalted ambition or towering aspirations. His juvenile prophecies of attaining the Presidency seem to have evanesced with his callow youth, and he seemed content to make both ends meet financially, to entertain his fellows with clownish antic and ludicrous stories, and to climb the hill of science in a usual way by aid of books and conversation with educated persons. He was not a brilliant genius, but a struggling, slow-plodding one.

## CHAPTER V

### SOLDIER, SURVEYOR, AND POSTMASTER

I HAVE already stated that Lincoln's nature, disposition, and training indisposed him to stable and continuous business, and impelled him to change and desultory employments. Hence it was that the episode of the Black Hawk War was the precise sort of adventure which harmonized with his nature. This brief but thrilling episode in the early Illinois history occurred thus: One Mucata Muhicatah, meaning Black Hawk, was principal chief of the Sacs and Foxes, a tribe which occupied the northwestern part of Illinois, including the teeming Rock River valley. As early as 1804, General Harrison, on behalf of the United States Government, made a treaty at St. Louis with several of the minor chiefs, for the cession of their country to the United States; which treaty, after lying dormant and only partially executed for some years, was confirmed by the tribe in 1815 and 1816. The last treaties distinctly embraced in the cession the great town of the Indians near the mouth of Rock River. Black Hawk was a proud, independent chieftain of great valor and renown, having been one of Tecumseh's chief councillors and warriors. His word was law to the better order of his tribe. He despised the American pioneers, but was enamoured of the British. He

always denied the validity of the treaty, averring that it was made only with some of the minor chiefs, and then by chicanery and compulsion. These chiefs were imprisoned for murder, and the whites had made them drunk and then extorted the treaty from them as the price of their liberty. So Black Hawk resisted removal from the land, and had to be transported into Iowa by force.

One provision of the treaty was that none of the tribe should revisit Illinois without first obtaining leave of the President or of the Governor of Illinois. This permission, it is needless to say, it was not intended that they should ever obtain, although the whites led the Indians to suppose they could get it for the asking. Not being able to do so, Black Hawk invaded the State in the early spring of 1831 with his tribe, avowing his intention to "plant corn" in the Rock River valley.

General Gaines, then in command of the United States forces at Rock Island, called on the Governor of Illinois for seven hundred militia to expel the Indians. Fifteen hundred came in response to the Governor's call. Abraham Lincoln was on his flatboat trip to New Orleans at the time, or he would probably have been among the volunteers. The troops marched against the Indians, who promptly ran away and recrossed into Iowa, abandoning their large town at the mouth of Rock River, which the troops burnt. Black Hawk himself then made a treaty, agreeing to remain west of the river. But with the advent of planting time the next season, the old chief gazed with covetous eyes upon the valley of so many bright reminiscences, before the

spoilers came; and allying Keokuk, another chief of renown with him, crossed the Mississippi again with all the warriors, braves, squaws, and papooses of the Sac and Fox nation. Again the United States commander called on the State authorities for a militia contingent.

One of the normal incidents of frontier life is the maintenance of possession by force. The early Western pioneers attended their "logrollings" and "shindigs," gun on shoulder, and the animus of shooting Indians in their mind. Hence this call prognosticated a diversion to the frontiersmen of Illinois, and in response, eighteen hundred men met together at Beardstown, the period of enlistment being a term of thirty days.

The spirit of mercantile adventure had "winked out" in the mind of Lincoln by this time. He was one of the first volunteers in the county of Sangamon. The rendezvous of the Sangamon contingent was about seven miles west of New Salem, and at that point the Adjutant General attended, in order to organize the company, the date being April 21, 1832. The chief candidate for captain was one William Fitzpatrick, a saw-miller. Lincoln had also been mentioned in a loose way for the distinction, although, unlike Fitzpatrick, he had not actually canvassed for the honor. It so happened that Lincoln had worked for Fitzpatrick, who had treated him meanly. So Lincoln was moved by more than ambition to enter into the contest. The men being mustered in line, the adjutant requested all who were candidates for the office of captain to advance and face about at right angles to the line. Thereupon Lincoln and Fitzpatrick marched out,

after which the order was given for the men to file in line behind the candidate whose success they desired. The first man to move was Billy Greene, who planted himself squarely at Lincoln's back. At the end of the voting Lincoln had double the number of Fitzpatrick's followers and seven more. While the vote was in progress and its issue was palpable, Lincoln, casting an eye rearward, placed his brawny hand on Greene's shoulder and exclaimed excitedly: "I'll be damned, Bill, but I've beat him." Mr. Greene, sixty years thereafter, informed me that that was the only time he ever heard Lincoln utter an oath. Lincoln informed me in general terms of this, his first candidacy, and observed that no event of his life ever gave him such a thrill of happiness as this triumph.

This so-called war was replete with wild incidents and some massacre, although nowhere did it attain the dignity of genuine civilized warfare. In fact, it had more the substance of a grand frolic. Its noted features, so far as Lincoln was concerned, were in his being mustered into service by Robert Anderson, then a Lieutenant, and, in 1861, Major in command at Charleston, and in the fact that Jefferson Davis, likewise a Lieutenant, was engaged in the same unheroic enterprise.

The reckless character of the recruits forbade any enforcement of discipline. Each man felt himself to be as good as any other, the officers included, and respect of the latter was only to be hoped for by force of character, and in no wise by virtue of dignity or conventional rank.

Lincoln was as closely environed by this con-

dition of affairs as the others, but it was in no wise galling to him. He was always, in little or supreme greatness alike, quite willing to abnegate his rank and title, and rely exclusively for "audience and attention" on his manhood and moral force.

To one of his earliest orders about an unimportant matter, it was suggested that he "go to hell," and when Lincoln interposed to save a captive Indian from unmerited and unauthorized death at the hands of his own men, he was branded as a coward, to which his sole and conclusive reply was: "Any one who *rally* thinks I'm a coward, can soon be convinced of his mistake, if he so desires."

A trifling incident, however, exhibited the force of will and estimation in which Lincoln was held by his followers. There was in Captain Henry L. Webb's company from Union County a very strong and athletic man named Nathan M. Thompson, nicknamed "Dow" Thompson. The question of comparative muscular strength arising between him and Lincoln, they resorted to a wrestling match, in order to decide it. After struggling for a while with no advantage either way, Lincoln said: "This is the strongest man I ever met." Soon thereafter, amid great and growing excitement, Lincoln was fairly thrown. This was for the first time in his life. The wrestlers took hold again, and a second time Lincoln was thrown. Instantly a hundred men jerked off their coats, crying "*Foul!*" An equal number on the other side followed suit, crying, "*We'll see if it was.*" A deadly fight seemed imminent, but Lincoln commanded attention, and said: "Boys, this man *can* throw me fairly, if



he didn't do it this time; so let's give up that I was beat fairly."

Peace reigned at once, for, as my informant said, "His word was more than law and gospel" to his followers.

That Lincoln was fond of the tented field is palpable in this, that after his original term of service and his captaincy was at an end, he re-enlisted as a private in Captain Elijah Iles's company, and served as such to the end of the service.

For this service, besides his pay of eleven dollars per month and one ration a day from the general government, he likewise obtained under an Act of Congress enacted in 1850, a land warrant, No. 52,076, for forty acres of government land, which he caused to be located in his own name on July 21, 1854, on the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 20, T. 84, North Range 39 West, in Iowa, and in the succeeding year, he obtained a patent therefor, which is recorded in Vol. 280, page 21, of United States Patents. Also under the Act of 1855, he received still another land warrant: No. 68,465, for one hundred and twenty acres, was issued to him on April 22, 1856, and located by him on December 27, 1859, on the east half of the northeast quarter, and the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 18, T. 84, North Range 39 West, in the State of Illinois; for this a patent was issued on September 10, 1860, and recorded in Vol. 458, page 53, of Patents.

Lincoln returned from the war (so-called) to New Salem in August, 1832, and found the business of Berry & Lincoln in a hopeless tangle and pretty well played-out. So he and his luck-

less partner sold out to some parties named Trent wholly on *tick*. These soon "busted-up," and left the town. Shortly thereafter Berry died insolvent, and Lincoln was left not only without employment, but owing eight hundred dollars to a prairie Shylock named Van Bergen, who had bought for a song the notes of Lincoln and Berry, given in payment for the stores of Radford and the Herndons. Eight hundred dollars was then a far greater sum than it would be now, and Lincoln was accustomed to call his obligations *the national debt*. Billy Greene was an endorser for two-thirds of the amount, which he paid, and Lincoln ultimately repaid him. Finally, however, Lincoln paid the entire debt, principal and interest, amounting to about eleven hundred dollars; the last payment being made about the year 1850.

While Lincoln was in the army, encouraged thereto by the flattering vote received by him for captain, he avowed his purpose to run for the Legislature in the fall. Accordingly he presented himself as a candidate to some of the voters at an executor's sale at Paffsville, a small hamlet, now extinct, located in the western part of the county. Before the political element of the gathering was brought into play a fight occurred, in which Lincoln acted as peacemaker by hurling the ringleader up in the air, so that, when he lit, he was too much surprised to resume the fray, and it ended then and there.

Lincoln then made his first speech intended for a practical object; it was about thus: "Feller citizens: I reckon you all know me; I'm Abe Lincoln. I'm runnin' for the Legislature. I needn't take long to give you my principles. I

am a National Bank man; I also am a high-tariff man; and in favor of all internal improvements which may be needful. As I am runnin', I of course want to be elected; and I hope all my friends, or the friends of the above principles, will vote for me. That is all. I thank you for your attention, and I will thank you still more if I get your votes."

Lincoln himself, however, did not expect to be elected; he had no general acquaintance, and he held such radical views on the subject of the navigation of the Sangamo River that he was regarded by the matter-of-fact voters as *loony*. Some of the boys even deemed his candidacy as a joke; they supposed they would garner a bountiful crop of fun and diversion, and hence encouraged him in his ambition. The responsible voters, however, could not seriously believe that so ill-dressed and *fresh* a spectacle could decently represent this important and populous county in the Legislature, yet he received 657 votes, heading the list of five other defeated candidates. In his own precinct of New Salem he obtained 277 votes out of a total of 280 votes.

Lincoln was now entirely out of business and quite uncertain of the future. He had among his close and intimate friends at New Salem one Miller, a blacksmith; him he consulted as to the feasibility of adopting that calling, but he took no practical steps in that direction. Destiny had a higher mission in store for him.

He did not, in point of fact, enter upon the performance of any stated or systematic labor. Occasionally he would "clerk" for a day, help in the cornfield, chop logs, or build fences. He was fond of visiting Bowlin Greene, or Jack Arm-

strong, and staying for days at a time, during which visits he would indifferently aid the men in their out-of-door work, and help the women with their milking, rocking the cradle, or other feminine employments. So he was exceedingly popular with every inmate of the households of his hosts.

While in the war, he became intimately acquainted with John T. Stuart, a Springfield lawyer, and having revealed his ultimate intention to become a lawyer, was invited to make use of his law library when he desired.

Accordingly Lincoln started early one morning for Springfield, and returned the same evening with Blackstone's "Commentaries," then published in four volumes. During his walk back to New Salem he had managed to read a large number of the pages of the first volume. Thereafter he might be seen either lying prone upon the ground, or seated upon the woodpile, or in any other place suitable for study, abstracted from the outer world, and wholly occupied with the volume before him. Russel Godby, an emigrant from Logan County, Virginia, without a particle of education or ideality, once saw Lincoln sitting astride a woodpile with a book in his hand. Lincoln had worked for him, and he regarded him in no different light from that of any other field hand, doomed through life to the dreary treadmill round of paid farm labor. Struck with surprise, Godby asked, "What's that you're readin', Abe?" "I'm not readin', I'm studyin'," was the reply. "Studyin' what?" "Law," replied Abe. "*Great God Almighty!*" exclaimed Godby.

At the same time that Lincoln was studying

all the law books he could get his hands on, he read all the papers which he could borrow, and was fully advised as to the general facts of current and political history. He also gave some attention to current light literature, and enjoyed with great relish *funny* books. At that time Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz was quite a prolific author of sensational novels, and Lincoln read many of her works.

In the spring of 1833 John Calhoun, then surveyor of Sangamon County, designated him as deputy surveyor. Lincoln procured somehow an outfit, secured needed instruction from the pedagogue, Mentor Graham, and entered upon the duties of his office with zeal. He gave universal satisfaction, and was continued in office by Calhoun's successor; in fact, he held the office until his removal to Springfield.

Many examples of his work are still extant in Menard County, where he was principally employed, and are shown with proud satisfaction by their owners. Russel Godby employed him to do some surveying, and paid him two deer-skins and one dollar for the job; Jack Armstrong's wife Hannah used the skins to repair Lincoln's ragged pantaloons.

The city of Petersburg, the present county-seat of Menard County, is one of the most prettily situated and pretentious of the third-rate towns of Illinois. Lincoln laid it out, setting the first monument at the southwest corner of the public square, where it still remains. He then turned his compass southward, but found in the line of vision a storehouse belonging to a friend. Here was a dilemma of a kind that frequently arose in his subsequent career—the conflict be-

tween sympathy and official duty. Friends applied to him for offices they were unfit to fill, and tearful wives and mothers on bended knees implored him to save their husbands and sons from merited punishment. So here official duty required an accurate survey, consideration for the householder a deviation from it. He solved it in characteristic fashion by an adjustment: he contrived to divert his bearings enough to save the storehouse from removal, but so slightly that no succeeding surveyor has called the survey in question.

The founding of Petersburg was the downfall of New Salem. In a year from the date of Lincoln's survey the place began to grow, and its site was so far superior to that of New Salem that it at once gained all accretions of population, and the latter place yielded to the inevitable, and was very soon a thoroughly deserted village. Not a structure now remains, and the sites of many of the former buildings are in dispute.

At the same time that he was a surveyor, Lincoln received from Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, the appointment of Postmaster of New Salem, *vice* John McNamar, who had gone East for a year, and consequently had resigned the office. Both duties and emoluments were slight. The mail came once a week by stage, and the bulk of it was distributed within an hour after its arrival. When Lincoln quit the office, he owed the Government a small balance which some obstacle prevented his placing to the credit of the Post-office Department; so he wrapped it up in a scrap of paper, indicated its ownership by a memorandum, and laid it by. When years thereafter an agent of the Depart-



ment called on him for settlement, Lincoln withdrew from a safe place this identical parcel, and paid it over.

Lincoln had many residences at New Salem; in fact, there were many homes always eager to welcome him as an inmate. He lived at Bowlin Greene's, Jack Armstrong's, Rowan Herndon's, and at the tavern kept by James Rutledge. Part of the time he slept in the loft over a store; indeed for a time he slept on the store counter of Offutt's store.

Billy Greene paid off that part of Lincoln's debt for which he stood as security, but Van Bergen brought suit on the other part, and getting judgment, sold on execution everything that Lincoln had on earth except the clothes on his back. But Lincoln's friends came to the rescue, and by general agreement suppressed competitive bidding. One of them, James Short, bid in all the goods, and presented them to Lincoln. His horse, compass and chain, and saddlebags were among the effects.

It was while living at this place that Lincoln first acquired the sobriquet of "Honest" Abe. As a judge of scrub races, or wrestling bouts, or of bets, his services were sought by all sides, and always acquiesced in, with no heartburnings.

He was then, as thereafter, extremely bashful; he avoided waiting on women at the store or meeting them casually. Once a family of ladies stopped at the hotel while he was a boarder there, and he failed to appear at the public table while they were there.

He was very popular with the men, and also with the women, such as Nancy Greene and Hannah Armstrong, by whom he was made to feel



“at home.” His story-telling, mimicry, and overflowing goodness were all felt and appreciated. Whenever he chose to let himself out on pleasantries, he drew a crowd; and if he chanced to shift his seat, the crowd followed him. His drolleries were repeated at every gathering and at every fireside, and he was universally commended in terms of unstinted praise.

Another Legislature was to be chosen in the fall of 1834, and Lincoln was elected by a handsome majority. Duly impressed with the importance of his representative character, he borrowed two hundred dollars of one Coleman Smoot in order to buy his first decent outfit in which to respectably appear at Vandalia, in a Legislature which was a mosaic of Federal aristocracy and backwoods democracy. He made his “touch” in characteristic fashion: “Smoot, you voted for me to represent you at Vandalia, and so made yourself responsible that I shall do so creditably.”

While Lincoln was not admitted to the bar till March, 1837, he yet practised, informally, at New Salem while he was still a student. His friend Bowlin Greene was a Justice of the Peace, and Edmond Grier, the schoolmaster, officiated also as a Justice. Lincoln not only “pettifogged” cases before them, but did sundry office work, such as drafting deeds, wills, contracts, etc. In everything he undertook, he gave satisfaction. Lincoln failed nowhere and in nothing; he was a genius of affairs, and, commencing at the lowest round of the ladder, he reached the top round without a misstep or misadventure of any kind.

Lincoln’s religious views were not very clear or well settled at this time. He believed in fatalism, and that we were impelled along in the jour-

ney of life with no freedom of the moral will. Owing to a line of remark he was once indulging in, Mrs. Samuel Hill said: "You surely don't mean that there's not to be an hereafter?" "I'm afeered there ain't," was the reply; "but it's an awful thing to think that when we die, that's the end of us." He wrote a small monograph on his religious views which he read to several people, including Samuel Hill. Hill urged him to abandon such extreme heterodoxy, assuring him that he had a brilliant and useful public career before him, which an indulgence in such views would tend to cloud. Finally, taking the book, Hill thrust it into the fire, where it was consumed. Lincoln lived to change his religious views radically, as I shall show, but being brought up on the frontier, with little religious training, and with the uninspiring example of Thomas Lincoln as a church member constantly before him, and having no ingrained element of inspiring faith in his nature, it is little wonder that in his callow youth his views on religion were loose and superficial.

## CHAPTER VI

### LINCOLN'S EARLY LOVE ROMANCE

HOWEVER, Abraham Lincoln had his share of natural human passion, if not of religious sentiment. One of the great psychic crises of his career was his tragic love affair with Miss Ann Mays Rutledge. This young lady was one of the children of James Rutledge, one of the founders of New Salem. Ann was in her sixteenth year when the Rutledges came to New Salem in 1828 or 1829. She was very handsome; tall, symmetrical, inclined to plumpness, with fair complexion, rosy cheeks, and dark auburn hair. Her manners were graceful, and she was self-possessed, had an excellent address, was courteous and dignified, and, though raised chiefly on the frontier, had the ambition, deportment, and bearing of a well-bred lady. She was a dashing and fearless rider, making a striking appearance on horseback, which was her favorite mode of locomotion in her journeys throughout the neighborhood. Her beautiful character and winning ways endeared her to young and old. As may be inferred, she smote the hearts and engaged the susceptibilities of all the marriageable youth of the settlement, among whom were Samuel Hill and John McNeil, partners in trade, and the leading merchants of New Salem. She capitulated to McNeil's attentions, and they became betrothed

in 1833. This young man had migrated from New York State in 1829, and by good management and shrewd business methods had acquired a farm and a handsome sum of money for those primitive days.

Just after his betrothal, however, his father died, making it necessary that he should return to his childhood's home and settle the estate. This, he supposed, would consume a year, and, promising to return at the expiration of this period, he took leave of his *fiancée* and went, after the manner of those days, on horseback to New York. A sad domestic calamity befalling his family, one incident of which was a lawsuit which was greatly delayed, extended his Eastern sojourn. The time elapsed for his return, and he still remained absent, and, moreover, gave no satisfactory excuse for his prolonged absence. This of itself caused uneasiness on the part of Ann and her family, which reached a climax when a report became current in the neighborhood that a local blight had fallen upon the family at home, and that the object of her affection himself had lived at New Salem and pledged himself in betrothal under an assumed name.

Now pride of name was a characteristic of the Rutledges. They were descended from the renowned family of that name in South Carolina which had included a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a nominated Chief Justice of the United States, Congressmen, etc.

The existence of these rumors filled the souls of the Rutledges with consternation, for it seemed apparent to them that the *alias* was employed as a shield for some dark and indelible disgrace. Ann avowed that she would never

give the report credence till she received it from the inculpated party himself. This opportunity was not long wanting, for it had happened that McNeil had bought a tract of land of her uncle Cameron just before he left, and had himself signed the deed. It was supposed, and, as the sequel proved, properly, that McNeil would insert his correct name in the deed, inasmuch as he desired to trade off this land at his Eastern home.

The matter was discussed at a family council, and it was proposed to ascertain from the records at Springfield in what name McNeil had taken the title to this land. Ann insisted on forming one of the party of inspection, averring with firmness and emphasis that she would not believe the perfidy and disgrace of her affianced lover upon any less indubitable evidence than that of her own senses. Accompanied by her brother David (then a law student) and her uncle Cameron, she rode on horseback to Springfield, where they found that Ann's lover had signed the name McNamar to the deed—proof positive that he had wooed, won, and plighted his troth to her under the felon's artifice of an *alias*.

Arrived at home, Miss Rutledge promptly wrote her recreant lover an account of his apparent infamy, and demanded an instant explanation. In due time an answer came, stating nonchalantly that he would explain fully when he saw her. She then wrote a curt note, abruptly dismissing him.

McNamar, however, affected to believe that she spoke in a Pickwickian sense, for he continued to regard himself as her affianced; and started West with his mother, brother, and sisters. For some reason, not plainly apparent, he

stopped in Ohio, rented a farm, and remained for a year. Then, in 1835, he wrote to Ann that he should buy furniture in Cincinnati, and be there soon after his letter was, to claim her in marriage, and settle down to housekeeping. This letter, however, was never read by her for whom it was intended, for the eyes which should have read it were by this time sealed in death. Sure enough, in November, 1835, McNamar, his family, and furniture, reached New Salem, there to learn the startling news that his misconduct had hastened the death of her with whose virgin affections he had cruelly and inexcusably trifled. The wagon was unladen, and the bedroom set, which was to have graced the nuptials of the young couple, stood out of doors in the weather, through the rigors of the early winter.

The disgrace of betrothal to a man who posed under the baleful shadow of an *alias*, and declined to explain to her who had a right to demand it, had told upon the proud and supersensitive nature of this ambitious and spirited girl, and a settled melancholy took possession of her nature.

Lincoln, like the rest, was not insensible to the beauty, charms, and merit of this most estimable girl, whom, of course, he had seen often and whose relations to McNamar he had known and respected; and when she had dismissed her recreant lover, Lincoln mustered up courage to address her in terms of sympathy and endearment, and finally to propose marriage to her. This proposal the young lady was certainly free to accept if she chose, yet she desired first to receive a ratification of her dismissal of McNamar, before she made any new engagement. This ratifica-

tion, however, never came; McNamar had her promise and meant to hold her to it. She finally, however, on the advice of her friends, disdained longer to be technically bound to a man who had deceived her, and she became the affianced of Lincoln. The family had meanwhile left New Salem and then resided at Concord, several miles north, and it was arranged between them that Lincoln should study law during the succeeding fall and winter at Springfield, while Ann should attend the Seminary at Jacksonville for the same time, and that in the spring the marriage should take place, and the twain should reside at Springfield.

But on the twelfth day of August, she took to her bed with a raging brain-fever, largely induced by the mental anguish of engaging herself to a polynomial lover, who had so sullied his real name as to render a disguise necessary, and then, while not yet released by him from her engagement, of affiancing herself to another. Her illness caused serious alarm to her physician and the members of her family. Lincoln and her brother David, who was attending school at Jacksonville, were at once sent for. When Lincoln entered her room, she urgently requested to be left alone with him for a short time, which request was allowed. After the lapse of a half-hour, Lincoln came out of the bedchamber, betraying signs of extreme and pitiable grief. Her brother came later, but she did not recognize him. She died on August 25, 1835, of brain-fever.

The remains of this unfortunate girl were consigned to their mother earth in Concord burial ground, and should have been suffered to remain there till aroused and animated by the Angel of



the Resurrection, but it was not to be so. Recently an enterprising undertaker who desired to advertise his cemetery at Petersburg, with the assent of the scattered and few members of the family then living, invaded the sanctity of the grave, and, gathering together the mouldering bones, the buttons of her shroud and a few rusty nails of her coffin, carted them off in triumph to Oakland Cemetery near Petersburg, and there reinterred them, where it is to be hoped that no dime museum proprietor or other enterprising ghoul will bid high enough to have them again exhumed for further speculation.

Lincoln was completely prostrated and unnerved by the death of his *fiancée*. He took it so deeply to heart that the universal pity which had animated all breasts for the "loved and lost" was transferred to him. His friends consoled with him, and tried, by every mode, to mitigate his sorrow. "Bear it like a man," said one. "I'll try," said he, "but I must first feel it like a man." His grief did not abate, and it was feared that he would be bereft of his reason. When storms would come, he would grow nervous and almost frantic. "The rains *shan't* beat on my darling's grave," said he passionately and piteously. He would steal away to the little graveyard, and sit and commune with the dead for hours. His friends deemed it unsafe to leave him alone, and, by strategy, induced him to stay at his old friend Bowlin Greene's till time and reflection should assuage his grief. The device measurably succeeded; he grew less excitable and less passionate in his grief, and settled down to a chronic condition of apparently hopeless despair. He would sit by himself in solitude, apparently

dominated by his grief, a habit he exhibited at intervals through life. He would wander off alone with no apparent aim or object, and would occasionally break out in meaningless soliloquy—a habit which never left him, and of which I furnish examples in my "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln."

Dr. Duncan of New Salem came across a poem in an almanac, which he repeated to Lincoln by way of solace to his wounded spirit, and the latter by his adoption of it as his favorite poem, conferred upon it the spirit and essence, as it had before the name, of "Immortality."

It reads thus :

Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
Like a swift, fleeting meteor—a fast-flying cloud—  
A flash of the lightning—a break of the wave—  
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,  
Be scattered around, and together be laid;  
And the young, and the old, and the low, and the high,  
Shall moulder to dust and together shall lie.

The infant, a mother attended and loved;  
The mother, that infant's affection who proved;  
The father, that mother and infant who blest—  
Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.

The maid on whose brow, on whose cheek, in whose eye,  
Shone beauty and pleasure—her triumphs are by;  
And alike from the minds of the living erased  
Are the memories of those who loved her and praised.

The hand of the king, that the sceptre hath borne,  
The brow of the priest, that the mitre hath worn,  
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,  
Are hidden and lost in the depths of the grave.

The peasant, whose lot was to sow and to reap;  
The herdsman, who climbed with his goats up the steep;  
The beggar, who wandered in search of his bread;  
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint, who enjoyed the communion of heaven;  
The sinner, who dared to remain unforgiven;  
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,  
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

So the multitude goes, like the flower or weed,  
That withers away to let others succeed;  
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,  
To repeat every tale that has often been told.

For we are the same our fathers have been;  
We see the same sights our fathers have seen;  
We drink the same stream, we view the same sun,  
And run the same course our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers did think;  
From the death we are shrinking our fathers did shrink;  
To the life we are clinging our fathers did cling—  
But it speeds from us all like a bird on the wing.

They loved—but the story we cannot unfold;  
They scorned—but the heart of the haughty is cold;  
They grieved—but no wail from their slumber will come;  
They joyed—but the tongue of their gladness is dumb.

They died—ay! they died—we things that are now,  
That walk on the turf that lies over their brow,  
And make in their dwellings a transient abode,  
Meet the things that they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea, hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,  
Are mingled together in sunshine and rain;  
And the smile and the tear, the song and the dirge,  
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye; 'tis the draught of a breath,  
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death;  
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud—  
Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

Lincoln often tried to find the name of the author of the poem, but never succeeded. It was William Knox, a Scotchman. Lincoln was wont to repeat these verses upon all occasions, and especially by himself when he supposed no ear but his own heard him. And on the occasion of the death of President Taylor, he, being at Chicago, made a speech at the celebration of the obsequies, in the course of which he repeated the poem.

Lincoln was never the same man after the death of Ann Rutledge that he was before. He never ceased to mourn and bewail her loss; but he lived a man's life thereafter, and carried out the plan devised for him by destiny, as he best could.

About a mile below New Salem, on the crest of a hill overlooking the broad river bottom, and on a farm adjacent to that of Bowlin Greene, lived Bennett Able and family, who had emigrated there from Green County, Kentucky. Mrs. Able had been an Owens, from Green County, but had incurred the displeasure of her father by espousing a man not of his choice; and, in point of fact, she was superior in education and refinement to her husband. Lincoln was a welcome visitor at the Able household, and Mrs. Able had often remarked that she was going to bring about a match between him and her sister Mary; and, in point of fact, Mary had visited her sister in 1833, and remained a month, leaving an excellent impression upon the minds of all, as to her person and character. She returned again in November, 1836, some fifteen months after the death of Ann Rutledge. She was about four and a half months older than Lincoln. While

she was not so lovely a character and did not possess so sweet a disposition as Miss Rutledge, she yet was a very handsome and brilliant girl, and gifted with rare talents that had been cultivated and polished with a high and liberal education. So far as she was concerned, her visit to her sister had no significance beyond the naked fact itself, but it is not unlikely that Mrs. Able had loftier aims, namely, bringing about a match with a man already entered upon a promising political career.

Mrs. Able was incautious enough to promulgate her design so publicly that her sister heard of it, and also heard that Lincoln had said that if Mrs. Able's sister Mary ever came to New Salem again, he would have to marry her. "We'll see," soliloquized the Bluegrass beauty; "it takes two to make such a bargain." Other beaux stood back, however (if there were any), and Lincoln had full swing, and the courtship, such as it was, progressed at cross-purposes. In the first place, despite Lincoln's public career, he was a timid and bashful man, especially as regards the gentler sex; then he was conscious of the wide disparity of culture and style between Miss Owens and himself; likewise of the extreme contrasts between her beauty and grace and his plainness and angularity. His wealth of talent he gave no credit to in the comparison; he merely took a superficial glance at the account in which everything was *plus* on the lady's side, and *minus* on his side, with the always inevitable result that what was embarrassment and bashfulness on his part, she accepted and considered as indifference and disdain. On the other hand, what was playful reproof on her part for his social delin-

quencies, was construed by him into pride and arrogance.

It appears to me conclusive that if Lincoln had dealt with this estimable and refined young lady in a spirit of his usual candor and naturalness, and had properly wooed her, there would have been no difficulty in the way of a match. Lincoln felt a sense of inferiority, for which the fair charmer gave no occasion, and he only played at courting, not pressing his suit in the manly and dignified way so characteristic of him in other rôles.

For instance, Nancy Greene was carrying a heavy child from her house, up a steep hill, to Able's house, and was accompanied by Miss Owens. It was evident that Mrs. Greene was very much exhausted, yet Lincoln, who joined and accompanied them, made no offer of assistance. Miss Owens could not fail to take note of her gallant's delinquency, and told her sister, who repeated it to Lincoln, that she did not think Lincoln would make a good husband. Yet his reason was, as he informed Greene, who informed me, that he was ashamed to be seen by a lady of Miss Owens's culture carrying a baby. At another time Miss Owens, with Lincoln as her escort, went out riding with a party. In crossing a deep stream, Lincoln forged on ahead, leaving his partner to get on as she could. Being reproved for this, he told her she was smart enough to get over alone; but the probabilities are that he had embarked upon, and was lost in the midst of, some reflections, or else he felt that his awkwardness in attempting to be gallant to a cultured lady would be worse than neglect. However that may be, Miss Owens, while holding



Lincoln in high esteem, as every one did, felt, as she said years later, that "he was deficient in those minor attentions and little civilities which constitute the chain of a woman's happiness."

Lincoln wrote her some letters after he settled in Springfield as a lawyer, but they were of a decidedly repelling character; and the lady took him at his word. As I have said, he felt himself beneath her in a social sense, and the mistakes, misunderstandings, and *contretemps* which arose from this anomalous condition of affairs prevented, in my judgment, a matrimonial union which would have been congenial and prosperous, for Miss Owens was polished, brilliant, and amiable, and Lincoln had nearly every element to make a good husband.

In 1839, Lincoln said to Mrs. Able, who was returning to her childhood's home: "Tell your sister Mary that I think she was a great fool that she didn't remain here and marry me." \*

While Mr. Lincoln's exploits in his callow youth are of minor interest and of less utility, and certainly not worth the serious efforts employed in their development, it should also not be forgotten that the communities amid which he was reared were extremely primitive and uncouth, and that the elements of wonder, mystery, and hyperbole were conspicuous, involving marked inaccuracies in portraying the idiosyncrasies of conduct in an original or otherwise

\* I cannot refrain from saying that the letter to Mrs. Browning by Mr. Lincoln about this estimable and refined lady should never have strayed beyond Mrs. Browning's desk. It was an unworthy thing for her to give it to Mr. Herndon, and equally unworthy for him and Lamon to give it to the world.



remarkable character. Hence the frontier narratives of the embryonic President's characteristics should not be too implicitly relied on. The stories which ascribe to him the persiflage of a fool or the vulgarity of a boor have no force of authority to me. From the simplicity of his origin and surroundings and the environments of his condition, he was of necessity rustic, uncouth, and unassimilated, but this crudity was only the rock-crystal holding in place the pure metal of his *character*, which shone so resplendently in later years. All that is needful to be said of his career during his life in Indiana is that if the diary of the modern Pepys be correct, the mind of the coming man in its impressionable state, as it developed, was a rank, luxuriant garden of thought, but that for lack of proper culture it yielded only weeds in which satire, sarcasm, coarse wit, irony, and eccentric pasquinades were ill assorted with moral apothegms, sage but immature reflections, and an ostentatious exhibit of rustic philosophy; that even then he had an exuberant *cacoethes loquendi*, and was a leader of men in embryo; that he was restless, uneasy, and prone to adventure, and that kindness, humanity, and philanthropy were essential elements of his nature.

His five years' residence at New Salem was passed under more favorable external conditions; his mental and moral horizon had been largely widened by two trips to New Orleans, and, in consequence, his character in this time begins to assume a semblance of harmony and logical consistency, and to afford a glimpse of the psychical superstructure whose moral architecture was destined in after years to dazzle, astonish, and

bless mankind. His insatiable thirst for knowledge and its wide range and desultory character are shown in many ways; his superlative honesty is exhibited in the utmost sincerity, although his unswerving loyalty to friendship trenches upon its border lines. His exploits in the Black Hawk War and his political diplomacy attest that he was a natural leader of men.

The time had come at last when he must leave the place where he had lived for nearly six years—where he had carried on two several courtships, and where he had been evolved from a mere adventurer to a lawyer and a legislator. He had served two terms in the Legislature, and had acquired considerable distinction; he had seen the rise, growth, development, and decay of New Salem; and he probably foresaw its speedy downfall, for Petersburg had been established, and was growing at the expense of the earlier settlement; indeed, the latter was already moribund. And so, immediately after the adjournment of the Legislature in March, 1837, Lincoln sold his compass, chain, marking-pins, and Jacob's staff; packed his little clothing and few effects into his saddlebags, borrowed a horse of his friend Bowlin Greene, and bade a final adieu to the scene of so much of life, so much of sorrow, to him. In less than a year from that time New Salem ceased to exist; its mission had been fulfilled; it was the Nazareth of the nineteenth century.

The Clary's Grove boys that made the welkin ring with sounds of "wine and wassail," Dunn the millwright, Onstott the cooper, Mentor Graham the pedagogue, Grier the Justice, Waddell the hatter, Allen the physician, Radford, Berry,

Hill, McNamar, Richardson, Lincho, Warburton, the Herndons, Rogers, Offutt, and Kelso, are gone—all dead. Bowlin Greene died in 1842. Lincoln was invited by the Masons, under whose auspices Greene was buried, to make a funeral address; he manfully attempted it, and ignominiously failed. His feelings overpowered him as the past rose in his fancy and the disinterested affection of his departed friend passed in review; his sobs choked his utterance, and he withdrew from the mournful scene to accompany Mrs. Green to her desolate home.

## CHAPTER VII

### STATE LEGISLATOR

MR. LINCOLN'S political career proper may be said to have commenced on March 9, 1832, when he issued an address "To the people of Sangamon County." As he was not as well versed in grammar then as by experience he afterwards became, he procured James McNamar to correct its grammar—otherwise the production is entirely his own.

The election took place about two weeks after his return to New Salem from the Black Hawk War, and he was defeated, as has been stated.

In 1834, Lincoln decided to run again for the Legislature. The highly complimentary vote he had received before, his oratorical reputation, acquired in the prior canvass, his local popularity in the northern end of the county, and his creditable record in the Black Hawk War, constituted his political stock in trade. There were no conventions then; the field was "free for all," and, while there were combinations among the candidates themselves, the fact was that each candidate stood or fell upon his own merits. Lincoln was classed as a Whig, although he held the office of Postmaster under President Jackson and that of Deputy Surveyor under Calhoun, a most ardent Democrat. The canvass was unusually tame and spiritless for some reason. It resulted

in the election of John Dawson, Lincoln, William Carpenter, and John T. Stuart.

It should not be forgotten that the Legislature was a much more dignified, consequential, and important body then than it later became, and that it was invested with much greater political power and social consequence. The granting of corporate charters and other special legislation had not then been withheld from it, and it elected judicial and other officers.

Vandalia, the capital, put on its best holiday attire when the Legislature met; and the beauty and fashion of the Illinois communities congregated there to a large extent. Lobbyists of the sleekest order hied them thither on schemes of plunder bent; town belles flocked in with their pantalettes, flounces, and ruffles, to enjoy the novelty and excitement; and "Becky Sharps" repaired thither with matrimonial schemes.

The Legislature was the culminating point of all effort and all diversion; the interest in the sessions was so great and abiding as to endure without diminution throughout the whole session. The brilliant modes of the *élite* of Kentucky society were initiated, and young lady graduates from the Kentucky seminaries were "introduced" into Illinois society here. Local statesmen affected the lofty airs of Kentucky politics, and Vandalia, during a legislative session, was a reflex of Frankfort during a similar period. The Yankees had made no perceptible impression as yet; Chicago was *in nubibus*—even Cook County had no existence.

The Legislature met on the first day of December, 1834. James Semple, afterwards United States Senator, was elected Speaker. Lincoln's

first political act was to vote for the losing competitor, Charles Dunn. Transportation was the great subject of political discussion at the time.

The Acting-Governor, in his message, said :

Of the different modes proposed of effecting this communication [intercommunication] the general sentiment of the community as well as the report of an able engineer and the experience of other States seems to be in favor of a railroad. . . A railroad commencing at the intersecting point of the Indiana Canal on the Illinois River, and terminating at an eligible situation on the western extremity of the State, would pervade a country of great fertility and unequalled adaptation to its [the railroad's] construction.

The Governor-elect Duncan, who was inaugurated soon thereafter, took a different view. In his inaugural address he said :

Of the different plans proposed [for intercommunication] I find that the Board of Canal Commissioners and my worthy predecessors have recommended a railroad, in which I regret that I am compelled to differ with them in opinion. In my judgment, experience has shown canals to be much more useful, and generally cheaper of construction than railroads.

This was the dawn of the era of premature internal improvements which brought fruits meet for repentance then, and whose glorious fulfilment was postponed for two decades. The political preponderance in the Legislature was against Lincoln's party, yet, somehow, he was placed second on the important standing committee on public accounts and expenditures,—quite an honor, since, in those days, there were not nearly so many standing committees as now. On the fifth day of the session, he performed his first legislative work, by giving notice that on a

subsequent day he would ask leave to introduce a bill to limit the jurisdiction of justices of the peace; and later, he offered this bill. Soon thereafter he gave notice that he would present a bill "to authorize Samuel Musick to build a toll-bridge across Salt Creek." What became of his first bill seems to be unknown, but it never became a law; contrariwise, a law was passed at that session to enlarge (rather than limit) the powers of a justice of the peace, so his first attempt at practical legislation proved to be a failure. His second bill, being rather in the nature of a private act, was more successful, for it matured into a law; and "Musick's bridge" was long one of the institutions of Illinois.

Lincoln generally voted with his party, but his early independence appears in his being one of three to resist the small petit larceny of hiring a suitable place for the use of the Committee on Revision. An election for United States Senator to succeed John M. Robinson resulted in his reelection, Lincoln voting for Richard M. Young; and five judges were elected by the Legislature, viz.: Stephen T. Logan, Sidney Breese, Henry Eddy, Justin Harlan, and Thomas Ford.

At the election for State's Attorney, Stephen A. Douglas made his first appearance in politics, coming from Jacksonville, where he was temporarily domiciled, to Vandalia, to press his claims for that position in the First Circuit against John J. Hardin, an eminent lawyer, who was thought to be sure of an election. The appearance of Douglas, who was then five feet and one inch high, and weighed about one hundred pounds, greatly amused Lincoln. Douglas was active, adroit, and insinuating, then and thereaf-



ter; and Lincoln pronounced him to be "the *least* man he ever saw," little dreaming of the time to come, when this same dwarf was to bear him on his shoulders to the Executive Mansion of the nation. To the surprise of all, the then pigmy Douglas was elected over the then giant Hardin by 38 against 34 votes, and this was the commencement of an illustrious though clouded political career. It is singular that in the competition for this office for the Quincy district, Lincoln supported Richardson, a Democrat, against Browning, a Whig, the former afterwards becoming a chief ally of Douglas and enemy of Lincoln, and the latter one of Lincoln's greatest political friends.

Lincoln's name is not very conspicuous in the proceedings of this session, which adjourned on February 13, 1835, after lasting two and a half months; but his career was satisfactory alike to his colleagues and constituents. In the succeeding year he again became a candidate, and constructed the political platform upon which he proposed to stand.

There were seven members to elect to the Lower House and two to the Senate. While no one was debarred from becoming a candidate, yet there was a sort of tacit understanding that each section should be considered in the list, and that the support of the candidates of each party should be homogeneous and compact. This canvass was as exciting as the other had been tame; being a Presidential year, the spirit of Jackson animated it. Then there was a sentiment that the capital was too far south, and that it should be removed; and as Springfield was one of the competing places, it was discerned that a wealth of

political glory awaited the delegates, if they could succeed in scooping the capital into the Sangamon net.

A stirring and vigorous campaign followed; not only did political spirit run high, but muscular force was brought into requisition. It was an age of rudeness. Fights were an inevitable and ordinary incident of a political canvass in the Jacksonian era; insults were often given, and usually resented. During the canvass, Colonel Robert Allen, a Democrat, perpetrated some petty slander about Lincoln and Ninian W. Edwards, to which Lincoln made a bold reply, in which he said: "If I have done anything, either by design or misadventure, which if known would subject me to a forfeiture of that confidence [placed in me by my constituents], he that knows of that thing and conceals it is a traitor to his country's interest."

In addition to the usual speeches, the several candidates indulged in joint debates, in which several would join. Not infrequently bad blood would be engendered. Robert L. Wilson, one of the candidates (whom, with Ninian W. Edwards and myself, Lincoln appointed Paymasters in the Army), told me many incidents of this celebrated campaign. Among other things, he said that Lincoln was by common consent looked up to and relied on as the leading Whig exponent; that he was the best versed and most captivating and trenchant speaker on their side; that he preserved his temper nearly always, and when extremely provoked, he did not respond with the illogical proposal to fight about it, but used the weapons of sarcasm and ridicule, and always prevailed. Ninian W. Edwards and Lincoln seemed to hunt

in couples, although the former was a scion of wealth and aristocracy, while the latter was of the poorest of his class. When Lincoln would combat his friend's ridicule with its kind, and give "railing for railing," Edwards would get mad, and propose to fight it out then and there.

George Forquer was a lawyer of wealth and ability, who had been a Whig, but had turned his coat and received the appointment of Register of the Land Office. He had recently erected a new house and protected it with a lightning rod. This rod was then a new device, and being the first one that Lincoln had seen, engrossed his attention.

Forquer attended a meeting at which Lincoln spoke, and, thinking to ingratiate himself with his new allies, jumped up and asked to be heard. This a crowd in those days was always ready to accord, and he replied in a very supercilious and insulting vein, whose haughty prelude was that "this young man [alluding to Lincoln] would have to be taken down."

Lincoln was thoroughly roused by the insolent and domineering style employed. The minute Forquer had concluded, he arose, animated with an excitement unusual to him, and replied in a strain that surpassed all his previous oratorical efforts. After effectually replying to all of argument advanced, he concluded with this flagellation of the intruder: "This anomalous Forquer, if he has taken me *down*, as he calls it, I reckon you know it, and if he is satisfied, I am. He seems to be thoroughly up to political tricks—something I am not familiar with, and I never intend to be. If I can't get office honestly, I am content to live as I am, and I hope I never may

be so thoroughly steeped in political trickery as to change my political coat for a big office, and then feel so guilty about it as to run up a lightning rod to protect my house from the vengeance of an offended God."

In no element of political controversy did Lincoln fail during this canvass. He was, as thereafter, clear and skilful in statement and logical in discussion; he generally preserved his equanimity and good humor, and discomfited his enemies, but when it was apparent that forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, Lincoln made points and gained friends by the force, spirit, and defiance of his replies. In his first and second canvass he was bashful and timid, and confined himself to the strictly rural districts; this time he put away his maiden reserve, and spoke as unrestrainedly at Springfield as at New Salem. He gained the approval and applause of his friends and the respect and fear of his enemies, and became, by that very canvass, a leader of his party in Sangamon County, which distinction he never lost.

The results of this noted canvass were very great, and of prime importance to Sangamon County. Whereas, it had theretofore leaned strongly to the Democracy, it now gravitated towards the Whigs, who never thereafter lost their prestige. The entire Whig ticket was elected, Lincoln receiving the largest vote, and the Whig party, which had been below *par* theretofore, was on the mountain heights of rejoicing then and thereafter in that county.

This celebrated Legislature assembled at Vandalia on the fifth day of December, 1836. Among its members were Stephen A. Douglas and John

J. Hardin from the same county—one a leading Democrat, and the other a leading Whig—General John A. McClernand, Augustus C. French (afterwards Governor), and Usher F. Linder, then the greatest orator in the State.

The delegation from Sangamon first engaged the attention of the Legislature on account of their size, their average height being over six feet, and their average weight being over two hundred pounds. They received the appellation of the Long Nine from their size and number. Their political force was soon felt to be as strong and impressive as their physical force, for the people of Sangamon had been generous in the conferring of political power, and their reputations were pledges not to be disobedient to the trust so confided to them.

A. G. Herndon, the father of William H. Herndon, the future law partner of Lincoln, and Job Fletcher were the Senators; and Lincoln, Ninian W. Edwards, John Dawson, Andrew McCormick, Dan Stone, William F. Elkin, and Robert L. Wilson were the members of the House. Lincoln was made a member of the important Committee on Finance; and both he and Douglas were on the Committee on the Penitentiary.

Douglas led off the session by offering a sweeping resolution in favor of a broad and catholic system of internal improvements, which was adopted, inasmuch as the demand therefor was as great at the hands of the Whigs as of the Democrats.

At the election for United States Senator, which was had at that session, Lincoln abandoned Richard M. Young, whom he had voted

for before (and who was elected this time), and voted with a few others for Archibald Williams, the same whom he appointed District Judge of Kansas as his first appointment after that of his Cabinet in 1861.

The most important measure to the Sangamon delegation was the removal of the capital. There were several competitors for it, of which Springfield was really one of the least meritorious. Peoria, Jacksonville, and Alton were places of sufficient consequence properly to aspire to this great honor. Decatur and Springfield, the other two aspirants, had no merit save that of centrality; they were inconsequential villages, approachable during the legislative season by roads almost impassable by reason of mud. The geographical centre of the State, called Illiopolis, a place between Springfield and Decatur, was a competitor.\* On account of its consequence and accessibility, Peoria should have been selected. In this contest, Lincoln was the leader and advocate, and the Long Nine surrendered the scheme to his management, almost entirely. Their power and efficiency of management soon drew all attention, and concentrated all the opposition against them; it was *the field* against Springfield. Wilson and Henry L. Webb have narrated to me many incidents of that apparently hopeless and unequal struggle. Upon several occasions their opponents deemed that they had circumvented the movement, and incautious ones *crowed* lustily over the supposed defeat and dis-

\* Illiopolis was in the extreme eastern part of Sangamon County, but considerably nearer to Decatur than to Springfield. It had no buildings then. It was only a geographical point on the map.



comfiture of Lincoln and his colleagues. The pessimists of the Sangamon delegation supposed that the measure was lost, but Lincoln was tenacious and resolute. He would make a flank and unexpected movement which would revive their chances. The final result was that, under his adroit leadership, the bill was carried, although the only political strength in its favor at the start was seven votes in one house and two in the other, with no natural allies, and several delegations of active enemies. This was felt to be one of the greatest of political triumphs, and its credit was freely ascribed to Lincoln. Wilson, one of the delegates, assured me that had Lincoln not been there, it would have failed. In one sense, it may be said to have been a triumph over his later adversary on a larger field, Douglas, for Douglas's town, Jacksonville, was one of the leading competitors.

The most important general matter which engrossed the attention of the Legislature was a broad and extended system of internal improvements, and in this, Lincoln was as enthusiastic as in the removal of the capital. The railroad had become an institution in New England, and it was even then prefigured as the great highway of intercommunication; the canal had been, and then was, the Appian Way of commerce, but its construction was limited to level plains, and hampered by sundry other conditions which barred it out as the common carrier of civilization.

The magnificent system of internal improvements which this Legislature evolved from the *nebula* of desire and necessity, would have been all right if the State could have afforded it, or



if the hoped-for development had been a well-founded pledge and promise of enough taxes to pay the interest on bonds promptly and surely; but, unfortunately, no such conditions existed, and this really able Legislature was in the condition of a visionary but hopeful man, entering into enlarged business enterprises, with roseate hopes and brilliant anticipations for his sole capital. However, then as always in a farming community, the ordinary tax-list was the greatest burden to be borne, and to have carried into effect the grand schemes which were here proposed by law and on paper, would have bankrupted nine men out of ten in the whole State, so the inevitable and necessary result was that, after expending millions, the whole scheme was hopelessly abandoned, with very little substantial benefit. In point of fact, I happen to remember that as late as 1884, a railway was built in the southern part of the State partly upon a grade made at the expense of the State nearly a half century before. That no voice should have been raised in condemnation of such extravagant legislation, whose evil effects were so palpable in a few years thereafter, seems now strange to us; but so it was that the general acclaim of the people was vocal for intercommunication, and legislators could not resist it if they would.

The soil of Illinois was of that character of rich loam that, while of the very best to yield luxurious crops, it yet was a bar to good, or even tolerable, roads in the fall, winter, and spring times of the year. In the southeastern, western, and southwestern parts of the States were navigable rivers. The Illinois was available as far as La Salle, the Wabash as far as Lafayette in

Indiana, and Lake Michigan touched the northwest; there was likewise a waterway for lead ore in the Fevre River to the Mississippi; and the canal from Lafayette to Covington in Indiana furnished an outlet for a small scope of country on the eastern border; but most of the State was without any means of communication save the "mud-wagon" for passengers, and the ordinary farm team for produce. Many communities had to go a hundred miles to haul farm produce: corn, oats, wheat, and hay. So the necessity for internal improvements was imperious, and the people, discarding those practical and businesslike considerations which guided them in ordinary business affairs, somehow deemed legislation as a magical mode of bringing things to pass which could not be achieved by ordinary business processes. They seemed to think that when the legislative body solemnly proclaimed "Be it enacted," the improvement was already made, and in this flimsy delusion the legislators affected to share. The Long Nine were instructed on the subject by their constituents; they were ordered to advocate a general system of internal improvements; and to brace up the lawmakers a mass convention was held at the capital, which resolved that the Legislature should provide for a system which should be commensurate with the desires of the people.

Every locality had its scheme. Chicago desired then, as constantly thereafter, and properly, a canal to connect the waters of the Lake with those of the Illinois River; all possibly available rivers were to be improved, as "highways of commerce," and in this branch of internal improvement, Lincoln was an enthusiast, for always since

his flatboat experience with Offutt, he had ardently believed even in the adaptation of the Sangamon to purposes of navigation as far up as Springfield.

Wherever waterways were theoretically possible, a demand arose for the necessary appropriation to make them available, and when there was no potentially navigable stream, railways were demanded; that there was no money in the treasury, or surplus wealth in the State, or proper *bases* for taxation did not seem to disturb or check these rustic Solons in the least. They developed and matured their schemes of traffic conquest as if they had the means in hand to enforce their legislation, and the only attempt to provide the sinews of war lay in a bill which passed, with no considerable opposition, to provide a loan of twelve millions (an enormous sum for those days) to carry their schemes into effect. In the enforcement of these measures of legislation, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, the two greatest men of Illinois, worked in perfect amity, accord, and enthusiasm.

It is a singular idiosyncrasy of dialectics that statesmen of broad gauge as well as dolts therein, alike consider themselves to be capable of constructing correct financial theories and enforcing them in practice; while the fact is, that the science of finance is single, distinct, and recon-dite, and its correct study and proper practice are inharmonious with the study of general and enlarged statesmanship. In proof of this adage, is to be noted the fact that many of our greatest statesmen have not exhibited sufficient ability to manage even their own private finances with success or skill, while the masters of finance are

most generally the most narrow gauge order of men elsewhere.

Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were always the necessary recipients of financial assistance at the hands of their friends; Stephen A. Douglas was a bold investor and, though living in an era of great rises in values, was always hopelessly in debt; Lincoln was prudent, and yet when elected President at fifty-two years of age had but ten thousand dollars; and similar conditions may be attributed to many others—indeed, our millionaire statesmen, as a rule, have little else but their millions, and successes acquired by the momentum of piles of gold, to save them from utter and abject scorn.

While Illinois Solons in 1836 and 1837 were voting millions for internal improvements every year, thousands of farms were being sold and forfeited for delinquent taxes. Finally, retribution came; and the whole airy fabric collapsed and brought immediate, though reparable, disaster, and came near causing repudiation, which would have been an irreparable calamity. But while the measures were being matured, the sword of Damocles was not visible, nor yet did the shadow of an avenging Nemesis darken the legislative halls. All was bright and beautiful. Capitalists were rushing in with money to buy bonds, and immigrants were swelling the roll of tax-payers, and Illinois promised to supplant New York as the Empire State.

Never was Lincoln more earnest, enthusiastic, or hopeful than in the advocacy of these measures; as he had never seen more than a hundred dollars or so in one lot, and had no financial negotiation of greater magnitude than his part-

nership transaction with Berry, he knew comparatively nothing of finance. While he could formulate schemes for expending the public money, he had no idea of the conservative qualities needed to complete the process and secure a logical balancing of accounts at the end. His ambition, in view of the future of history, took a strange direction, and had no legitimate basis; he had read of the glorious "Erie Canal" system and the lustre conferred upon its founder, and he confidentially avowed to his friend Speed his ambition to become the "De Witt Clinton" of Illinois. Instead, he came nearer, however, to being its John Law; at least the enterprises in which he courted distinction ended almost as disastrously as the "Mississippi bubble."

Lincoln was on the important Committee on Finance, in which were matured these magnificent schemes of internal improvement; and both Lincoln and Douglas were brought, in a legislative sense, face to face by service on the Committee on the Penitentiary. In pursuance of their official duties, it was necessary for them to visit the institution at Alton, then about sixty miles distant; and we can imagine this committee, one of whose members was six feet four inches in height and the other five feet and one inch, *en route* in the stage thither and return, entertaining each other, to while away the tedium of the journey.

During the session, a motion was made to express the thanks of the Legislature to President Jackson for the firm, consistent, independent, and able manner in which he had performed his duties, and to tender its best wishes to him on his retirement from office. Jesse K. Dubois moved

to amend by inserting the prefix "in" before consistent. This was rejected. Lincoln moved to divide the proposition, which was done; and he himself voted "nay" to the first branch and "aye" to the second branch. Both branches of the motion were carried.

It is noticeable that an election took place at this session for a Judge at Chicago (I suppose of the Common Pleas Court), at which Thomas Ford was elected, and Browning and Lincoln were the tellers.

The session ended on March 6, 1837, and the "Long Nine" mounted their horses and started for home, except Lincoln, who had no horse to mount, and hence went by means of "Shanks' mare," as he termed it. Being long-legged and an excellent walker, he was enabled to pick his way through comparatively dry fields and by the roadside, thus avoiding the mud which his companions must contend with, and so he managed to keep up with them for the whole journey, which consumed four days. It is quite probable that, in order to have the benefit of Lincoln's humor, they suited their gait to his, and it is manifest to such as were familiar with the methods of the "Wild and Woolly West" in those days, that the literary entertainment of the journey was highly spiced, if not classical. The poorest scintillation of wit of the journey reveals a border of sadness. The future Emancipator, thinly clad for the season, shivered as a cold northeaster struck him, and said: "Boys, I'm cold." "No wonder," was the unfeeling reply, animadverting on the size of his feet, "there's so much of you on the ground."

However, the "Long Nine" were received with



great *éclat* at Springfield. The *keys* and freedom of the little mud-begirt city were accorded them, and free dinners *galore* were spread. At one of these the following toast was proposed to Mr. Lincoln: "Abraham Lincoln: he has fulfilled the expectations of his friends, and disappointed the hopes of his enemies," and Lincoln proposed this toast: "All our friends: they are too numerous to mention now individually, while there is no one of them who is not too dear to be forgotten or neglected." And Douglas, who was also there, having been appointed Register of the Land Office, offered this toast: "The last winter's legislation: may its results prove no less beneficial to the whole State than they have to our town."

But the novelty wore off in a day or two, and the usual humdrum of existence prevailed. Lincoln had had the lead in the honors accorded, and, although his name was as sonorous and more applauded than any, he was the sole one of the "Long Nine" who had no local habitation or home, and the necessity for achieving one pressed remorselessly upon him.

Soon after leaving Springfield at this time, he visited Athens, where his colleague, Robert L. Wilson, of the "Long Nine," resided, and that community extended to Mr. Lincoln the compliment of a banquet, at which he was accorded the toast: "Abraham Lincoln: one of Nature's noblemen." One can scarcely credit the extreme rusticity which then prevailed. These extremely raw "toasts" sound very like the proceedings of a cross-roads debating club—in fact, Lincoln and his surroundings smacked of the Justice of the Peace order of law business, and the "log-cabin and hard cider" style of social life.



From Mr. Wilson, whom I knew intimately in after life, I learned much of the career of the great President in those early days. Wilson said: "Lincoln was a natural debater; he was always ready and always got right down to the merits of his case, without any nonsense or circumlocution. He was quite as much at home in the Legislature as at New Salem; he had a quaint and peculiar way, all his own, of treating a subject, and he frequently startled us by his modes—but he was always right. He seemed to be a born politician. We followed his lead, but he followed nobody's lead; he hewed the way for us to follow, and we gladly did so. He could grasp and concentrate the matters under discussion, and his clear statement of an intricate or obscure subject was better than an ordinary argument. It may almost be said that he did our thinking for us, but he had no arrogance, nothing of the dictatorial; it seemed the right thing to do as he did. He excited no envy or jealousy. He was felt to be so much greater than the rest of us that we were glad to abridge our intellectual labors by letting him do the general thinking for the crowd. He inspired absolute respect, although he was utterly careless and negligent. We would ride while he would walk, but we recognized him as a master in logic; he was poverty itself when I knew him, but still perfectly independent. He would borrow nothing and never ask favors. He seemed to glide along in life without any friction or effort." Soon after the termination of this session, Jackson's relentless war on the National Bank bore fruit, and that institution closed its doors, followed by a suspension of the banks in the large cities of the

Union. The danger was imminent, and the conservative Governor convened the Legislature in special session at Vandalia, on July 10, 1837, when a practical message calling attention to the financial perils which environed the State, and advising the Legislature to reef sails, and throw out ballast, awaited them. The optimistic Legislature paid no heed to these monitory and temperate suggestions, but, on the other hand, with an astonishing recklessness, persisted in its mad schemes of inflation, and not only so, but added to them.

The Sangamon delegation was strengthened by the addition of Edward D. Baker, afterwards known to a great fame as a fervent and thrilling orator; and the pyrotechnics of oratory held sway over prudence, and the approaching and inevitable pay-day. So ultimate financial ruin was accelerated, in which Lincoln was more enthusiastic than his fellows, although at that time, he probably did not pay one cent of taxes, for he not only owned nothing, but was twelve hundred dollars, or such matter, in debt. However, this was one branch of Lincoln's training-school, by which, in process of time, he became the wisest of our public men.

At the ensuing session of the Legislature, which convened on December 9, 1839, Lincoln was again a member, and so conspicuous that he received the votes of his Whig colleagues for Speaker—thirty-eight votes, to forty-three for his Democratic colleague. He was reappointed on the important Committee on Finance, and was likewise made a member of the Committee on Counties. Edward D. Baker, afterwards United States Senator from Oregon, and Isaac P.

Walker, afterwards United States Senator from Wisconsin, were members. But little of public importance was done, except to bemoan the sad condition of the finances, and make tentative efforts to retrieve the errors and profligacy of past legislation. Lincoln started in the session with a heroic resolve to maintain the ground, but finance was not his *forte*, and he succumbed to the inevitable, as the others did. Repudiation in disguise was boldly mentioned. It was not deemed possible that the State could pay its entire debt; and discussions were entered into as to which parts were more, and which less, meritorious. Lincoln candidly admitted "his share of the responsibility in the present crisis"—admitted that he was no financier, and did not have the least idea how the State would be extricated from its embarrassment. The Legislature could do nothing effective; work was suspended on the public improvements, and Lincoln's roseate hopes of becoming the "De Witt Clinton" of Illinois faded away like the mists of morning.

He returned home from this session very deeply chagrined at the anti-climacteric ending of his brilliant schemes, and had to endure the taunts and gibes of the Democrats, to whom his career had afforded so excellent an opportunity for the display of ridicule and envy. In order to restore, if possible, his lost prestige, and to retrieve his political character, he offered himself again as a candidate, and put all the vigor he knew into the campaign.

The campaign was a vituperative one. Among the Democratic orators was Edmund D. Taylor, a professional politician, having held office for most of his life; in fact, both he and his brother

had a weakness for land office appointments, and one or the other, and sometimes both, were constantly feeding, in some way, at the public crib.

So Taylor, in one of his speeches, took occasion to appeal to the prejudices of the people by calling the Whigs "English aristocrats," and speaking of them as bankers, capitalists, *toadies* to the English, etc., and to laud his party as the lover of the poor man, plain manners, honest workmen, etc. In point of fact, Taylor himself, with a strange inconsistency of conduct, was a consummate fop. He never appeared in public without a ruffled shirt, a blue coat and brass buttons, and a gold-headed cane. This habit he persisted in to his ninetieth year, when, with his oiled and glossy locks and erect deportment, he would easily pass for a youth of sixty. When Taylor had concluded this demagogic appeal, Lincoln caught the lower edge of his vest and suddenly jerked it open, exhibiting a huge ruffled shirt and a ponderous gold watch-chain with a lot of ornamental appendages, which Taylor had designed to conceal for the occasion, to the dire confusion of Taylor and the infinite merriment of the crowd. Then Lincoln "sailed into" the pretensions launched forth by Taylor, in this style: "And here's Dick Taylor charging us with aristocracy and gilt manners, and claiming to be an exponent of the farmers and cattle raisers; and while he's doing this, he stands in a hundred-dollar suit of clothes in a dancing master's pomp and parade, with a ruffled shirt just such as his master, General Jackson, wears, and a gold log-chain around his neck to keep his watch from being stole by some of us, and with a big gold-headed cane. And while he was raised in this style, I

was a-steering a flatboat down the river for eight dollars a month, with a torn shirt, one pair of buckskin breeches, and a *warmus* as my only suit. The Bible says, 'By their fruits ye shall know them'; now I have got on my best to-day, and Taylor has got on his shabbiest. You can judge which one of us is the aristocrat by our appearance."

The canvass was full of bitterness. Baker was once making a Whig speech in the courthouse, in the course of which he dealt the Democracy some pretty severe blows, exciting the wrath of the Democrats so that they cried: "Hustle him down!" and began to move toward him to carry out the threat. The room had a very low ceiling, and there was a hole in the floor just above the judge's stand (which was in the centre of the building) to let in light and air. Lincoln's office was in the second story, and he was lying down by this hole, to hear Baker's speech. When he saw this attempt to mob Baker, he at once let himself down through the hole, and, appearing at the side of Baker, shouted in a voice of authority that was at once respected: "Stop this. Baker has a right to speak as he pleases, and if you take him off the stand, you'll have to take me, too!"

Baker then finished his speech just as he desired, and Lincoln went out in the street, and stayed with him as long as he was menaced with danger.

Jesse B. Thomas, a leader of the Democracy, in the absence of Lincoln made a good deal of sport of him, which some friends of the latter reported in time for him to reach the meeting before it broke up. As soon as Thomas had concluded, there were vociferous shouts for Lin-

coln from all over the house. The latter was "on tap." Having heard of Thomas's line of remark, he was wrought up to his extremest tension, and abused Thomas in a merciless way. He mimicked Thomas perfectly, showed off all his peculiarities and weaknesses, and kept the audience in a roar of derision at poor Thomas, who was in full view of the audience during the whole scene, and could not escape. It was a long time before this incident, called the "skinning of Thomas," was forgotten in Springfield; but Lincoln himself, to whose nature the attack was entirely foreign, after it was over felt very sorry for it, and even went so far as to apologize to Thomas.

Lincoln himself told me of an incident that happened at the election. Baker was born on the sea, when his parents were emigrating to this country from England, and it used to be occasionally said that he was not a qualified voter. So on this election day a prominent Democrat said to Baker, "I'm going to challenge your vote." This was a tender point with Baker, as well as a deadly insult, and he quickly said, "If you do, I'll lick you." Baker tendered his vote, which the man challenged, and Baker took the oath and voted. Then in quicker time than he could comprehend that anything had occurred, the man lay in the street, his face covered with blood, the worst whipped man Lincoln said that he had ever seen.

No event prior to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise ever happened in Illinois which created so much excitement as the removal of the State capital. The first measure was a joint resolution to relocate by a joint convention of the



two houses on a day named. That day was a red-letter day in the history of Vandalia, for all the politicians in the State were there, each one advocating his favorite location. There were a dozen competing places, six actively so, and the rest hoping that an emergency would arise that would bring one of them to the front. The leading places were Springfield, Jacksonville, Vandalia, Peoria, Alton, and Illiopolis (the centre of the State). When the first ballot was taken, intense excitement prevailed. Lincoln's adroit tactics were felt and acknowledged throughout, and Springfield secured more votes than any two of its competitors combined on the first ballot, and continued to grow on every ballot, securing the coveted prize on the fourth.

An appropriation of \$50,000 was made toward providing a capital building, and Springfield was required to obligate itself to pay \$50,000 toward the same object. It took herculean efforts to raise this amount, and Douglas proposed a measure to release the city from its obligation, but Lincoln opposed it. Said he: "We have the benefit; let us stand to our obligation like men." The sum was divided into three instalments; the first two were raised, but they had to borrow the last instalment from the State Bank. To secure this a joint note was made, signed by every citizen of the place.

The first Legislature to convene in Springfield used temporary quarters: the Representatives sat in the Second Presbyterian Church on Fourth Street; the Senate in the Methodist Church; and the Supreme Court in the Episcopal Church.

Of this Legislature which sat at Springfield, Lyman Trumbull, William H. Bissell, Thomas



Drummond, and Ebenezer Peck—all greatly distinguished thereafter — were members, and John Calhoun, of “candle-box” notoriety afterwards, was Clerk. Lincoln was again the Whig candidate for Speaker, receiving thirty-six votes, but was defeated by W. L. D. Ewing, who received forty-six votes. On account of the financial distress and incidents growing out of the same, the Governor convened the Legislature two weeks earlier than its regular session. The banks all over the nation had been forced by the panic of 1837 to suspend specie payments, and at the previous session, the Legislature of Illinois had authorized its State Bank to suspend specie payments till the end of the next General Assembly. The Democratic party got into a quarrel with the Bank, and, in consequence, conceived a plan to force it to resume, by adjourning *sine die* at the end of the first fortnight of the regular session, which would have been ruinous, for this reason, that the banks of all other States being suspended, if the State Bank of this one State was alone compelled to redeem its bills, an attempt would be made to run every one of them home at once, which, of course, would very soon exhaust their small stock of specie. The Whigs, having heard of this scheme on the morning of the day it was to be attempted, resolved to counteract it in this way: it needed several of the Whig members to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but on an attempt to take a vote, a quorum would be assumed as present, if unchallenged, and so all Whig members stayed out of the chamber, except Lincoln and Joseph Gillespie, who remained to call for the *ayes* and *noes* when an attempt should be made

to adjourn *sine die*. The Democrats, seeing the ruse, made a call of the house, and sent the Sergeant-at-Arms out to hunt up the absentees. Lincoln and Gillespie, seeing Whigs brought in, agreed with two of them that *they* should move for the *ayes* and *noes*, and then attempted to withdraw; but finding the doors locked by order of the Speaker, they raised a window, and, joined by Asahel Gridley of Bloomington, jumped out and secreted themselves. Although judged by the canons of political morality this was a justifiable act, Lincoln ever thereafter regretted it, and would always have some little inapposite story to narrate whenever the story came up, in order to divert the subject. A most rancorous partisan spirit prevailed throughout the entire session, and the Democrats, having the power, carried measures with a high hand, one of their schemes being a total overthrow of the judicial system of the State, and the substitution therefor of a strictly partisan bench, for partisan objects.

The law, as it then stood, provided that all white male *inhabitants* should vote, etc. This, the Democrats contended, included *aliens*, but the Galena judge, on a test case, decided that it did *not* include aliens. Whereupon Douglas drafted a bill vacating the seats of the nine circuit judges, and providing for the appointment, by the Legislature, of nine additional Supreme Judges, who also should perform "Circuit" duty. Of course, the Legislature appointed Democrats, who decided the law as the party wished; and thus, by one of the most high-handed outrages upon the judiciary, and usurpations of political and constitutional power, the law was subverted, the independence of the judicial power invaded,

and a general degradation of the law and public morality enforced. Douglas, the author of the law, became one of the new judges, but the odious system did not last long. Public opinion everywhere condemned it, and the new constitution made it impossible for the Legislature thereafter to punish the judiciary for trying to administer the law honestly. This example indicates the rabid and vicious character of local politics in Illinois in the days of Lincoln's novitiate in that field where he was destined to garner such colossal fame in the days to come. Lincoln subsequently, in the debates with Douglas, made good use of this episode in his opponent's early career, showing that the advocate of the Dred Scott decision had not always upheld the sanctity of the judiciary.

Mr. Lincoln was absent for a considerable part of the regular session, on account of nervous irritation and general ill-health. He visited his friend Joshua F. Speed, who had removed to the Speed plantation, near Louisville. While there, he was wont to visit James Speed's law office in Louisville and amuse himself with the law library, neither one then thinking that one of them would become President of the United States, and the other his Cabinet law adviser.

This was Lincoln's last legislative service. During its existence he gained much experience, became acquainted with the genius of Illinois laws and politics, and the laws themselves, and the politicians, and was enabled to gauge, to some extent, his own merits and abilities as a politician and public man.

Mr. Lincoln's statesmanship was in a chrysalis state. His evolution from a backwoods youth to

a man of affairs was not yet complete. His training for his true mission in life had just begun. A LINCOLN was not made in a day.

In 1854, his political friends brought him and Judge Logan out as candidates for the Legislature, and although both Lincoln and his wife tried to prohibit it, yet both he and Logan were kept in the field and both were elected. Lincoln was a candidate for the United States Senate, and declined the position. The Democrats took advantage of the opportunity, and elected one of their number to fill the vacancy. Had Lincoln remained in the position, the result of the Senatorial election might have been otherwise.

William Jayne, a brother-in-law of Senator Trumbull, was one of the most active and persistent of the Springfield local politicians. He attended all conventions, great and small, and was a man of inflexible integrity to his friends and principles. Jayne went to Lincoln to get his consent to run, and thus reports the occurrence: "I went to see him in order to get his consent to run. This was at his home. He was then the saddest man I ever saw—the gloomiest. He walked up and down the floor almost crying, and to all my persuasions to let his name stand in the paper, he said: 'No, I can't; you don't know all. I say you don't begin to know one-half, and that's enough.' I did go, however, and have his name reinstated."

It is scarcely needless to say that it was Mrs. Lincoln's opposition which so much disturbed him. She insisted in her imperious way that he must now go to the United States Senate, and that it was a degradation to run him for the Legislature

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONGRESSMAN

MR. LINCOLN'S first law partner, John T. Stuart, ran and was defeated for the Twenty-fifth Congress, which sat in December, 1837, but he was successful for the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Congresses. For the next Congress in course, the Twenty-eighth, which was to meet on December 4, 1843, the city of Springfield presented three several Whig competitors for the nomination, viz.: Judge Logan, E. D. Baker, and Mr. Lincoln. Logan withdrew, leaving the field to Baker and Lincoln. Baker secured the delegation, one of whom was Lincoln, who humorously wrote that he felt, in attending the convention, like attending as the "best man" at a successful rival's wedding. However, Baker lost the nomination, it going to John J. Hardin of Jacksonville, who was elected. At the next convention, held in 1844, Baker was nominated and thereafter elected. He resigned on December 30, 1846, in order to return to the Mexican War, he having participated in it the previous summer, and one John Henry was elected to fill the vacancy of nearly a month.

Lincoln and Logan were both candidates for the succession, but the latter withdrew, in consequence, probably, of an agreement that he should run next time. He presented Lincoln's name to

the convention, which met at Petersburg in May, 1846, and the latter was unanimously nominated.

The Democrats nominated Rev. Peter Cartwright, the most eminent and widely known Methodist preacher in the State. Cartwright was an untiring worker and personally very popular, owing to his force of character. The canvass on both sides was made with great vigor and spirit, not to say acrimony. Cartwright appealed to the prejudices of the religious community against Lincoln, branding him as an infidel, which was a more terrible accusation then than now. That the reverend gentleman took no pride in this canvass is patent in this, that in an autobiography published by him afterwards the circumstance is not alluded to at all. Lincoln was elected by an unprecedented majority—1,511 votes—the usual majority in the district being about 500. This was a great honor, in view of the kind of canvass which was made against him.

The principal subject for political consideration was the Mexican War, which was then waging. In Illinois the war was popular, even among the Whigs. Hardin and Baker, both Whigs, fought in it, and Hardin was killed at Buena Vista. Lincoln partook of the spirit of the time, and made a fervent war speech to his constituents on May 29, 1847. In December, 1847, he appeared in Congress, the only Whig from Illinois; his Democratic colleagues from Illinois being: Robert Smith, from Alton; John A. McClernand, from Shawneetown; Orlando B. Ficklin, from Charleston; William A. Richardson, from Rushville; Thomas J. Turner, from Freeport; and John Wentworth, from Chicago.



This was a very talented and a very eventful Congress. Questions relating to the accessions and government of new territory were being considered. In the Senate were Bell, Calhoun, Corwin, Crittenden, Davis, Dayton, Dickinson, Dix, Douglas, Hale, Hunter, and Webster; and in the House, Ashmore, Andrew Johnson, Toombs, Giddings, Wilmot, Collamer, Botts, Rhett, Stephens, and Clingman. Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts was Speaker.

On December 20, 1847, the following resolutions came up for action on a motion to lay on the table, and Lincoln voted with his party against the motion, and in favor of the measure:

*Resolved*, That if in the judgment of Congress it be necessary to improve the navigation of a river to expedite and render secure the movements of our Army, and save from delay and loss, our arms and munitions of war, that Congress has the power to improve such river.

*Resolved*, That if it be necessary for the preservation of the lives of our seamen, repairs, safety, or maintenance of our vessels of war, to improve a harbor or inlet, either on our Atlantic or lake coast, Congress has the power to make such improvement.

On December 21, 1847, Joshua A. Giddings presented a petition from certain citizens of Washington City for the repeal of the slave-trade in the District of Columbia (there then being a slave-market within earshot of the Capitol). Mr. Giddings attempted to have it referred to the Judiciary Committee, with instructions to inquire into the constitutionality of all laws by which slaves are held as property in the District of Columbia. The pro-slavery hordes tried to lay the measure on the table, but failed. Mr. Lincoln voted with Giddings not to lay on the table.



On December 22, Wentworth from Chicago moved as follows:

*Resolved*, That the General Government has the power to construct such harbors and improve such rivers as are necessary and proper for the protection of our navy and commerce, and also for the defences of our country.

It passed, after an animated debate, by 138 to 54, Mr. Lincoln voting aye.

On December 22, Mr. Lincoln attempted a political *coup de main*, if not, indeed, a *coup d'état*, which he took great pride in at the time, but which proved to be a *coup de grace* to his immediate political aspirations. He made a motion which was ever afterward called in derision the "*spot*" resolutions, and brought upon their author unmerited obloquy. The reception and fate of this proposed measure show the political folly of attempting to impede or cavil at a national war, whether just or unjust.

In point of fact, these resolutions were in the highest degree proper. It was the administration which inaugurated the war, and yet President Polk, at the behest of the slavocracy, took especial pains to set forth, in all ways, and whenever he could, that the Mexicans had done so. The Whig party in Congress denounced this lie, as was proper, but Mr. Lincoln seriously crippled his political career by being too *fresh*, and furnishing a basis for slander. Thomas Corwin dug his political grave even deeper by exclaiming in the Senate: "Were I a Mexican, as I am an American, I would say to the invader: We will welcome you with bloody hands to hospitable graves."

Always thereafter the Democratic press and

orators charged Mr. Lincoln with voting against supplies for the Mexican War, and in the joint debate, Douglas charged that Lincoln took the side of the enemy against his own country.

As late as June, 1858, the *Chicago Times* charged Lincoln with voting against the supplies to our soldiers in the Mexican War, the "spot resolutions" being its only basis. I sent the paper to Mr. Lincoln and he replied: "Give yourself no uneasiness about my having voted against the supplies, unless you are without faith that a lie can be successfully contradicted." He further stated that he was then considering as to the best way to contradict it, but he deemed it best to do nothing about it.

On the 17th of February, 1848, the question of supplies for the army in Mexico came to a test vote on a Loan Bill to raise \$16,000,000 to pay government debts, chiefly incurred in carrying on the Mexican War. Recollect that the House of Representatives was a Whig one with a Whig Speaker, yet this measure passed by a vote of 192 to 14, Mr. Lincoln voting with the majority; thus giving the direct lie to the brood of maligners and liars who pursued him with their venom constantly thereafter.

On December 28, 1847, sundry citizens of Indiana sent in a petition for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and it was laid on the table, although Mr. Lincoln voted against thus summarily disposing of it.

And on the 30th of December, a memorial against the slave-trade in the District was presented, and Lincoln sustained its respectful consideration by his vote.

On January 17, 1848, Giddings introduced a

resolution reporting alleged outrages against a colored man in Washington, and asking for a special committee to determine on the expediency of prohibiting the slave-trade in the district. Many test votes were taken on the resolution, and Lincoln sustained Giddings each time.

On February 28 a resolution was offered in the House, which read thus :

WHEREAS, in the settlement of the difficulties prevailing between this country and Mexico, territory may be acquired in which slavery does not exist; and whereas, Congress, in the organization of a territorial government, at an early period of our political history established a principle worthy of imitation in all future time, forbidding the existence of slavery in free territory:

Therefore, be it *Resolved*, That in any territory which may be acquired from Mexico, on which shall be established territorial governments, slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, should be forever prohibited, and that, in any act or resolution establishing such government, a fundamental provision ought to be inserted to that effect.

It was laid on the table by 105 to 92. Mr. Lincoln voting with the mover, and Giddings in the negative.

On April 3, and also on the 18th, Mr. Lincoln moved to suspend the Rules, so as to take up for action the "Ten Regiment" bill.

On June 19, 1848, Stewart of Pennsylvania offered a resolution favoring a protective tariff, as follows :

*Resolved*, That the Committee of Ways and Means be instructed to enquire into the expediency of reporting a bill increasing the duties on foreign luxuries of all kinds and on such foreign manufactures as are now coming into ruinous competition with American labor.

Mr. Lincoln voted in favor of the resolution.

An important bill came down from the Senate on 28th of July to establish territorial governments for the territories of California, Oregon, and New Mexico. It authorized slavery in California and New Mexico, and was very obnoxious to the Whigs, even to those from the South. This measure was of especial importance, as showing the change of base executed by Mr. Webster between that day and March 7, 1850, for in the speech of the latter date, he took grounds entirely antagonistic to those exhibited by him on this occasion. He closed his speech with these words:

“Under no circumstances would I consent to the further extension of the area of slavery in the United States, or to the further increase of slave representation in the House of Representatives.”

Thomas Corwin likewise made a forcible speech in opposition, ending as follows:

“I must consider it bad policy to plant slavery in any soil where I do not find it already growing. I look upon it as an exotic that blights with its shade the soil in which you plant it, and therefore, as I am satisfied of our constitutional power to prohibit it, so I am equally certain it is our duty to do so.”

Stephens of Georgia, afterwards Vice-President of the Confederacy, moved to lay the bill on the table, and voted “aye.” Lincoln did the same.

On August 2, the House bill for organizing the Territory of Oregon came up, and a motion was made to repeal the Ordinance of 1787 prohibiting slavery there. Mr. Lincoln voted against it. From first to last he was consistently on the side of freedom in the Territories.

During this session, Mr. Lincoln showed his sterling qualities as a debater in the delivery of several speeches, all emphasized by clearness of statement and vigor of reasoning, characteristic of him during the slavery discussions. On January 12, 1848, he made a notable speech on the War with Mexico.

I do not believe that anybody could have crowded more matter in the same amount of space.

On June 20, he spoke on the subject of Internal Improvements.

On the 27th of July, he made a speech in derision of General Cass's claim to be a military hero, which, though sadly lacking in dignity, entertained the House and the nation, and formed an admirable campaign document.

At the second, or short, session, on December 12, 1848, the following resolution was submitted:

*Resolved*, That the Committee of Ways and Means be instructed to inquire into the expediency of reporting a Tariff Bill based upon the principles of the Tariff of 1842.

And Mr. Lincoln voted for it.

As showing Mr. Lincoln's love of perfect justice is this incident: Palfrey of Massachusetts proposed a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without any compensation to owners, and Mr. Lincoln voted *No*, because no provision for compensation was included. On the same day, however, a resolution was offered, as follows:

*Resolved*, That the Committee on Territories be instructed to report to this House with as little delay as practicable, a bill or bills providing a territorial government for each of the territories of New Mexico and California, and excluding slavery therefrom.

Mr. Lincoln supported this measure heartily. On the 21st of December, Mr. Gott proposed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the traffic now prosecuted in this metropolis of the Republic in human beings as chattels is contrary to natural justice and the fundamental principles of our political system, and is notoriously a reproach to our country throughout Christendom, and a serious hindrance to the progress of republican liberty among the nations of the earth:

Therefore, be it *Resolved*, That the Committee for the District of Columbia be instructed to report a bill as soon as practicable prohibiting the slave trade in said district.

Because Lincoln did not like the meagre provisions of the bill, he voted to lay it on the table; and that having failed, on the passage of the resolution Mr. Lincoln voted "nay."

On December 21, the following resolution was proposed in the House:

*Resolved*, That the present traffic in the public lands should cease, and that they should be disposed of to occupants and cultivators on proper conditions, at such a price as will nearly indemnify the cost of their purchase, management and sale.

This measure received Lincoln's support.

The "Gott resolution," heretofore mentioned, to prohibit the slave-trade in the District of Columbia having again come before the House on a reconsideration, Mr. Lincoln offered an elaborate measure as a substitute.

On January 31, a bill was reported from the District of Columbia to prohibit the bringing of slaves into the District, either as merchandise or for hire. Mr. Lincoln sustained it

On February 21, Mr. Lincoln sustained a bill

to abolish the franking privilege. His congressional career came to an end on March 4 ensuing.

While Mr. Lincoln's congressional career gave no sign of the tremendous possibilities afterwards developed, it nevertheless, tested by principle, is a very creditable career, although it was deficient in matter of policy.

It was not Mr. Lincoln's style, however, to let policy govern principle or stand in its way. He knew that the Mexican War was founded on a lie; and he felt that it was his duty to contribute to the unmasking of the fallacies and deceit of an administration given over completely to the behests of the slave power.

On the subject of slavery, he was consistent then as always. He believed that Congress had the right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and he so stated as early as 1837, in his protest in the Illinois Legislature; but he also believed that the rights of the white people of the District, and of the slave-owners, should be respected.

He believed in the perfect right of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories, and that no right at all existed in Congress to interfere with it in the slave States; and to the observance of these principles he was, throughout, consistent.

The "spot" resolutions, however, formed a basis for misrepresentation and vilification, which rendered Mr. Lincoln's career unsavory on the whole, ruled him out of politics for the time being, and turned his district over to the embraces of the enemy. In point of fact, it has always had a Democratic representation since, although it must be said that a redistricting took place in 1851, by a Democratic Legislature.



## CHAPTER IX

### CITIZEN AND NEIGHBOR

IN Lincoln's day, the seminal principle of the *haut ton* of his home town was derived from the Kentucky "bluegrass" region. Two sons of Governor Edwards, who had been Chief Justice of Kentucky, Territorial Governor of Illinois, and Minister to Mexico; three daughters and a nephew of Hon. Robert T. Todd, who had been a leader of the political and social aristocracy of Kentucky; the Mathers, Ridgeleys, Opdykes, Forquers, Fords, Lambs, and Herndons formed the Springfield aristocracy. Mr. Lincoln gained an excellent social as well as political standing at Springfield by his successful efforts about the capital removal, and also by his partnership with John T. Stuart. Consequently, when he married Miss Mary Todd, who was a member of the Kentucky aristocracy, it was not considered to be a *mésalliance*; its only social consequence was to engender an envious feeling among the plebeian fraternity who had theretofore claimed him. Throughout his social life he was always plain and unassuming; he lived in very moderate condition; had no man servant or errand boy, attending to his horse, cow, woodpile, and stable himself. He chopped wood, went to market, and did the chores and odd jobs about the place. This round of duties did not cease till a week after

his nomination for the Presidency. His nearest neighbor was a working carpenter, and Lincoln used frequently to go into his yard on neighborly errands, to do which he would straddle a low fence. However, his neighborly association extended no further. This geographical neighbor was never in Mr. Lincoln's house except to make repairs, and the great President was never in his neighbor's house, except on small errands. I recollect that one of Lincoln's queerest stories includes a visit to his neighbor's kitchen to borrow spoons one evening, when he had company to tea.

To reconcile some otherwise irreconcilable incidents of Mr. Lincoln's biography, an understanding of the political and social bias of his neighbors and neighborhood is necessary. In 1856, we are advised by local history that, although Herndon took extra pains to get up an enthusiastic reception to his illustrious partner upon a distinguished occasion, yet no one came except one obscure man, and the discomfited partners turned off the gas and went home very meek and chopfallen. Yet Lincoln had been his townsmen's Congressman eight years previously; had been five several times elected by this same people to the Legislature—the last time only two years before.

This inharmony between cause and effect had its basis in social and political prejudice; the early settlers of southern Illinois were from the slave States, and they were wedged in between either slave-holding communities, or those having such affiliations, so that the Yankees and Abolitionists were as much *below par* in southern and central Illinois as they were in Kentucky

or Missouri. This prejudice invaded the sanctuary, and even when the theme was abounding grace and universal brotherhood, it still was not temporarily laid aside. The virtue of fraternal love could not be assumed, even in the fervor of religious zeal. A Chadband of the "hardshell" order thus exclaimed in a sermon: "The overwhelming torrent of free grace *tuk in the mountings of Ashy, the isles of the sea, and the uttermost ends of the yearth.* It *tuk in the Eskimo and the Hottingtots;* and some, my dear *brethring,* go so *fur* as to suppose it *tuk in them air poor, benighted Yangkeys;* but I don't go that *fur!*"

Of course, when the Nebraska Bill was passed, this feeling became all the more rancorous, in view of the fact that the adherents of the "Anti-Nebraska" party came from the ranks of the hitherto pure and undefiled Democracy, as well as from the moribund Whig party, and the line of cleavage which had theretofore separated the Whigs and Democrats, now divided the Proslavery Democrats from the anti-extension of slavery element, and the prejudices became more intense and unyielding than before. An exhibition may be given in the case of Governor Bissell, who as a member of Congress from Illinois had electrified all classes of the State by his prompt defence of the Illinois brigade in Mexico when assailed by Brown of Mississippi; and by his equally prompt and eager acceptance of a challenge from Jefferson Davis, growing out of the same. Every Illinoisan felt a thrill of pride and exultation at this episode, and especially as Bissell abjured any mock-fighting by naming rifles at short range. Yet when this same gallant sol-

dier was elected as Governor by the Anti-Nebraska party, and being paralysed, so that he had to take the official oath in the Executive Mansion, the pro-slavery Democrats, from pure spleen, put forth Hon. Elijah Pogram to insult and vilify this brave soldier, because he had taken the official oath in the Executive Mansion, instead of in public, the fact being that he was too disabled by his wounds to do otherwise.

The acerbity and illiberality of politics, of which this is a fair example, were more pronounced in Springfield than in other parts of the State, because the politicians from the whole State gathered there and made a public exhibition of party rancor and animosity, and the citizens could not fail to imbibe it in its intensity. Even before 1854, the political contentions between the Whigs and Democrats had been violent and wordy, and led to occasional physical collisions, but the Nebraska Bill increased the rancor, and changed the combatants. In Springfield, Lincoln, Logan, Herndon, Milton Hay, William Jayne, William Butler, and Cullom adhered to the Republicans; while Stuart, Broodwell, Springer, and Matteson allied themselves to the Democrats, while the Edwardses were sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. The cast and structure of Mr. Lincoln's mind and ambition forbade him from having regard for politics having less than a national principle; hence city or town politics had no charm for him. In his own family circle, Mr. Lincoln was the most affectionate and gentle of men. No man thought more of his wife and children than he, and he oftentimes was seen fondly carrying one of his children in his arms up and down on the sidewalk

before the house, or drawing one in a little rude cart.

Mr. Lincoln was an excellent citizen, in the sense of being a citizen of the whole State, and ultimately of the whole nation, although at the outset of his career his affiliations were local, and quadrated with Sangamon County alone. However, with expanded experience his social and political horizon expanded and enlarged, and he was no more intimately in touch or accord with the people of Springfield or Sangamon County than with those in Logan or McLean; he considered himself as much obligated to the people of Danville as to those at his home. In his appointments to office, he wholly ignored geographical lines—even the local appointments for his judicial district were not from Springfield. In his administration at Washington, it was in principle the same. He wanted a Cabinet Minister, Judd, from Illinois, but he considered that that State had enough consideration in his election; he had no more regard in the matter of executive favors for Illinois than Maine; geographical propinquity and social propinquity had no alliance in his mind; his social area covered the whole nation; his field was the world. He dealt in *principles* and *institutions*. To him, men were but agents or *media* to enforce, promulgate, or originate principles, and a man's locality had naught to do with his efficiency in that regard. Lincoln's highest social pastime was achieved on the circuit with the "boys" (as we were termed) at Court-time.

This catholicity of association, and consequent failure to localize his attachments explain in some degree the lack of that ardent sympathy for

him at home which sometimes cropped out. The bitterness of partisan politics, especially on the part of those who deemed his anti-slavery sentiments recusant to the land of his fathers, aided this feeling, and his omission to recognize his fellow citizens properly in the distribution of Federal offices, all combined to produce a somewhat social alienation, and prevented him from being, as abstractly, and on his individual merits, he would be, an ideally popular citizen. Not that he was unpopular, but he should have been popular to the verge of enthusiasm, as he was when news of the location of the capital at Springfield reached that small village.

That Mr. Lincoln, aside from the prejudices appurtenant to the slavery question, was a very popular citizen was frequently attested. His four several consecutive elections to the Legislature attest it; his immense majority for Congress on his ticket exhibits it; his being elected to the Legislature in 1854 against his earnest protest confirms it.

He was a scrupulous observer of the laws, local and otherwise; he paid his debts and taxes promptly, did not let his little real estate get on the delinquent list, and his daily walk and conversation among men were circumspect. He neither attended church himself, nor sought to influence others from so doing; his example in all the minor morals was excellent. Politicians were accustomed to drop in at saloons, of which there were plenty at Springfield and elsewhere on the circuit, but no one knowing Lincoln would have dreamed of seeing him in a saloon on any pretence. Yet he did not obtrude a temperance lecture on any one.



In the joint debate at Ottawa, Douglas, in his reckless way, averred that Lincoln "could ruin more liquor than all the boys of the town put together"; while the unembellished fact was that Lincoln never at any time drank any liquor at all, and when he was younger it was the custom for all to drink. He told Swett that he absolutely never drank a drop of liquor in his life, and William G. Greene's testimony I give elsewhere. A life on the frontier is not conducive to the reign of ascetic habits, yet Mr. Lincoln did not even embrace the vice of tobacco. Like all men on the frontier with whom intellect and its exercise is the engrossing quality, and especially one whose business on the circuit kept him absent half the year, his domestic habits were irregular. He had a habit of being out with the "boys," and might be found frequently at Burnes's grocery at the southwest corner of the public square entertaining the crowd, such being the custom of the place at this time, and Burnes's was a general loafing-place for all the local wits of the place, and was in the strict sense of the word a *grocery*—not a *groggery*.

Mr. Lincoln shone resplendently in an association, in a social sense, with men, but not in a general company which likewise included the fair sex. Occasionally, on the circuit, we would be invited out to some social gatherings, and sometimes we would force Lincoln along, for he never would gravitate to such a place of his own accord. But he would be ill at ease. Judge Davis would be perfectly *au fait* in the little trivialities and "*smorl tork*" demanded, but Lincoln could make no effort to shine. In my own home, with my little family, when he was a visitor, he was at ease,



and would hold my children as fondly as one of coarser mould; but the presence of females he was not familiar with abashed him extraordinarily, especially if they had on extra frills or tuckers. He was not a polite or polished man outwardly; his graces and amenities were of the heart and affections. Several of us once were stopping at Judge Davis's, by invitation; in his absence Lincoln was quite familiar with us all, and likewise with our hostess, who was a lady of rare attainments and of extreme simplicity of style and character. There was no margin for restraint there, but as we came to the dining-room for our first meal, Lincoln adroitly and suddenly sat down at a side of the table. "Why, Mr. Lincoln," said the lady of the house, "I expected you to occupy Mr. Davis's place at the foot of the table." "I thought so," was the reply, with a chuckle of satisfaction, "and that's why I hurried up and got here. Let Whitney run the carving."

On the circuit, Swett, Gridley, Oliver Davis, Lamon, and others seemed to consider that the dignity of the profession required that they should erect some sort of a social fence or barrier between themselves and the masses that we would meet, but there was none of this attempt at exclusiveness with Lincoln. It was not infrequent to see him, while Court was engaged in something which did not concern him, sitting on a store box on the sidewalk, either entertaining, or being entertained by, some of our villagers; nor was there any affectation or demagogical art in this; it was in accordance with his plain, unaffected, undramatic style.

Judge Cunningham narrates that at our mass-

meeting in 1858, he had charge of arrangements on the ground, and placed Mr. Lincoln at the post of honor at the guests' table; when Lincoln saw an old lady whom he called "Granny" Hutchinson, without a seat, he insisted that she take his seat, while he stood up and munched from his hand something that he had procured from the table.

I suppose one could not sanely imagine Daniel Webster or Rufus Choate appearing before a Justice of the Peace and trying a case involving a few dollars for a five-dollar fee, yet Mr. Lincoln did not disdain to do that on our circuit. "All was fish that came into his net," and I have in my mind's eye at this moment a rudimentary lawyer, who then was merely an aspirant to the bar, and whose chief pride and boast had been for thirty-five years, and is yet, that he tried a case against Lincoln before a justice in our county in 1856, and beat him. And I may remark here that the "justice of the peace" style of trying cases was more agreeable to Mr. Lincoln than any other. The ancient style of pleading was "*ore tenus*," and written pleading came later; a simple verbal statement of the issues in a case was suited to Lincoln's simplicity of style and manner, and the simplicity attendant upon a Justice Court was much more in harmony with his wishes than the elaboration and red-tape of a Court of Record.

Mr. Lincoln did not meddle with, or obtrude himself upon, his neighbors or their local matters, nor did he after 1840 personally ask them to support him for office. When he ran for Congress, his largely increased vote on the ticket at a previous election indicated his local popularity,

and I have already said somewhere that at his first candidacy in 1832 he secured every vote in his own precinct but three. Mr. Lincoln personally was a very popular man; aside from political animosities, I don't think he did have, or could have, an enemy.

While he was careless, indifferent, and "slouchy" about his attire, no note was taken of it by acquaintances; his companionship was so interesting and desirable that his attire was not regarded. The same principle inhered in his personal appearance. A snob or dude might deem him "homely"; no man or woman of sensibility would think of that subject in any way on acquaintance.

Aside from all politics, Mr. Lincoln was one of the most interesting men I ever saw; he had no envy, malice, or spite—no ill-feeling of any kind toward anybody; he was deferential but not obsequious; he made no sarcastic remarks. He employed no social tyranny to one in his power; he had no angularity except physically; was not inquisitive about the affairs of others; was disinterested and magnanimous, not supercilious or discourteous; was generous and forgiving to a fault. He was not only sincere and candid, but he assured you by his conduct that he was so; his actions towards men symbolized his belief that the greatest of the social virtues was charity. Every social element was agreeable. No true man ever had cause to repent his acquaintance; in the extremely rare cases of those who disliked him on other than political grounds, the party offended was of a narrow, illiberal order; the fault certainly could not be laid at the door of generous Abraham Lincoln. Of him the

classic eulogium may in sober truth be said without hyperbole :

Neither the ardor of citizens ordering base things, nor the face of the threatening tyrant, shakes a man, just and tenacious of principle, from his firm intentions.

## CHAPTER X

### LAWYER

MR. LINCOLN was not well grounded in the principles of law, nor was he a well-read lawyer. He had an intuitive sense of abstract justice, but he had no conception of rules, technicalities, or limitations; he knew nothing of decisions, except such as came with his own experience; he did not approve of being hampered by precedents; to him, estoppals were unjust; he had no patience with technicalities as such, desiring to consider every case as disconnected with all else, and to be tried on its abstract and unencumbered merits alone.

While lawyers of small abilities would array a list of authorities to support their contention, Lincoln would try to establish his by logic. His strength as a lawyer lay in his analytical and reasoning faculties, *i.e.*, he could apperceive the matter at issue and deduce the true conclusion from it with as much facility and strength as he could achieve the same results from moral questions.

A lawyer has a right—in fact, it is the present mode of law practice—to use the labors of the profession, and appropriate former decisions to enforce his views. Lincoln did this, of course, but only subordinate to his own logical consideration of the case; hence the labors of those who

preceded him were not of nearly the same value to him as to his adversary. However, when it came to cases with no well-defined precedent, then it was that Lincoln had a powerful advantage, for he had no superior, certainly, and but very few equals, at our bar in original reasoning. Take it all in all, he had probably only one superior as a lawyer in our circuit, viz.: Stephen T. Logan.

In a rough-and-tumble practice on the circuit, where advocacy was relied on rather than exact knowledge or application of legal principles, he was especially effective. He had a frank and cordial way of dealing with witnesses, and his memory was of a methodical cast; he recollected the evidence as it accrued, and assigned each element thereof to its proper room, hall, or vestibule in his memory, to be withdrawn when needful, for use.

He was courteous yet skilful in cross-examination, and had a faculty of so cajoling a witness as to make him (as my father once put it) say just what he wanted him *to* say. His candor and honesty were very effective weapons for success. A statement made by Lincoln was almost invariably accepted as correct; and I have on more than one occasion known of a case with intricate details being made to appear so clear on both sides, by Lincoln's lucid and comprehensive statement, as to be very much simplified, if not, indeed, as was sometimes the case, made ready on both sides for the decision without argument.

Mr. Lincoln contemned useless or irrelevant litigation; he had little patience with *tort* cases or with technical defences. He was much annoyed at dilatory tactics or preliminary skirmish-

ing for advantage, he disliked long drawn-out trials, and desired quickly obtained results; he was fond of settlements and compromises, when the parties themselves would move in the matter, but if the litigation was wholly useless, he would move in the matter himself.

He would always give a perfectly fair and candid opinion as to the merits of a case and the probability of success, and would not enter into a case he knew to be dishonest. In a case, however, where the dishonesty was developed during the trial, he would simply do what he honestly could for success, and no more. I have known him to injure a case, when he became convinced during the trial that he was on the dishonest or unjust side of it.

His view of morals was broad and catholic; his integrity was not confined to any special line or particular mode; to him, there should be a *quid pro quo* in all social attrition or mercantile dealing. To charge too much for a thing was, to his view, dishonest; to gain a lawsuit by sophistry or chicanery equally so. The basis of his hostility to slavery was his consciousness of its *dishonesty*, in exacting service for nothing, and of its *injustice* in coercing and enslaving men. Although he was philanthropic toward his own race, he had no feelings of philanthropy toward the black race, but only the feeling that injustice should not be visited upon them.

He had this marked peculiarity, that, although he was one of the most amiable and courteous of associates in a case, yet he pursued his own independent course in his share, whatever it was, of its management, nor would he reveal his designs in the least degree to his colleagues. I



have, on many occasions, held consultations with him in which I would get no hint from him as to his views or designs about the case. On one occasion, Swett and I sat on a bench in the extreme rear of the courtroom while Lincoln closed to the jury on our side, and we were utterly astonished at the cruel mode in which he applied the knife to all of the fine-spun theories we had crammed the jury with.

He was extremely accommodating and courteous to his adversary, and likewise to the adverse witnesses, provided they told the truth; but woe to them if they falsified! for he had no charity for falsehood anywhere, least of all for exhibitions of it on the witness stand, and the logical structure of his mind afforded him the means to detect falsehood, almost inevitably. He would brook no insult or sarcasm from an opponent, but he never unfairly or uncharitably presumed that an insult was intended. He waived all mere technicalities and minor and inconsequential matters; conceded in advance all that he knew could be as well proved; gathered up the *essential* matters in a bunch, and rested his case upon *them*.

The consideration and trial of cases was to him matter-of-fact responsible labor; he introduced no pleasantry or quips therein, but soberly and discreetly arrayed all advantages orderly, for his side of the case. He studied both sides of his case, and considered the course of tactics which his opponent would probably pursue, quite as thoroughly as he considered his own. Nothing moved or excited him in the course of a trial; he presented the same calm, placid, and imperturbable exterior when disaster frowned, as

when good fortune smiled, upon the career of a case.

We had a client once who took occasion to complain to me about alleged unsatisfactory management of a case. I asked Lincoln to placate him, as I could not. "Let him howl," was the reply I got, after a moment's deliberation.

He minded his own business better than any lawyer I ever saw; he stuck to his case, or to his part of it, and rendered no advice to any one else about his or their duties, but he performed *his* functions independently and *sui generis*, and let the responsibility of others' actions rest upon themselves. Considering the magnitude of my early business at the bar, I was a careless lawyer, and often drew upon myself the reproofs of older colleagues, but never from Lincoln. In our joint cases, of which there were many, he did the best he could for the case in hand, *plus* the difficulty caused by my affirmatively bad management, or *minus* the advantage that proper management on my part would have secured.

To the "mint, anise, and cummin" of a case, he was indifferent. Whether the pleadings were artistic or inartistic; whether the formal facts had been sufficiently established, etc., he cared nothing, and attempted no advantage thereby; he wanted no less a fight than on the merits.

No matter how eventful or exciting a trial was, he remained entirely calm, unexcited, imperturbable; you could not discern by his manner that he had the slightest tinge either of trepidation or enthusiasm, but he remained inflexible and stoical to the last. Once I had an important railroad suit that I secured his aid in, and as the able counsel on the other side was dealing

out heavy "wisdom licks" at us, I got alarmed, and spoke to Lincoln about it; he sat inflexibly calm and serene, and merely remarked: "All that is *very* easily answered," and when his time came, he blew away what seemed to me as almost an unanswerable argument as easily as a beer-drinker blows off the froth from his foaming tankard.

Through his accurate perceptions, he would discern what was genuine and what was sophistical; many a time have I seen him tear the mask off from a fallacy and shame both the fallacy and its author. In a railway case we were trying, the opposing lawyer tried to score a point by stating that the plaintiff was a flesh-and-blood man, with a soul like the jurymen had, while our client was a soulless corporation. Lincoln replied thus: "Counsel avers that his client has a *soul*. This is possible, but from the way he has testified under oath in this case, to gain, or hope to gain, a few paltry dollars, he would sell, nay, has already sold, his little soul very low. But our client is but a conventional name for thousands of widows and orphans whose husbands' and parents' hard earnings are represented by this defendant, and who possess souls which they would not swear away as the plaintiff has done for ten million times as much as is at stake here."

He did not, as a rule, "play to the pit" in his addresses to the jury, but simply confined himself closely to his case. However, I recollect once in the evening at Urbana, Lincoln was arguing a case, when some ladies came in, and we made room for them within the bar, which caused a little commotion, and Lincoln said: "I perceive,

gentlemen, that you are like all the rest of the *fellers* in your admiration of the fair sex—in fact, I think, from appearances, that you are a little worse than the common run,” and he added something else that provoked laughter; and he waited a minute and then said patronizingly: “Now, boys, behave yourselves,” and went on with his argument.

I have heretofore adverted to his intellectual honesty, and, of course, by that I do not mean his acumen or intellectual grasp and vigor of mind. It is common to have intellectual power. Webster had that in a marked degree, but he was not intellectually honest, and hence we find him in history advocating free trade in 1816, and a high tariff in 1836. He is seen working hand in hand with the friends of freedom anterior to 1850 and abnegating his record on the 7th of March. That “honesty is the best policy” was well established in the career and empty results of the life of this man so great intellectually and so essentially feeble morally; and in the career and fruitful results of the life of Abraham Lincoln, as seen in his great mission, its faithful performance, and his immortal fame. A man of the former class, of which, alas! there are too many in our history, is equally at home in arguing either in unison with, or contrary to, his convictions; it is simply a little more difficult to argue dishonestly than honestly—that is all with him. But it was morally impossible for Lincoln to argue dishonestly; he could no more do it than he could steal; it was the same thing to him in essence, to despoil a man of his property by larceny, or by illogical or flagitious reasoning; and even to defeat a suitor by technicalities or by

merely arbitrary law savored strongly of dishonesty to him.

Lincoln was usually very mild, benign, and accommodating in his practice on the circuit; but occasionally he would get pugnacious. "Oh! No! No!! No!!!" said McWilliams once, in a trial, to a witness, who was straying beyond the domain of legitimate evidence, as he thought. "Oh! YES! YES!! YES!!!" shouted Lincoln, looking daggers at McWilliams, who quailed under Lincoln's determined look.

He gave but the slightest attention to rules of evidence, and rarely objected to the admission of anything at all allowable; he could not endure those illiberal practices required at the hands of the complete lawyer; he could not practice or countenance that selfishness which the requirements of good practice demanded. All the generalizations of his mind tended to frankness, fairness, and the attainment of substantial justice, and the simplest mode was to him the best. In entering upon a trial, he stated the whole case on both sides, as he understood it, with fairness and frankness, not attempting to gloss over the faults and imperfections of his own case, or to improperly disparage the adverse side.

But when the *strain* came, Lincoln was very apt to bear down heavily on his adversary's case, and a novice who presumed much on Lincoln's graces and amenities as the case was being developed, frequently found himself in the lurch when the crisis was reached.

I once brought suit on a Kentucky judgment, and Lincoln, with others, was employed to defend. Oliver L. Davis, who was with Lincoln, taunted me before trial that they not only would

defeat, but would make me ridiculous. I appealed to Lincoln, who comforted me by saying: "Don't you mind Oliver; it is merely like any other case, and I'll see, at least, that there is no ridicule about it"; but when we went into trial, and the thermometer of the case got up to 96 degrees in the shade, Lincoln went for me and my case as vigorously as the others, and I was entirely alone against all the talent of that end of the circuit. It is needless to say that I was gloriously beaten.

Lincoln's guileless exterior concealed a great fund of shrewdness and common sense about ordinary matters, as well as genius in the higher realms.

I remember once, that while several of us lawyers were together, including Judge Davis, Lincoln suddenly asked a novel question of court practice, addressed to no one particularly, to which the Judge, who was in the habit, certainly, of appropriating his full share of any conversation, replied, stating what he understood the practice should be.

Lincoln thereat laughed and said: "I asked that question, hoping that you would answer. I have that very question to present to the Court in the morning, and I am glad to find out that the Court is on my side."

When Lincoln desired to make an extra good effort, or when he had a difficult case, he would be missing—he would hide somewhere, and by self-introspection mature his plans. He did not have any particular place to hide—the unused back room of a law office, or an obscure corner of the Clerk's office, or a lonely bedroom of the travelling bar, the streets of the village, or the



woods, were alike serviceable and equally put in requisition by him. He had a talent for embracing the whole scope and plan and all essential details of a case within the area of his mind, in an orderly and systematic manner. He took no notes and made no memoranda, and rarely, if ever, made any mistake in referring to the evidence, in his argument.

The petty advantages on his side in a case, he did not urge with any force or pertinacity, but arrayed his strongest points and relied exclusively on them. His ability to separate important and controlling matters from those which were secondary, was marked, and showed great analytical skill; he abhorred that style of practice which attributed unworthy motives to an adversary, or enforced technicalities to the exclusion of justice or progress. He allowed to adverse evidence or argument their fullest value and importance; never sought to disparage or "damn with faint praise" an opponent or his arguments, and in minor and inconsequential points, would help his adversary along, and this especially if he was a young practitioner. In trying a case before the court, without a jury, he would summarize the case as impartially on both sides as the impartial judge could do it himself; no matter what the case was, he would get possession of the facts, and form his own conclusions upon them without any extraneous aid or suggestions. In formulating his mode of treatment, he gave little attention to technicalities or any advantage to be derived therefrom; his guiding star was not expediency but principle; not coigns of vantage but justice. He made no pretensions to anything beyond circuit court ability,



yet he was occasionally employed in important cases outside, and not infrequently went to Chicago, and once or twice to Cincinnati on business connected with a patent suit.\*

The last case he ever tried was an important case involving the question of *accretion*, in which he took the lead on our side, and argued the question, so far as he was concerned, on original principles and with great ability. This case was tried in March and decided early in April, somewhat less than two months before the assembling of the "Wigwam" convention. It is somewhat singular that the senior opposing counsel to Mr. Lincoln was Hon. Buckner S. Morris, who had been a leading lawyer in Chicago, and who was afterwards Treasurer of the "Sons of Liberty," and who was tried by a court-martial at Cincinnati during the war on a charge of being involved in the Camp Douglas conspiracy, of which he was acquitted. In point of fact, Mr. Morris read law with Henry Clay at Lexington at the same time that Mary Todd, who became Mr. Lincoln's wife, was a schoolgirl there. I may, however, say that Mr. Lincoln was an uneven lawyer—that his best results were achieved as a result of long and continuous reflection; the various elements of a case did not group themselves in apt and proper position and order in his mind on first impression; hence he was not as self-reliant in a new case as in one he had fully discussed and

\* This suit was *McCormick vs. Manny*. William H. Seward, Reverdy Johnson, Edward N. Dickinson, and Isaac N. Arnold were for complainant; and Edwin M. Stanton, George F. Harding, and Abraham Lincoln were for defendant.

decided in his own mind, and his first impressions in a case were not his best ones.

He did not disdain any association, and listened to all suggestions from those associated with him with patience and deference, and gave as much weight to a good suggestion from a novice as from a veteran. In a hard case, however, he was eager for good auxiliary connections, and Leonard Swett was his favorite in a difficult jury case. Lincoln was preëminently a man of peace, and discountenanced all litigation whose origin, vital principle, or main auxiliary was vengeance, ill-feeling. He promoted and favored all compromises, as I have said, but asked no quarter or favors, and fought to the bitter end all contested cases not susceptible of accommodation.

His imperturbability was one of his strong points; the only excitement he ever betrayed in court was when he got righteously indignant at the actions of some one in a case—then he was terrible in his wrath; he has been known (though rarely) to transcend the bounds of decorum on such occasions. While, as a lawyer, he was not great, yet he admired a great lawyer and despised a charlatan with a high reputation. He once told me that John McLean, United States Supreme Judge, had considerable vigor of mind, but no acuteness of discernment at all; he also said to me of Archibald Williams, whom he made United States Judge in Kansas, that he had more ability to discuss law questions to learned lawyers than any lawyer he knew. Of Judge T. Lyle Dickey, he said: "He can draw such fine distinctions where I can't see any distinction, yet I have no doubt a distinction does exist."

He studied the character and ability of Lord Bacon, and was greatly charmed with it. "But how about his taking bribes?" I asked him. "He did take bribes, but never made any change in his decision," was the reply. It struck me as strange. Bacon's transcendent ability seemed to condone, in Lincoln's estimation, his flagitious conduct.

He charged insignificant fees. The first really adequate fee I ever knew him to charge was \$5000 for trying the case of The Illinois Central Railroad Company *vs.* McLean and Champaign Counties. The railway claimed that the land comprised within its land grant was not taxable till a patent issued; while the counties claimed that they were taxable as soon as they were allotted. A formal decision was rendered by the lower court, and the case argued before the Supreme Court at Springfield. There were three several counsel: Lincoln and Herndon, James F. Joy of Detroit, and Mason Brayman. Joy was an influential railway lawyer, with a great influence and an exalted opinion of himself, and, although it is probable that Lincoln did the most effective service, it was quite natural for Joy to disparage Lincoln's efforts, and he did, in fact, do so. Accordingly, when his bill came in and Joy had to audit it, he not only disallowed it, but spoke contemptuously of its author as a "common country lawyer." Lincoln then sued in the McLean Circuit Court, and, somehow, no defence being made, a default was taken. Lincoln, however, allowed the default to be set aside and the case set down for trial. John M. Douglass, then our solicitor, consulted with me about the matter; I said that even if the amount was too large, we

could not afford to have Lincoln as our enemy, instead of an ally, on the circuit, and I insisted further, and with greater force, that he would beat us anyhow, both in the circuit and Supreme Courts. Douglass paid the fee. (Somehow, plain as this case is, it has never been correctly stated by any historian.)

Mr. Lincoln never let his diversion obtrude upon the serious business of his law practice, but he felt the responsibility and gravity of his position, and entered into all trials with the attention, dignity, and decorum demanded; he would sometimes score a point by fun in some way, but he did not resort to pleasantry to the detriment of his case.

In the long run his honesty, and, more particularly, his reputation therefor, was a great and potent factor for success. When he made a statement for judicial or forensic action, it carried weight and authority. He stated nothing morally impossible; his demeanor was that of personified honesty; and his reputation was a letter of recommendation, convincing, if not conclusive.

After his death, the Nestors of the Illinois bench and bar, and lawyers and judges of high and low degree, grave and sedate men with no imagination or fancy, spoke in eulogy of him. There was not the slightest diversity of opinion on either his honesty or ability; and the apparent disparagement of Judge Davis that Lincoln had no managing faculty nor organizing power in a case and that a child could conform to simple and technical rules better than he, was not literally true. The whole truth is that Lincoln did not grovel amid the minor trivialities of the

technical, but reigned amid the stars of the immutable and eternal principles of justice.

Isaac N. Arnold, one of the leaders of the Chicago bar, delivered a lecture before the Illinois Bar Association on January 7, 1881, in course of which he said of Mr. Lincoln:

“In any courtroom in the United States, he would have been instantly picked out as a Western man. His stature, figure, dress, manner, voice, and accent indicated that he was of the Northwest. In manner, he was always cordial and frank, and, although not without dignity, he made every person feel quite at his ease. I think the first impression a stranger would get of him, whether in conversation or by hearing him speak, was that here was a kind, frank, sincere, genuine man of transparent truthfulness and integrity; and before Lincoln had uttered many words, he would be impressed with his clear, good sense, his remarkably simple, homely but expressive Saxon language, and next by his wonderful wit and humor. Lincoln was more familiar with the Bible than any other book in the language; and this was apparent both from his style and illustrations, so often taken from that book. He verified the maxim that it is better to know thoroughly a few good books, than to read many.”

While I cannot think, with any idea of propriety, of Lincoln sitting as a Judge, it yet seems to me that if he had been made a successor of John Marshall, he would, by his moral and logical acquirements, have achieved as great renown, in spite of his lack of the judicial temperament.

Lincoln's partnership with John T. Stuart commenced in March, 1837, and ended on April 14, 1841, when he formed a partnership with Judge Stephen T. Logan, who had previously been the Circuit Judge, and was then the best lawyer in the State. The firm of Logan & Lin-

coln lasted till the early spring of 1843, when Lincoln withdrew on account of some little feeling, growing out of the political canvass for Congress, both partners then being aspirants. William H. Herndon had just commenced to practise, and he was not only a young man of promise, but his family was very extensive, of great respectability, and highly influential. Lincoln, therefore, proposed a partnership, which Herndon gladly accepted. It lasted eighteen years, and during the entire term no accounts were kept, and not a word of dispute ever occurred between the partners.

After Lincoln became Logan's partner, he did not venture far from home to practise; he did, however, attend Menard County, that embracing the region of country which had been the theatre of his surveying and early political operations, and where, therefore, he had a large and favorable acquaintance. After his partnership commenced with Herndon, he extended his circuit business somewhat, but still did not attempt to achieve a general practice on the circuit. Entering into politics in 1846, and being absent in Washington for a considerable part of two years, his practice was very much broken in upon—in fact, was largely dissipated and lost.

His comparative failure in Congress induced in him a belief that he was not adapted to politics, and, besides, his finances had become somewhat attenuated by its pursuit. The result was a more general and systematic application to the practice of law. Accordingly, he began to travel the entire circuit with Judge Davis, the circuit then being denominated the Eighth, and embracing the counties of Sangamon, Logan, Tazewell,



Woodford, McLean, Champaign, Vermilion, Edgar, Coles, Piatt, Macon, De Witt, Shelby, Moultrie, and Christian.

In those early days, it should not be forgotten, the law business was not only very meagre, but quite informal; cases were not then decided upon *authority*, as I have said, so much as upon logical consideration. Lincoln gained friends at once; politics and law were closely entwined, and political prejudice was quite as intense then as it ever was. Lincoln had been the only Whig from Illinois in the Congress of 1847-48, and partisans of his faith on the circuit were likely to cleave to him both as parties and jurors. His story-telling propensities stood him in good stead, and yielded a large following of admirers. He was more thoroughly advertised on the circuit through the media of his anecdotes than by either his Congressional experience or his law practice. Law practice was more difficult then than now by reason of the dearth of authority, and of the method then in vogue of reasoning out cases upon primordial and original principles. As a consequence, young men counted for little in law practice in contested cases, and the habit was general to employ leaders on the circuit in anything which savored of a contested case. There was not, at that time, any lawyer who travelled over the entire circuit. Logan rarely left his own county; Stuart attended only Tazewell; Logan and McLean, the Macon lawyers, went only to Piatt; Swett and Gridley attended McLean, De Witt, Champaign, and Vermilion; Scott of McLean went only to the northern counties; and Moore of De Witt limited his practice to his own county and McLean.



Courts lasted nearly six months in the year, and the judge and lawyers generally contrived to spend as many Sabbaths at home as they could. Lincoln did not join in this effort, but, contrariwise, when he set out on a tour of the circuit, generally continued until the end. Nothing could be duller than remaining on the Sabbath in a country inn of that time after adjournment of court. Good cheer had expended its force during court week, and blank dulness succeeded; but Lincoln would entertain the few lingering roustabouts of the barroom with as great zest, apparently, as he had previously entertained the court and bar, and then would hitch up his horse, "Old Tom," as he was called, and, solitary and alone, ride off to the next term in course. One would naturally suppose that the leading lawyer of the circuit, in a pursuit which occupied nearly half his time, would make himself comfortable, but he did not. His horse was as rawboned and weird-looking as himself, and his buggy, an open one, as rude as either; his attire was that of an ordinary farmer or stock-raiser, while the sum-total of his baggage consisted of a very attenuated carpetbag, an old weather-beaten umbrella, and a short blue cloak reaching to his hips—a style which was prevalent during the Mexican War. This he had procured at Washington while a Congressman, and carried about with him as a winter covering for the years thereafter. He read no law on the circuit, except when needed for a special case, nor did he read general literature. Instead he would read and study a pocket geometry, which he carried about with him; after the year 1854 he gave especial attention to the newspapers, and watched the

growth and drift of political sentiment in that way more assiduously than any one whom I ever knew.

He was utterly indifferent as to the appearance or merits of any tavern or place he stopped at; it was a matter of no consequence to him whether a caravansary was good, bad, or indifferent—the chief solicitude with him was the magnitude of the bill, for from necessity he was very prudent in his expenditures, and so would stop at the cheaper taverns. He did not, however, violate good policy in that regard, and whenever it was convenient roomed with the judge while out on the circuit, the general knowledge of this fact being helpful in the way of securing business from people who augured therefrom that advantages accrued to him in consequence. This inference was entirely erroneous, for social “chaff” made no impression on the judge on the bench. Frequently on the circuit, we were accustomed to stop at farmhouses for dinner, and sometimes over night. Upon such occasions, Lincoln would not be long in entertaining the whole household with his drolleries. He readily assimilated himself to any position or circumstances, and was as thoroughly at home in an unhewed log cabin as at the Pike House, an elegant hotel in Bloomington, where he stopped when in that city.

While Mr. Lincoln was more guarded and less unrestrained in his narration of anecdotes to a crowd in a public place than to a select few in the privacy of one room, yet he was not particular as to the character of his auditory. In fact, I have known of his regaling a miscellaneous crowd of farmers, stable boys, and general roustabouts in the common waiting-room of a country

inn with as much apparent zest as our coterie, embracing the *élite* of the bench and bar. Probably, however, his story-telling adjuncts were more completely attained in our morning and evening walks than at any other time; and if the ghosts of the departed trees in the "big grove" at Urbana, or the *manes* of the stumps east of Danville could speak, they might unfold some startling revelations. I can easily recall in fancy the crowd of roisterers all of whom save myself have departed for the land of shadows, and especially the Abraham Lincoln of my early days as we thronged these primitive ways. Imagine a loose-jointed, carelessly attired, homely man, with a vacant, mischievous look and mien, awkwardly halting along in the suburbs of the little prairie village, in the midst of a crowd of wild, Western lawyers, he towering above the rest, taking in the whole landscape, with an apparent vacuity of stare, but with deep penetration and occult vision. Something would remind him of "the feller in Indiana," or the "man down in Florida," and all would crane their necks to hear the story. At its conclusion, the whole crowd would explode with laughter, Lincoln himself more emphatically than the rest. The reflection that this uncouth and clumsy joker should have been designated by Providence to be "the greatest leader of men that the world ever saw" could never have occurred in fiction, and is almost too improbable for belief as a practical fact.

I was once complaining, while attending court at Danville, that I had no business in that court, having but two or three cases, when Lincoln said: "You have as much business here as I used to have; I listened to a French street peddler's

antics here half a day once, simply because I had not one particle of business."

The only remark savoring of sarcasm or rebuke which Mr. Lincoln ever bestowed on me at the bar or elsewhere (except on one occasion when he was President) occurred while a small case in which we were interested was being closed by a speech on the other side, to which Lincoln was languidly listening; the next case for trial being an important one in which we also were together. Said I: "I am afraid the old war-horse ain't stirred up to the importance of the next case"; he looked at me listlessly and said: "Do you want the old war-horse to haul two loads at once?" That and one other time I refer to in my "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln" (page 474) are the only times Lincoln ever said anything to me to cause me to feel *cheap*.

Judge Davis often delegated his judicial functions to others. I have known of his getting Moon of Clinton to hold court for him in Bloomington for whole days; Lincoln to hold an entire term, and frequently to sit for short times; and I even knew of Colonel Bryant of Indiana to hold court for him at Danville. All judgments rendered by these lawyers were voidable. Time has probably now cured them; it was a hazardous business for them and the sheriff and suitors in their cases.

During the greater part of the time that Lincoln rode the circuit, railways did not form the usual means of travel; and our methods of locomotion and accommodation on the circuit were of the era of the stage-coach and country taverns, and those who are without experience cannot know to how great an extent the advent of the

locomotive is the exodus of sentiment, and a destruction of homely simplicity.

In those sober and prosaic days, the public-house was called a tavern, and at meal-times the guests were placed at a long table, with the most distinguished guest at the foot of the table, and the sum-total of the victuals arrayed all along the table. During court week, the choice places at the foot of the table were reserved for the court and bar, and witnesses, jurymen, and prisoners out on bail were ranged along the same table. Peddlers and travelling mountebanks took advantage of the throngs which court week usually brought, to ply their vocations, and the outlying farmers embraced those occasions to pay their taxes and debts, swap horses and jack-knives, do their trading, and listen to the exchange of professional compliments, clashing of wits, sallies of sarcasm, and flights of eloquence in the courthouse. As the court and bar were necessarily together, sleeping or waking, throughout the circuit, in business or at rest, there must needs be social attrition and intimacy, more or less pronounced, all around, and Judge Davis's "best hold" was as a host, entertainer, and head of the social organization of the circuit. The judge greatly loved attention, to be paid court to; he was extremely fond of prudent and proper conviviality, and was wont to put every newcomer on the circuit on a period of probation, giving him opportunity to prove himself a proper member of our coterie, where, if he succeeded, he was admitted into full membership; from which, if he failed, he was informally excluded, and made to understand thoroughly that he was so.

A method of social entertainment more in practice than now was story-telling, and it was, somehow, one of the greatest of accomplishments to be able to narrate stories in an entertaining way. Exactly why lawyers should be addicted to this species of entertainment more than votaries of other callings, I cannot see, but the fact is nevertheless so, and it seems to have been assumed in Lincoln's time that the Eighth Circuit was the locality *par excellence* when entertainment by story-telling was to be looked for.

It is probable that Lincoln was never exceeded, on the whole, as a story-teller, but he had no ambition or pride in this art, nor the slightest envy towards any one who vied with him in that respect; indeed, he preferred listening to another good story-teller to entertaining in that way himself. And there were other humorists on our circuit besides Lincoln; indeed, fun was the chief staple of our leisure hours.

In some of the courts, the terms occupied two or three weeks; in others, as in Piatt and Champaign, prior to 1854, they occupied but a day or two. There was as little formality in these courts as in any other proper ones, and most of the civil cases were tried by the court, without the intervention of a jury. The first business was to charge the grand jury; the next to call through the dockets, grant defaults, continuances, or orders; then followed the disposition of criminal cases; then civil law cases, and, finally, the disposition of the chancery docket. Davis was a very prompt and energetic judge, and despatched business with great celerity. In the evening, we would all assemble in the judge's room and listen to stories or talk sense till bedtime; and I



will venture to say that no coterie of men, thrown accidentally together as we were, was more harmonious or engendered more sincere and generous friendships than ours. Lincoln was the most noted of our circle; Swett scarcely less so; then Oliver L. Davis, Oscar F. Harmon, and Judge Terry, of Danville; Lawrence Weldon and James B. McKinley, of Clinton; Amzi McWilliams, William W. Orme, John M. Scott, Asahel Gridley and Ward H. Lamon, of Bloomington; and General Linder and O. B. Ficklin, of Charleston. From Indiana there used to come, partly on business, but chiefly for pleasure, Dan Mace and Jim Wilson, from Lafayette; Ned Hannegan, Dan Voorhees, and Joe Ristine, from Covington; and John P. Usher and Dick Thompson, from Terre Haute.

I have known of ten of us riding all day in one vehicle, and singing over half the way, and listening to jokes from our clowns, of whom we had several, the other half the journey. "When I lived 'way down in Ole Virginny," was our favorite song for two or three terms. We knew only a stanza and a half, but we sung these over and over again. Lincoln made no attempt to sing; he would do nothing and attempt nothing he could not do well. I never knew Lincoln to make "a fool of himself" at anything; never knew of his making a *fiasco* in telling a story, or anything else. If any one wanted to quarrel with him in court or out, which was rare, Lincoln never backed down. Swett used to "log roll" (as he called it) for business on the circuit; Lincoln never. And there was this peculiarity about his practice, that, although he was a poor lawyer in the sense of knowing the technical and con-



crete law, yet I never saw him discomfited or disgraced in court. He was a genius of affairs in the courthouse, as well as on the circuit. His tenderness and humanity cropped out on the circuit as it did at the White House. An old farmer named Van Atta (as I remember it) took a lot of sheep to winter on shares, fed his entire spare crop to them, and they all died in the spring, when the sheep-owner sued for the loss of the sheep. Lincoln and I defended. The first trial was a mistrial and we had a second; the costs amounted to \$700. We were defeated, and our client had a large judgment to pay, which took nearly all he had. Although a man nearly seventy, he started West, where he could find cheap land and found a new home. When he bade us good-bye, Lincoln was affected almost to the point of tears.

Whenever Mr. Lincoln took up a case on the circuit of any intricacy, if there was time to make research, he would counsel sufficiently with his client and joint counsel to ascertain all that could be learned; then would examine to see if the statute was likely to contain anything bearing on the subject; then he would seclude himself and formulate the whole case, in all its details, into concrete plan and harmony, and unless it was essential that we should know his conclusions, we would first learn his news when the trial came on. When I was new to the bar, I was trying to keep some evidence out, and was getting along very well with the court, when Lincoln sung out: "I reckon it would be fair to let that in." It sounded treasonable, but I had to get used to this eccentricity. He made no attempt to gain favor by cajolery. He made no

apologies. If any one got mad at him, he must get pleased again in his own way; Lincoln would never seek a reconciliation. The judge told me he never saw Lincoln angry at poor accommodations on the circuit but once. They arrived at Charleston on a cold, wet afternoon, chilled through and uncomfortable; the landlord was away; there were no fires nor wood. Lincoln was thoroughly incensed; he threw off his coat, went to the wood-pile, and cut wood with an axe for an hour. Davis built a fire, and when the landlord made his appearance late, Lincoln gave him a good scolding. His favorite attitude in the room while telling stories was standing up with his back to the fire; it gave him a good chance to gesticulate. If the weather would admit, his favorite place for consultation with a client was at the foot of a tree. I have seen him seated on his haunches, counselling with one or more clients. Unless the case was very intricate, he would master all the facts without a note or reference. If a case was on hand for more than one term, he would recollect the details from term to term, without omitting one. The first chancery case I had was a *boy's* case, for I filed a bill for a mortgagee to compel the mortgagor to insure the mortgaged property. I applied to Lincoln for neighborly help, and he puzzled over it, but couldn't decide at first whether the bill was good or not; finally, Somers, however, cut the Gordian knot in a minute, by handing the bill to the judge, saying: "Judge, won't you look over this bill and see if there is any equity in it?" The judge was prompt, if Lincoln was not; he held the bill to be worthless.

In the early days on the circuit, nearly all

things were as primitive as was consonant with the reign and rule of civilization; the taverns were of the old-fashioned, "high-post" bedstead order; the best rooms were assigned to the judge and his coterie of lawyers, and these, except in case of Davis, who tipped the scale at three hundred, slept two in a bed, and sometimes he had to take a lean bedfellow. At each semi-annual session of court, a general housecleaning and turning over was had; the sheriff, clerk, and local attorneys resorted to the semi-annual drawer or closet and arrayed themselves in the disguise of clean, "biled" shirts and good clothes, the creases of the store shelf yet patent. The rude courthouse benches were dusted, the floor swept and doused with many buckets of water, fires were lit, the neglected water-pitcher was replenished; and quires of foolscap and quill pens were placed upon the jackknife-indented tables. Little knots of country statesmen, attired in their best jeans suits, met in the courtroom, yard, or sidewalks, and in the county offices, and discussed everything from the Crimean War or the California gold diggings to the newest seed-wheat or Lincoln's latest joke.

Veteran lawyers met their constituents with a lofty and condescending air of mock or strained dignity, which the latter appreciated at more than its value, and young lawyers, resplendent in ill-fitting suits of creased store clothes and stand-up collars that chafed their ears at every turn of the head, affected a courage not well based, and made ostentatious display of judicial paper which had no office except to exhibit the mock substance of business hoped for, the evidence of retainers not yet seen. When the court

would actually arrive, there would be a *hurryin'* and a *scurryin'* in the courthouse and vicinity.

The judge would march in pomp from the tavern, attended by such of the court loungers as had sufficient "gall" to obtrude themselves upon him; the lawyers would gather with their little dockets, and, mayhap, their law books too; the clerk would carry up the court archives in a little hair trunk; the bailiff would bring up the stone water jug full cool and flowing, unless he should forget it, as he seems to have done at Piatt one term. "If the Court please," said State's Attorney Campbell, holding up a partly filled pitcher suggestive of antiquity and neglect; "is this the same water left over from last term?" The sovereigns would gather in, each ready and proud to perform his allotted mission as juror, witness, party, or looker-on. "Mr. Sheriff, open court," was ordered perfunctorily. "O yes! O yes!! the circuit court is now open for the despatch of business," the sheriff would ejaculate in a quavering voice. "Mr. Sheriff, send outdoors and move that peddler away from the square," might be the next order. "Mr. Clerk, call up the grand jury"; and from that time, it might be said, *opus fervet*. The grand jury would be charged and sent to their room; the docket would be called through, and many cases disposed of in some summary way; and by the time of adjournment, the work of the session would be well outlined.

The charm which invested the life on the Eighth Circuit in the mind and fancy of Mr. Lincoln yet lingered there, even in the most responsible and glorious days of his administration; over and over again has the great President stolen an

hour or a few minutes from his life of anxious care to live over again those bygone exhilarating and halcyon days in brief epitome, with Swett or me as the purveyor or historian of the bright reminiscences. Lincoln could not resist the influence of association, as was demonstrated when he cast policy, statecraft, and proper administration to the winds in behalf of sentiment, and appointed David Davis to the high office of Supreme Judge, simply because he was the exponent of that period of bright and auroral reminiscences, his Life on the Eighth Judicial Circuit.

## CHAPTER XI

### LINCOLN'S RELIGION

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, who in the years of his adolescence was extremely latitudinarian in his religious beliefs, when entrusted with the mission of greatest import to humanity ever confided to man since Moses the lawgiver, became fully reconciled to the essential truths of Christianity.

Joshua Fry Speed, the most intimate and unselfish friend that Mr. Lincoln ever had, said: "When I knew him [Lincoln] in early life, he was a sceptic. He had tried hard to be a believer, but his reason could not grasp and solve the great problem of redemption as taught. He was very cautious never to give expression to any thought or sentiment that would grate harshly upon a Christian's ear. For a sincere Christian he had a great respect. He often said that the most ambitious man might live to see every hope fail, but no Christian could live to see his fail because fulfilment could come only when life ended. But this was a subject we never discussed. The only evidence I have of any change was in the summer before he was killed. I was invited out to the Soldiers' Home to spend the night. As I entered the room, near night, he was sitting near a window, intently reading his Bible. Approaching him I said: 'I am glad to see you so profitably engaged.' 'Yes,' said he,

'I am profitably engaged.' 'Well,' said I, 'if you have recovered from your scepticism, I am sorry to say that I have not.' Looking me earnestly in the face, and placing his hand upon my shoulder, he said: 'YOU ARE WRONG, Speed; TAKE ALL OF THIS BOOK UPON REASON THAT YOU CAN, AND THE BALANCE ON FAITH, AND YOU WILL LIVE AND DIE A HAPPIER AND BETTER MAN.'"

Judge Gillespie of Edwardsville, Ill. (the same who jumped out of the window of the Legislature with Lincoln), says: "I asked him [Lincoln] once what was to be done with the South after the Rebellion was put down. He said some thought their heads ought to come off; 'but,' said he, 'if it was left to me, I could not tell where to draw the line between those whose heads should come off and those whose heads should stay on.' He said that he had been recently reading the history of the rebellion of Absalom, and that he inclined to adopt the views of David. 'When David was fleeing from Jerusalem, Shimei cursed him. After the Rebellion was put down, Shimei craved a pardon. Abishai, David's nephew, the son of Zeruiah, David's sister, said: "This man ought not to be pardoned, because he cursed the Lord's anointed." David said: "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be adversaries unto me? Know ye that not a man shall be put to death in Israel."'"

Mr. Lincoln's early religious views conformed, not to dogmas and creeds, but to the religion of humanity. Of Sabbaths, when his parents would be at church, he would hold a simple religious service at home, and would enforce upon his small auditory the duty of kindness toward all



animate objects. As he grew to manhood, his practical mind discarded all conventional matters appertaining to religion, and boldly took issue with every artificial barrier, mediator, or approach which lay between his Maker and man. Whether he kept his protest within the strict realms of ideal propriety it is needless to inquire; what the great martyr believed in the years of his adolescence can have none but speculative interest. The theories of the untutored mind are prone to fallacies, alike in sacred and secular things. What he believed as the result of maturity of intellect, inquiry, suffering, and experience is all that is valuable as example.

While all men are agents of the Deity to enforce His will, Mr. Lincoln was the especial nuncio and vicegerent of the Deity to execute a supernatural mission. So Mr. Lincoln believed, and he humbly and reverently accepted the mission, and performed it with zeal and fidelity.

Logically and inevitably, therefore, he believed in God; in His superintending Providence; in His intervention in mundane affairs for the weal of the race. To Him he made report; from Him he took counsel; at His hands he implored current aid; he ascribed glory and thanks to Him; he recognized Him as the Supreme Good. God came to him monitorially; with succor; with good cheer; with victory. He confounded the counsels of his accusers; He made the wrath of his enemies to minister to his good; His direct intervention the President experienced in many ways. Lincoln acknowledged all with a grateful heart; he ordered national thanksgivings and praises on every suitable occasion; and for some reason, clear to Omniscience but inscrutable to

us, he was stricken down, as his great prototype was at Mount Pisgah, when he came in sight of the promised land. Therefore, he had more proofs to warrant his belief, and believed more implicitly in God, and approached nearer to Him, than any man of the race since Moses the lawgiver.

In my "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln," in an elaborate chapter, I make, as I believe, a conclusive argument in favor of Mr. Lincoln's claims to be called a Christian, but the proofs are so ample and conclusive, unless Mr. Lincoln be a trickster in speech, as to leave no excuse for any contrary opinion.

In a brief letter of acceptance of the first Presidential nomination, Mr. Lincoln implores "the assistance of Divine Providence." Again, in his farewell address to his neighbors, he also gratefully and reverently placed his reliance on Providence, and invoked the prayers of his neighbors upon his mission, and in several of his speeches *en route* to the Capitol, he recognized the power and mercy of God.

In his Inaugural Address, he says: "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 difficulty." The closing sentence of his first Message to Congress was thus: "And . . . without guile and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear, and with manly hearts."

He opens his first regular message to Congress by expressing gratitude to God, and closes by expressing reliance on Him. And in a special message to Congress on March 6, 1862, he says:

"In view of my great responsibility to my God and my country," etc.

His fourth and last regular Message bestows the profoundest gratitude to Almighty God.

The second Inaugural is an almost unbroken invocation to God for His assistance and succor in behalf of our bleeding nation. It contains passages (I say it without irreverence) which approach the Divine Sermon on the Mount for moral sublimity and supreme elevation of thought as closely as a merely human document can do it. It is, in my judgment, the most sublime of Mr. Lincoln's utterances. I think it exceeds even the Gettysburg speech. It is, and will ever remain, a sacred classic.

In the general exultation which followed the surrender of Lee, the President said: "He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten."

And a call for a National Thanksgiving was being prepared when he was stricken down.

I have thus presented but a small part of the documents and sayings in which Mr. Lincoln recognized, praised, and relied on the Almighty. He seemed to act as if He was present, exercising a personal supervision over our affairs, and in every way, and upon all proper occasions, he recognizes and attests his gratitude to Him for mercies and providences, and humbly receives blows from His chastening hand.

The proper Christianity of such a man cannot be questioned. The President once said: "When any church will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership, the Saviour'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 all my soul."

Then his absolute morality, purity of life, beneficence of conduct, abounding charity, and the catholicity of his love of his kind, must inure to his infinite credit. No ruler of a republic ever had so much power; none ever employed it so tenderly, so benevolently, so mercifully. No man ever saved so many human lives by the pulsations of his kindly heart; no power save the Almighty ever used the power of pardon so graciously and benignly; no man ever dried the mourners' tears, assuaged grief of stricken ones, restored the condemned to life and hope, to such an extent, and with such a sympathetic soul as he. His succor was almost Divine in essence, and gracious and gentle as the dews of Heaven in manner.

More than any other man in modern life, he completely fulfilled the requirement, and justified the asseveration, of James, the brother of our LORD, that "pure religion and undefiled before GOD and the FATHER is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Mr. Lincoln was an extremely sad and melancholy man; at times this sadness was laid aside for an hour, and he felt really blithe and jocund; but his feelings gravitated and tended to the sombre, mystical, and melancholy. In the realms of his diseased fancy, the heavens were always hung in funereal black. He was prone to fits of weird abstraction, and enveloped in an atmosphere of morbid reverie; he lived largely in unseen realms, communed often with invisible

spirits, and talked with a personal God. Although in apparent opposition to his tendencies to fatalism, he yet believed in the direct intervention of God in our national affairs, and he frequently used to ask Him in a direct, manly way to grant this boon, avert that disaster, or advise him what to do in a given contingency. "The Mystics," says Murdock, "profess a pure, sublime, and perfect devotion, wholly disinterested, and maintain that in calm and holy contemplation, they have direct intelligence with the Divine Spirit, and acquire a knowledge of Divine things which is unattainable by the reasoning faculty." In religion, Lincoln was in essence a mystic, and all his adoration was in accordance with the tenets of that order.

## CHAPTER XII

### LINCOLN'S MENTAL AND MORAL NATURES

MR. LINCOLN'S intellectual and moral natures were blended and harmonious, nor could any line of cleavage be discerned between them; his moral honesty and intellectual honesty were one and the same; and I defy the ages to discover the ratio in which the moral and intellectual elements commingled in his daring deeds of statesmanship. The greatest trophies were, indeed, moral achievements, but they had an intellectual framework and fibre. But he was not born great; contrariwise, he was defective, inharmonious, and unassimilated; anatomically, he was disproportioned and unsymmetrical; physiologically, he was both organically and pathologically deficient; phrenologically, he was without emphasis in the region consecrated to the logical and reasoning faculties. Only the deep and earnest reflection indicated by his sad eyes is in harmony with his intellectual trophies.

These views are confirmed alike by his youthful tendencies, and by what, for want of a more appropriate name, I may call his literary productions, between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight; for there is no embryonic or assured greatness there apparent. Nor was greatness ever thrust upon him, as is obvious, upon the most superficial view. By sheer force of political en-

terprise and intellectual energy, he conquered an honored place in the political forum, and by the display of wisdom, ethics, and strength, he achieved a venerated name in the gallery of the immortals. Therefore, I think he achieved greatness; but in the mystery of his being can its genesis be portrayed?

His scholastic education, as he distinctly told Swett, was limited to four months' tuition of unlettered masters in log schoolhouses, yet his literary performances have the technique of a rhetorician; and while his modes of expression are original, bizarre, and inverted, they are never extravagant or meretricious, but frequently glisten with the sublime and beautiful, and attain to the heights of the classical.

His coarse texture and homely exterior style and address betray his primitive and wilderness extraction, but the absence of the petty vices and gross habits incident to the frontier gives assurance of psychological refinement; and the wide compass, intense energy, and deep profundity of his mind are attested by the range and diversity of his achievements, of which the wild "Chronicles of Reuben" and the second Inaugural are extremes of the chronological and intellectual span.

This marvellous, if not, indeed, miraculous, progress could not, according to human experience, have been wholly achieved by orderly evolution; it would seem as if he underwent a mental metamorphosis. In the coarse "Chronicles of Reuben," or even the more dignified products of the obscure *nebulae* of his youthful aspirations, one found no promise of the "Cooper Institute" speech or germ of his Inaugurals; but his



speeches and state papers, commencing in 1854, and continuing until the end, each and all attest the master workman, and not the apprentice, in politics and statesmanship. After he was fully invested with the responsibilities of state, charged with the awful burden and heart-rending sorrows of an internecine war, and was encompassed by "the fierce light that beats upon the throne," the contrasts between the apparent man as a man, and the undisguised ruler, were emphasized. So far as *method* was concerned, he exhibited no ostentation; but so far as *principles* and official policy were concerned—the chart, so to speak, by which he sailed—he was as unyielding and implacable as fate, whose agent he was, and none could mistake the fundamental ideas which he enforced.

In these matters he "wore his heart upon his sleeve," and the historian and biographer has no biographical or ethical surprises to record, for certainly nothing in history could be more simple than his ethics and philosophy. "Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature; opposition to it in his love of justice." "Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to its extension, rather than see the Union dissolved." "I would save the Union; I would save in the shortest way under the Constitution; . . . if I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; if I could do it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; if I could free it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that." "The question whether slavery is *wrong* depends upon whether or not the negro is a *man*." "The negress is not my equal in color, and perhaps in other respects, but in the right to eat the bread

which her own hand has earned, she is my equal, and the equal of everybody else." "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." "He who would be no slave, must have no slave." "They who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves." "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital, and deserves the higher consideration." "The soldier risks his life, and frequently yields it up, for his country; to the soldier, therefore, belongs the highest honor," etc.

And because his philosophy and modes of expressing it are so simple and unadorned, superficial minds are apt to consider that his character may be readily analyzed. Such, however, is not the fact. The twenty-six alphabetical letters, the nine numerical digits, and the algebraic and geometrical symbols are, indeed, simple, like Lincoln's apothegms; but from the former are formed theorems and problems in mathematics, philosophy, and metaphysics, which task and confound genius, and from the latter were deduced concrete political principles which millions of men in arms assailed, and other millions with shot, shell, and gleaming steel defended.

In the practical application of principles to actual administration, Lincoln was handicapped by the inharmony and conflict of opposing interests, and, although not impervious to the charge of affirmative dissimulation, he, nevertheless, beneath the mask and disguise of listlessness, humor, simplicity, and guilelessness, concealed the wiles and artifice of *finesse* and sagacity. He observed frankness, candor, and ingenuousness in his dealings with men, and when honor and integrity were involved, conformed rigidly to their monitions, but he was conventionally, prac-

tically, and by stress of circumstances a politician. He believed in drawing *party* lines and in enforcing *party* discipline. When Buchanan was removing Douglas's friends from office, Lincoln told me the former was right in putting in office those who conformed to his views, and that he would have done the same in Buchanan's place.

His awkwardness of manner, heartiness of welcome, promises, and direct statements were genuine; his dissimulation was never express or affirmative, but always negative, implied, and utilitarian. He would listen to matters and not agree with the narrator, but with no symptoms of impatience or displeasure. He would frequently launch out or lapse into inappropriate and fatuous themes in order to evade or neutralize those which were *mal apropos* or mischievous, and so interpose the President's jester as a shield or foil to an inapposite or undesired interview with the responsible President himself. These by-plays of diplomacy served a needed purpose, and met a current emergency, but did not add to the fame or dignity of its possessor. Superficial men who met him on these terms, judged him by the ostensible act, and not by its occult force or ultimate results, and either ascribed to him the tame attributes of the commonplace and prosaic, or disparaged his great qualities and exploitations by ascribing to them no higher qualities than a cheap attribute of vapid and insipid goodness.

A recent astute critic says that "the preëminently striking feature in Lincoln's nature was the extraordinary degree in which he always seemed to be in close and sympathetic touch with the people—that is to say, the people in the mass wherein he was imbedded, the social body amid

which he dwelt, which pressed upon him on all sides, which for him formed the public. First, this group or body was only the population of the frontier settlement; then it widened to include the State of Illinois; then it expanded to include the entire North." This propensity has been noted by many observers, and is thus stated by Bancroft: "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."

In contemplating the methods by which he kept *en rapport* with the people, there are a logic and harmony, a consistency of aim and an adaptation of means to end, that it would be an abuse of common sense to call fortuitous.

The popularity which he had acquired by muscular arts, he retained and extended over a wider and more highly cultivated area by intellectual prowess, and his force of dialectics had sufficient momentum to reach all peoples who prized liberty as a jewel. At a later period, when the fate of democracy depended on his correct and heroic performance of high moral exploitations, he rose to the dignity and demands of the occasion, and, however exalted his mental achievements, they were outclassed by trophies of moral exploitation, albeit there was an intellectual fibre running through the series.

But exterior, logical, and visible agencies defined only the starting-point of his matchless career; the film of sorrow and bereavement which glazed his eyes at the death-bed of Nancy Hanks Lincoln was never effaced, and the mystic cords of memory and sympathy which stretched from

the neglected grave in the unkempt furze and deep, tangled wildwood to the sad heart of the bereaved boy were constant in their tension, impelling him in all efforts that were noble and heroic toward all results that were good and true.

Mr. Lincoln's character might be defined as a combination of many *antitheses*; some obvious, some perplexing, others occult. The extreme simplicity and profound secrecy of his methods of administration, and the daring of his enterprises and magnitude of his achievements, presented the widest contrasts, and provoked illiberal criticism.

It is singular to reflect that the "Conway Cabal" was organized by some of the best men of the nation, to destroy Washington in the heyday of his usefulness, and that the "Wade and Davis" intrigue was inaugurated to relegate the great Emancipator to private life just after he had "proclaimed liberty throughout the land, to all the inhabitants thereof." It is instructive to the historical student to trace the serpentine line which defined the formative public opinion of Mr. Lincoln during his administration; the proslavery coteries would alternate with the radical Abolitionists in praise and censure; while the several personal followings would do the same; and in pursuing a just, constant, and necessary course, he at one era trenched upon, and at another ministered to, the prejudices of all.

Intimately connected with the disparity between methods and results was Mr. Lincoln's profound and impenetrable reticence. With almost prophetic vision, he foresaw crises in our National affairs in advance of the general view,

and bore the woes of the nation vicariously in advance, but shared the burden with none; and of the many sad scenes presented by the unholy rebellion, none was more melancholy than the spectacle of this august victim expiating in silence and without complaint the great National sin, of which he was guiltless.

While a majority of his supporters were quick to discern in Emancipation a righteous act and one essential to the autonomy of the administration, the border States were equally clear that its adoption would be the knell of the cause, and Mr. Lincoln was the first to discern its portentous shadow advancing as an imperious necessity to National salvation. In the solitude of self-introspection he formulated plans of emancipation and wrought out the details, carefully avoiding offence in all places and modes where it might prove fatal to the cause of the Union. His policy about provisioning Sumter was similar; while giving no sign and apparently bestowing none but perfunctory thought upon this momentous matter, he was, in fact, secretly but most anxiously devising proper means to do it at the apposite time. Other instances will readily occur, as the surrender of Slidell and Mason, the reinstatement of McClellan, his veto of the Confiscation Act, refusal to arm negroes, etc. For all these and other matters he gave no premonition or sign of a parturition of mighty events, but proclaimed them in the least startling and most undramatic mode practicable to efficiency.

His modes of thought, speech, and action were *sui generis*. He imitated nobody; his manners were hearty, honest, and sincere, and no one had any distrust of affirmative deceit or latent treach-



ery. In social and personal democracy he was like Jefferson or Jackson, but, unlike those great leaders, he possessed the crowning virtue of magnanimity, and he administered his great trust "with malice toward none, with charity for all."

His companions on the circuit were as prone to be the unconventional and the unpolished as the polite and genteel; to his apprehension, that part of the man composed of wool, fur, leather, and bear's-grease was unnoted, the soul and ethical tendencies alone made the man. He practised himself, and appreciated in others, cordial, homely, and unrestrained manhood, and disdained the vacuity of mock gentility, and the inanity and hypocrisy of vain and empty deportment. Benevolence and conscientiousness, causality, order, and association of ideas abounded in his character; and his concrete ethics, political philosophy, and responsible administration were drawn from these.

Abstractly, he desired to be thoroughly logical and consistent in his honesty; concretely, he was as effectively so as propriety and expediency authorized. He would as lieve break into a man's house and despoil the owner of his goods as to secure the same result through the medium of an unjust lawsuit. To acquire values by malpractice or by unjust and inequitable action in court, by flat perjury or by larceny, were alike in essence to him. The form of the mal-appropriation was of no consequence, nor was he deluded by ornate names or euphemistic titles; dishonesty was dishonesty to him, whether it was concealed in the burglar's kit, the "dicer's oath," or the lawyer's sophisticated speech. But his honesty was more essential and abstruse than this; for it was



equally an attribute of his intellect and conscience; and he was, with equal intensity, materially, morally, and mentally honest. But he was not fanatical, bigoted, or dominated with one idea; he strove for the most wholesome and utilitarian results, even in the observance of honesty. Thus, he believed it was radically dishonest to hold slaves in bondage, but he also knew that our National life was founded and vouchsafed by a contract to hold them thus; and by the latter contract he abided, even to the extent of restoring fugitive slaves, as embracing the higher ethics and utility.

He believed that nature was as logical and harmonious in the moral, as in the material, world, and that the interrelation between cause and effect was as unerring in one case as in the other. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" was, to him, alike a practical truth and a Divine law.

He said to Herndon: "There are no accidents in my philosophy; the past is the cause of the present, and the present is the cause of the future; all these are links in the endless chain, stretching from the finite to the infinite."

Lincoln's logical tendencies were indigenous. He had no tutor; he learned nothing from schools, academies, or professors. His inductive methods came wholly by self-introspection; and like an acorn, which comprises within itself not only the oak in embryo, but also the form of structure and development, his mind comprised within itself not only the potential President and Emancipator, but equally the mechanism and motor of growth and development to that sublime destiny.

According to Lincoln's philosophy, affairs in the moral world should approximate to the certainty of affairs in the material world. If clients had good sense and perfect integrity, and lawyers complete knowledge and sterling honesty, there would be no lawsuits; if people led orderly and well-appointed lives, sorrow would be reduced to the inevitable; if philosophers, statesmen, and rulers were wise and upright, the history of mankind would not be a melancholy retrospect of wars, violence, and passion; and as a political casuist or law advocate, he deemed it to be his duty to bring to his subject the force of demonstration as completely as the environments of moral questions would allow.

Sound principle to him was like a man in perfect health; a proposition in which fallacies were inherent was like a body full of humors, or a man with a broken leg. He introduced no fallacy in his own creations; he suffered none to go without detection in his opponents; he was a practical, and in no sense a speculative, philosopher.

He contemned the historical argument about slavery, either as a word or shield. His abstract argument was like this: "Whether slavery is or is not wrong, depends upon whether the negro is or is not a *man*; to admit that the negro is a *man* is also to concede that *his* slavery is *wrong*." His concrete argument was like this: "While a negress may not be my equal in everything, in the right to eat the bread which her own hands has earned, she is my equal, and the equal of every one else."

A moment's reflection will render conclusive the view that these arguments are based on a

solid foundation, and that the only ways to confound those arguments would be, in the first case, to establish the proposition that the negro is one of the lower animals, as the horse or the hog, and in the second place that the strong has a right to steal from the weak.

Thus it is apparent that the springs of his honesty and integrity of purpose welled up from his intellect, and that his conscience was not a derivation from either the fear of retribution, or from pride of character; but was rather a product of logical perception and the eternal fitness of things. He knew that if he introduced alcohol or tobacco into the fine tissues of his system, evil consequences would ensue; he equally knew that if he harbored a fallacy in his meditations or practices, a disconnected and fallacious conclusion would be inevitable. As early as in 1849, at least, he realized (though he did not act in unison with the belief) that the retributive justice of God awaited this nation for the awful sin of chattel slavery. It is equally certain, and well attested from many statements made in his state papers and elsewhere, that he also recognized a consecutive order and method in the intervention of Deity in the affairs of men, and that it was the duty of the moralist to grope deep and search for the ultimate solution of all moral problems. One of his favorite expressions was:

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we may.

'And this seems to have conveyed to him a deeper meaning than a merely trite proverb. He believed that all human actions were the result of motives, and that the basis of motive was self-

ishness; utility was his crucial test; he had no faith in disinterestedness, not even in his charities.

Lincoln had a remarkable faculty of *abstraction* from the cares and ills of life; oftentimes he had an absent, "far-away" look, the same, I infer, that was attributed to his mother.

When he was running for the Presidency in 1860, I attended the great mass-meeting at Springfield, and going directly to his house, found him in the front yard watching the procession, which was then already passing, shook hands with him, and spoke briefly.

An hour later I returned and introduced a friend. After speaking to the newcomer, he seized me by the hand, and gazing at me peculiarly, said: "Whitney, I've not had hold of your hand before." I corrected him, and he gazed at me with a dazed look, and said hesitatingly: "No! I've not seen you before to-day." His *mind* was absent at our former greeting.

In his social conversation on serious matters, and in his forensic and political speeches, he never made use of anecdotes. Biographers state it otherwise. It results from lack of familiarity with their subject; knowing of his anecdotal propensity in his hours of ease, they erroneously reason that the propensity must be universal in his practices, and that

His mouth he could not ope  
But out there flew a trope;

and so it was in his *pastime*, but not in his *business*. The sober, practical, business Lincoln and the "madcap" wag Lincoln were two totally different and widely contrasted persons. In what

political speech of his, and there are many extant, can a single anecdote be found?

In his business matters he was the incarnation of logic and adaptation; in his life in *déshabille*, he was the incarnation of humor.

He thought as a sage, though he felt as a man.

Although Mr. Lincoln was often frivolous in *expression*, he always was dignified in *character*. And there was this peculiarity about Mr. Lincoln's pleasantry, that it involved no idea of contempt or degradation. A sense of superiority and dignity always attended him; the humorist in his nature was evanescent and temporary; the man of power, dignity, and responsibility was in abeyance for limited occasions. While he excelled all men as a humorist, this preëminence gratified no ambition. That his humor oftentimes was forced and simulated was palpable.

Replying to an impatient exclamation of George Ashmun over one of Lincoln's jokes, the President said: "I know you to be an earnest, true man, but if I could not find a vent for my feelings in this way, I should die."

I have often been asked by scholarly and intellectual men who had never seen Mr. Lincoln, such questions as these: "How did Mr. Lincoln strike you at first view?" or "How did he impress you?" "What was his bearing?" etc., etc. My general reply to all such questions is that he always impressed me as commonplace and informal in all externals, but noble and dignified in all the essentials of conduct and affairs; that nothing in intercourse of any sort with him savored of meanness, insincerity, a craven or timid spirit, irresolution, "backing down," littleness, vulgar-

ity, or any unmanly thing or quality. He never obtruded advice, aid, or sympathy, but was ready with either if requested, to those he approved, but not to such as he did not approve. His sympathy was not exuberant or demonstrative, nor yet active, except when he must act as in the case of signing death warrants. He was not mawkish in his sympathy, but manly and robust; the woman who kneeled to him in the exuberance of gratitude for an official favor, it will be remembered, was savagely rebuked. He was not cynical, sardonic, or sarcastic in company. Although he was frequently annoyed, he did not betray his feelings, nor did any outward manifestation at the time escape him, unless it bore a relation to business or some substantial thing. In such case he could cut the Gordian knot with facility, either by a humorous anecdote, an adroit evasion, or downright denunciation, if needful.

I have known leaders in society, in whose presence one felt always uncomfortable for fear of committing some *faux pas*, but no such restraint need be, or was, in fact, felt when Lincoln was the social censor; for he required a great social license himself, and accorded it as freely to others. Judge Davis may be said to have had a school of manners and deportment on the circuit, but Lincoln was the court jester with the most abundant license. It was difficult to tell by exterior appearances whom Lincoln really liked and whom he did not, except in extreme cases. A leading lawyer of Danville told me that Lincoln thoroughly despised him. And I will venture to say that of the hundred or more lawyers whom Lincoln was thoroughly acquainted with



on our circuit, not ten could have shown a single social letter from him; while the letters to the few whom he did honor by correspondence might be counted by hundreds. Lincoln really had but few close friends, and those few he cherished in his heart of hearts.

Mr. Lincoln's preëminent greatness lay in the combination of the powers of analysis and synthesis. He could discover and unmask a fallacy more completely than any other living man; and he could define a moral, political, or legal issue more perspicaciously than any statesman in American history.

In the debates between Lincoln and Douglas on the issue of the extension of slavery into free territory, the latter made vain attempts to divert or obscure the true issue. Because Mr. Lincoln deprecated the repeal of the time-honored Missouri Compromise, Douglas sophistically assumed that he wanted, and that his policy implied, an abolition of slavery; social and political equality with negroes; and a making of, and enforcing by, law, of a uniformity of pursuits, practices, and social life throughout the Union.

Those who read Mr. Lincoln's speeches will find some of the most brilliant exhibitions of dialectics in political literature in his untangling of the knotted threads of Douglas's fallacious and involved statements, made with a view and animus to embarrass and confuse.

Here is shown one of Lincoln's salient points of intellectual character: his clear and unimpeded view of a controverted subject, and his lucid and terse manner and terms of statement. And this involves as a corollary his genius for unmasking and exposing all fallacious and involved state-



ments, thereby dissevering them from the real issue.

In clearness and felicity of statement, Lincoln was like Webster or Jefferson; in remorseless logic like John C. Calhoun or John Quincy Adams; in fiery and impetuous denunciation like Henry Clay or James G. Blaine. Yet he equalled any in cogency and vigor, and exceeded all in simplicity and terseness.

Nothing within the wide range and compass of his mental view passed unchallenged; to all events, acts, incidents, accidents, phenomena, objects of vision and moral propositions, he made the highwayman's demand, "stand and deliver." Every object presented to his physical or mental vision conveyed to him an object lesson; from everything actual or phantasmagorical he extracted a moral. His apparently indifferent gaze comprehended and included every element of the object in review; he was an eager student, under the mask and disguise of *nonchalance* and dissimulation; moral objects, which were chaotic and heterogeneous to the common view, were homogeneous, orderly, and sequent to him. He had a most comprehensive association of ideas; while excluding all irrelevant subjects from the one under discussion, he included every element that was pertinent, and educed cognate, allied, and related matters that none but he would have discerned. Therefore, he strengthened every subject of consideration by including incidents which none but himself could have thought of, as well as by eviscerating those which, though passing the ordinary view unchallenged, would be halted, arrested, unmasked, and rejected as irrelevant by his critical gaze.

Such was the strength of Mr. Lincoln's perceptive faculties; but he was equally pronounced, as I have foreshadowed, in his reflective ones. Having himself perceived an object clearly in all its parts, he joined these parts together by causation and comparison, with the result that his argument was a composite, logical, and symmetrical whole.

Mr. Lincoln never went to the extreme limits of his mental or fortuitous opportunities; never exhausted his subject; always and in all considerations suggested and pointed to more than he developed, invariably leaving much unsaid. His speeches of 1854 on the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, apparently exhausted the "anti-extension of slavery" argument; but his speeches of 1856 on the same subject presented the same question concretely, according to the demands of current history; and his speeches of 1858 and 1859 demonstrated, by the trend of actual events, the correctness of his prior logical divination. His last studied and elaborate speech, the "Cooper Institute" speech, was his most ornate and most comprehensive historical speech. His first Inaugural was still a new presentation of the subject, affording many texts for illustration and paraphrase.

He did not contest with opponents or principles on or near the borders of debate, took no advantage of technicalities or his adversaries' mistakes or weakness, ascribed no malign moral motives to flagitious political conduct. Considering the individual morality of wicked political offenders to be none of his concern, he impaled such offenders on the spear of political casuistry alone, and with the trenchant blade of debate

clove in twain pernicious political principles, and not their mischievous advocate.

Thus, from an intellectual standpoint, Mr. Lincoln's *forte* was that of a dialectic architect or builder. Unerringly he constructed from loose facts, principles, morals, ethics, and dialectics, a complete concrete theory.

A singular fact connected with Mr. Lincoln is that with no clearly apparent logical reason for it, he should have conceived a passionate fondness for the study of geometry. There was nothing within his ordinary experience to lead or even point to this; he was, it is true, a surveyor, but only in a practical application of right angles, according to the land office system of Mansfield. Evidently his *penchant* for the study of geometry had no correlation with any practical experience or speculative fancy, but was a mere interlude, with no apparent association or inter-relation with his life-drama; yet, singular to say, Bolingbroke says: "Mr. Locke . . . recommends the study of geometry, even to those who have no design of being geometricians, and he gives a reason for it . . . that although such persons may forget every problem that has been proposed, and every solution that they or others have given, but the habit of pursuing long trains of ideas will remain with them, and they will pierce through the mazes of sophism, and discover a latent truth, when persons who have not this habit will never find it." It may also, in this connection, be remarked that Quintilian says: "No man, assuredly, can become a perfect orator without a knowledge of geometry. It is not without reason that the greatest men have bestowed extreme attention on this science." The ultimate

basis of Lincoln's greatness was his marvellous capacity for logical deduction, the exhibition of which was by his effective and fervid oratory. And it would thus appear that he pursued the monitions of both Locke and Quintilian, though, probably, without knowing of either.

To Mr. Gulliver, he said that the term "demonstrate" puzzled him while he was a student, and that he investigated till he ascertained its meaning. Whether he sought to acquire the art of demonstration by the study of Euclid, or pursued that study as an idle fancy or congenial pastime, cannot be known, but it is fair to suppose that in his evolution from a cornfield logician and log-cabin orator to the ratiocination of the joint-debate, his study of the six books of Euclid held place.

His honesty was not of negative ethical obligation merely, as "Thou shall not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness," etc., but was an active vital law of his being, which prompted affirmative performance of duty. He would not misstate or conceal a mental conviction or a conscientious scruple when he believed it was his duty to make disclosures, or even passively acquiesce in error, though policy forbade, any more than he would misstate a fact. To his apprehension, one form of falsehood was as nefarious as the other, and the fact that one form might be kept concealed while the other was disclosed, was not taken into consideration. The *form* of the falsehood made no difference to him, whether it was a literal lie, an evasion or suppression of the truth, or a mental reservation, when he was bound by ideal honor to speak. Thus, in his earlier anti-slavery speeches, he deemed it to be

his duty to avow certain conservative sentiments, as his adhesion to the fugitive-slave law, etc., and he did it with emphasis, although it was grossly against the most relentless prejudices of his disciples and seriously injured his political standing. The incident of the "house-divided-against-itself" speech illustrates this tendency, as well as his moral courage and the good policy of honesty in its ultimate effects. The result was, as was clearly foreshadowed, that the voters in the State who had emigrated from Kentucky and Tennessee, and who would have sustained Lincoln as a Whig, were frightened off, and voted for the "Douglas" candidates, and thus defeated Lincoln for the Senate.

This tendency is exhibited in another manner. On January 14, 1862, Simon Cameron was forced out of the Cabinet by popular odium; and in the succeeding April the House of Representatives by a large majority passed a resolution of censure of some of his official acts. Mr. Lincoln was under no especial obligation to shield Cameron, but he sent a special message to Congress, saying: "I should be wanting in candor and in justice if I should leave the censure . . . to rest . . . upon Mr. Cameron; . . . not only the President but all the other heads of departments . . . were, at least, equally responsible with him." And it took an heroic man to defend anything that Cameron did.

This same trait was exhibited in a minor way in a letter dated July 13, 1863, addressed to General Grant, in which he says: "When you turned northward . . . I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong." To

Sherman, on December 26, 1864, he writes: "The undertaking [Savannah campaign] being a success, the honor is all yours; for I believe none of us went further than to acquiesce."

And this quality is shown in a much more heroic exhibition, by his letter to Joseph Hooker, of January 26, 1863, from which I make these extracts: "I have placed you at the head of the Army . . . but I think that during [your predecessor, General Burnside's] command . . . you have . . . thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the Country . . . I have heard of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a Dictator. . . . What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the Dictatorship. . . . I much fear that the spirit you have aided in infusing into the Army . . . will now turn upon you."

And his contempt for falsehood was as pronounced as his reverence for the truth, as the following extract from the joint debate at Jonesboro' will show. Douglas said at Joliet, speaking of Lincoln, that at Ottawa he "made him tremble in his knees so that he had to be carried from the platform. He laid up seven days," etc. *Lincoln*: ". . . there was not a word of truth in it." *Douglas*: "Didn't they carry you off?" *Lincoln*: "There; that question illustrates the character of this man Douglas exactly. He says, 'Didn't they carry you off?' . . . Yes, they did. But, Judge Douglas, WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL THE TRUTH? . . . And then again: 'He laid up for seven days.' He puts that in print for people of the country to read as a serious document . . . I don't want to call him a LIAR, but . . . I don't



know what else to call him, if I must tell the truth out." (All this was of an episode at Ottawa, where Lincoln's friends were so enthusiastic over his speech that they forcibly shouldered him and carried him off the ground, to Lincoln's great disgust.)

The term "honest," so generally applied to Lincoln, was not technical but comprehensive, including candor, sincerity, single-mindedness, incorruptibility, kindness, morality, and purity, but not mawkish sentimentality nor impracticability. If he was as harmless as a dove, he also was as wise as a serpent, and he employed his wisdom as effectually as any wise and strictly honorable man would; but the only instances that I ever heard raised against him any sort of criticism of personal conduct were in cases where the concrete claims of friendship and humanity were in conflict with abstract duty, for it was a practical belief with him that if he could remove mountains and had not *charity*, he was nothing; and that the greatest of all virtues was charity.

In ordinary life Mr. Lincoln was to the end inartificial, unsophisticated, and unassimilated. No man of his experience ever wore his rusticity in its newest gloss and virgin freshness so persistently. Although his progress in life was not devoid of enterprise, yet he could not personate or imitate any behavior which was strained or artificial. There were candor and honesty even in his manners and habits.

Style and pretensions made no impression on him. To him,

The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that.



He wanted no attendance nor restraint, loved the largest liberty of all kinds, waited on himself, even to the performance of the most petty errands. He never had a clerk, errand-boy, or student, of his own will; he wrote his own law pleadings and made them brief; he never used a printed blank in his life; he respectfully listened to all advice and rarely, if ever, followed it; he kept his own counsels, and asked the fewest favors of all kinds of any man of his station.

Imagine a lawyer and politician of his rank going out on the "commons" every evening, searching for, driving up, and milking his cow, cleaning out his stable, grooming his horse, chopping and carrying in wood for the kitchen. Yet Lincoln did all of these things, not from ostentation or eccentricity, but from motives of the strictest utility, even on the evening of May 18, 1860, when the telegraph from Maine to California, and from Minnesota to Texas, was vocal with his name.

His disinclination to employ a clerk, errand-boy, or servant arose from his self-reliance, secretiveness, and absolute desire to be wholly independent. After he was elected, Mrs. Lincoln procured the services of an excellent colored man, but Lincoln dispensed with his services whenever he could. At one time, Lincoln and I were going on a short railway trip, when the servant tried to carry our hand baggage, but Lincoln could not relish the idea of a servant following him with a slender satchel, so he devised a protest to get rid of him.

The only account books he ever kept were those he found in the law offices of Judge Logan and John T. Stuart; he and Herndon kept none

in their partnership. After coming to Springfield, he never went in debt but twice; once when he bought his residence from Mr. Dresser, he gave his note for the deferred payment with a mortgage on the property as security; again when he started to Washington on February 11, 1861, he borrowed enough to last for necessary expenses of his family, till he could acquire a month's payment for services. His simplicity in financial matters was almost childish. In 1856, when he was a "Frémont" elector-at-large, knowing that he paid his own bills on the canvass, I raised the sum of \$35 in our county when he attended our mass-meeting, and waited on him at the hotel, where I gave it to him. I recollect his embarrassment; he looked at the money and then at the Committee sheepishly. "What will I do with it?" said he. "Put it in your pocket and keep it there," was the reply. He did so, but deemed it necessary to make a protest. "Don't you fellows do that again," said he humorously.

On a similar subject, my old and valued friend, William D. Somers, Esq., for many years the leading lawyer of Champaign County, has sent me this anecdote, which illustrates the same trait, and which I reproduce in his own words:

In 1855, George High was confined in the Urbana jail under two indictments for horse-stealing. He sent for me to call and see him with reference to assisting in his defence, some time before the sitting of the Court, and intimated his desire that I should associate Lincoln with me in his behalf.

When Lincoln came, as was his custom, to attend Court, I went with him to consult our client. We found his wife with him in the jail. After consulting about the matter of the defence, the subject of our

fee came up, when High said he had but \$10, which he handed to Lincoln. Lincoln, seeing from the condition of the wife that she would soon need pecuniary assistance, asked High: "How about your wife, will she not need this?" He was answered that she would get along somehow. Lincoln then gave her \$5 of the money, and divided the balance between himself and me, \$2.50 to each.

That, probably, was all he received for defending the most noted horse-thief in Illinois.

Lincoln was unexceptionable in his personal habits, but careless of his outer dress as to style, being sedulous merely to make it go as far as it would. His appearance on the circuit was that of an Illinois farmer visiting town, adorned with his second-best clothes. He wore the same suit till it was threadbare, and the same hat till its nap existed no longer, save as a reminiscence. A short blue cloak, quite the style during the Mexican War (he had acquired it while in Congress), and extremely unbecoming to one of his length of legs, he wore as long as in 1856. An umbrella, originally olive green, but faded to a dingy brown, he carried around the circuit for ten years; he had the letters comprising his name cut out of domestic and sewed on the inside; the knob was gone when I first knew him. His night-dress was a coarse, home-made, yellow woollen-flannel gown. His attire cost less than that of any man in the State associated with others. He had not only no talent to dress well, but equally no physique to display dress. He put on no style anywhere; he did not defy or contemn fashion or custom, but was oblivious of it. He could not have been

A glass of fashion and a mould of form

had he tried; tailors could do little for him. In all things he was unique, and not susceptible to conventionality or to polish.

The antithetical character of Mr. Lincoln is again illustrated by the wide contrast between his exterior and formal guilelessness and simplicity of nature, and the depth of *finesse*, sagacity, and diplomacy which that exterior simplicity masked and concealed. He was instinctively a politician as well as a statesman; these several rôles are not diverse, but the latter is an amplification of the former. A politician is a statesman in embryo, and a statesman is an enlarged politician. The campaign of 1858 illustrates this subject. While ostensibly it was a contest for a Senatorship, in reality it was the vestibule to the White House. That this was so, as far as Douglas was concerned, was not disguised, but Lincoln's equal design was masked by speech, which, like that of Talleyrand, was employed to conceal his thoughts.

That Lincoln understood the occult trend of this discussion is clear by many tests. Douglas was so incautious as to interrogate Lincoln publicly. Lincoln seized the golden opportunity thus presented to impale his antagonist on one horn or the other of a political dilemma, by which he must lose either the Senatorship or the Presidency, and Douglas, in saving his standing at home, lost that which he had acquired in the entire nation. Contrariwise, Lincoln not only preserved his local reputation, but gained a national one. He also not only held his party allegiance to the Whigs, but gained the allegiance of the Abolitionists. He played a consummate political game, and played it like a master of the art. He

consciously and designedly baited his political hook with the Senatorship for the Presidency, losing the sprat to catch the herring.

Mr. Lincoln was peculiar in his social attachments, nor were they controlled at all by geodetic propinquity. His adhesion to men was the result of congenial qualities, regardless of mathematical or external considerations of any sort, his geographical neighbors could not define what he was, except outwardly, simply because he did not disclose himself to them. His most cherished friends did not live in Springfield at all, and with the exceptions of Herndon, Logan, Stuart, Dubois, and Matheny, the Springfield people knew nothing of him especially, beyond what they gleaned by seeing him pass through their streets, and hearing him, sometimes in a cheery, and sometimes in an absent-minded, way, say, "*How-dye! Howdye!*" as a passing salute. Jesse K. Dubois served with Lincoln in the early legislatures, and became very intimate then, which intimacy was increased when Dubois was elected State Auditor in 1856, and lived thence till 1861 within sight of Lincoln's house. Five days before the assassination, Dubois wrote me: "I have been intimately associated with Lincoln for twenty-five years, but I now find out that I never knew him."

At Washington, Lincoln was brought in close relations with many men of illustrious talents, but how few had any mental insight into the man? Yet he was not a Machiavelli or a Talleyrand; he had no duplicity, deceit, or affirmative dissimulation; but he had a peculiar ability to mind his own business and keep his own counsels without being offensive, which amounted to

genius. To the limited few who possessed his confidence, he was as unreserved in most particulars as men in ordinary, but to what I may term the exterior world—that portion outside his confidence—he was impenetrable. While to outward appearance he was brought face to face, and was *en rapport* with the whole nation for four years, he occupied, in fact, the chair of state, “a sceptred hermit, wrapped in the solitude of his own originality.”

For some men, Lincoln had special uses, and the social ligature was limited to that narrow utility; for others the affinity was catholic. To an intimate who had mistakenly supposed that he placed much reliance on the counsels of David Davis, judge of our circuit, he explained away the error by this illustration: “They had side judges down in New Hampshire, and to show the folly of the system, one who had been a side judge for twenty years said the only time the chief judge ever consulted him was at the close of a long day’s session, when he turned to the side judge and whispered: ‘Don’t your back ache?’” And Davis himself narrates that Lincoln never consulted him but once or twice.

On the other hand, he had some general and genuine friendships, which ranged throughout the entire gamut of correlative social amenities, and to such friendships, his loyalty and constancy were inflexible. He never sacrificed a friend at the behest of personal policy or menace, but over and over again he sacrificed policy and safety by reason of his loyalty and devotion to friendship. This trait I know in circumstance and detail, and I therefore affirm that Mr. Lincoln was the most firm, sincere, and unyielding devotee to



the sacred cause of friendship that I ever saw, and whenever his sense of obligation to duty prevented his allowance of the claims of friendship, it gave him more pain than it did the disappointed one.

An excellent test of Mr. Lincoln's high nobility of character and nature was his kindness and mercy. I never knew a brave and courageous man to be so abnormally sensitive about his own acts; he touched the world with bare nerves, and suffered in secret more than was ever known or ever will be revealed about matters which, within the orbit of his great responsibilities, should be deemed to be extremely trivial. Once, on the steps of the War Department, he confided one of his minor sorrows to me, to secure my sympathy, apparently. I tried to make him relinquish it. He listened assentingly to my casuistry, but dismissed the subject with the conclusion: "I know all that as well as you do, but I can't get over it," and he turned sadly away.

Confidence was not only a very slow growth with Mr. Lincoln, but was an extremely rare growth as well, nor was it withdrawn for any but extreme reasons; and when Lincoln's confidence was betrayed or forfeited for social misdemeanors, he took it to heart and brooded over it in genuine agony of mind. I recollect finding him on the train at midnight at Champaign, *en route* to Chicago, and I accompanied him; and T. Lyle Dickey having just before announced to me his political recusancy, I told the news to Lincoln. The latter had not expected it, and I shall never forget the tremulous tones in which he lamented the loss of this, one of his thitherto most cherished friends. It touched his innermost



soul, and he almost groaned in spirit at the reflection.

By reference to the literature to be found in Mr. Lincoln's letters, messages, and speeches, it will appear that he had an exquisite taste for the ideal, and a wealth of imagery and metaphor almost miraculous for an uneducated man. His poetical taste attested alike his refinement of mind and mental gravitation toward the weird, sombre, and mystical. In his normal and tranquil state of mind, "The Last Leaf," by Oliver Wendell Holmes, was his favorite in the whole wide expanse of reflective literature. Over and over again I have heard him repeat:

The mossy marbles rest  
On the lips that he has prest  
In their bloom:  
And the names he loved to hear  
Have been carved for many a year  
On the tomb!

and tears would come unbidden to his eyes, probably at thought of the grave at Gentryville, or that in the bend of the Sangamo.

Herndon wrote to me of this poem: "I have heard Lincoln recite it, praise it, laud it, and swear by it; it took him in all moods and fastened itself on him as never poem on man. This I know."

The other favorite poetry of Lincoln was for particular moods. "The Inquiry," by Charles Mackay; "Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal be Proud?" by William Knox; and a passage from "Childe Harold," were attuned to single phases of his existence. His feelings tended to the mystical, the weird, and the melancholy, and

when his sympathies were steeped in the bitter waters of Marah, he would break out in the dirge-like lamentation, "Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal be Proud?"

In no mode were his sagacity and diplomacy employed to better advantage than in his urbanity and his close affiliation with the people. By a figure of thought, as it were, the ruler of any nation in arms stands as the exponent of the stake contested for. The patriotism of the nation rallied to the slogan of

We are coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 strong,

and the beneficence and mercy of the President, though it weakened the army discipline directly, yet it strengthened it in its ultimate sources of support, by identifying the wishes, welfare, and earnest desires of the loved and revered President with the vigorous prosecution of the war. If Mr. Lincoln had been animated with the unbending and imperious spirit of discipline of Jefferson Davis, no spirit of enthusiasm would have animated the "three hundred thousand," if, indeed, they had come at all at his call. That philanthropy and mercy were the dominant motives of his frequent exercise of mercy and of his many acts of beneficence, is undoubted, but his administration is replete with instances of his courting, cultivating, cajoling, and soliciting the favor of the people, of his identifying himself with them, of his making the people and himself homogeneous.

Volumes are expressed in one sentence of Fred Douglass, "He is the only man I ever talked to for ten minutes, who didn't, in some way, give

me to understand that I was a *nigger*," and yet he told the deputation of colored men who came to consult him about the future of their race, and without offence, that their race was different from his, and could not exist in the same nation together in harmony.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FREE-SOIL ADVOCATE

It so happened in the year 1853 that Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, and William A. Richardson, also of Illinois, were chairmen, respectively, of the "Committees on Territories" in their respective houses, one of the Senate and the other of the Lower House, and to those committees would belong the duty of reporting, or considering, any measure for the legal organization of the Territory of Kansas, or of Nebraska, as it was then called.

Judge Douglas was an aggressive and progressive statesman, and, as quickly as any one, saw the growing necessity of the case, to meet which, during the short session of 1852-3, he drew up, and reported from his committee, a bill to organize the Territory of Nebraska, embracing the region which is now the States of Nebraska, Kansas, and part of Colorado, but it failed to become a law, simply for want of necessary time.

This bill merely embodied the technical and ordinary features of a territorial bill, and contained no elements of disputation. There was apparently no opportunity for objection or criticism; the necessity for organization was apparent in this, that emigrants were already occupying the country, and the land should be surveyed, so as to assure titles to them, and courts and legis-

lature and an executive should be established, in order to guarantee to the settlers "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

A political bargain had been entered into thirty-two years before, between the slave power and the exponents of freedom, by the terms and observances of which slavery had gained a large State north of the true dividing line between freedom and slavery, and the advocates of freedom had simply the unfulfilled assurance that the advocates of slavery would make no further attempts to introduce it north of that line.

Judge Douglas had publicly avowed that this bargain was sacred—"was canonized in the hearts of the people"—and that no "ruthless hand" would disturb it. David R. Atchison, then a United States Senator living on the border line of Missouri, and at that time President of the Senate, had publicly announced that this compromise was a finality, and no thought existed in any responsible mind that this compromise could be abrogated. Still there was even then a little ground for misgiving; irresponsible newspapers in the South began to carp at the Compromise; fault was found that the Illinois farmer could go to Nebraska with all of his property, while the Missouri planter must either keep out or leave his most valuable property, viz., his negroes, behind. The Southerners generally, in speaking of the Compromise, berated it, and avowed that it was wrung from their necessities; the Southern statesmen who had enacted it pretty well satisfied their constituents at the time, but they had generally passed away, and the then existing delegations must meet the exigencies, necessities, and prejudices of that time.

Some outside discussion had taken place at the time when, in 1853, the bill had been first offered, which disclosed a possibility that at least the displeasure of the Southerners would be expressed at their exclusion from this Territory with their slaves.

This prejudice was not appeased, nor these oburgations stilled, by efflux of time; and seeming to fear that some effort would be made expressly to take some note of the Compromise, and thus produce friction, Senator Douglas, on January 4, 1854, proposed an entirely new bill, similar to the preceding one, but accompanied the same by a special report, in which he expressly recommended that the Missouri Compromise be neither affirmed nor repealed—the idea being, probably, that the Supreme Court, then having a *pro-slavery* cast, might be invoked to pass on its constitutionality. Mutterings were heard on the Southern side of the chamber, as of parties who deemed themselves unfairly treated, but being without redress; but no well-defined fears of any sort were anticipated. On the 16th of January, however, Senator Dixon, of Kentucky, his prejudice in favor of the institution of slavery and against the Missouri Compromise being more intense than any other, arose in his place and gave notice that in due and proper time he would offer an amendment to the territorial bill, repealing the Missouri Compromise in express terms. On the succeeding day, Senator Sumner gave notice that he would propose an amendment expressly recognizing the vital force and authority of the Compromise. Thus the gage of battle was thrown down by the South and taken up promptly by the North. There could be no

middle ground; that the South would stand united to repeal the Missouri Compromise was apparent and probable; that that powerful political faction would disinherit any Northern ally who should desert them in this crisis was equally sure, and that the free States would constitute a clear-cut and relentless opposition was quite as well foreseen.

Douglas had been the favorite candidate of the young and progressive Democracy for the Presidency as early as 1851, immediately after the settlement of the slavery question then, and had not his friends treated the veteran statesmen of the party, Cass, Dickinson, Marcy, Toucy, and that class, with superciliousness and disdain, he would have been nominated and elected in 1852. He had not, however, seriously damaged his political standing at this time, but it was clear that the time was now come when he could no longer hope to serve two masters; he must either pander to the views of the South, or he must abandon the political heresies urged by that intemperate section. This necessity was immediately pressed home upon him by David R. Atchison, who informed him, that, unless he was prepared to incorporate into the committee bill a clause expressly repealing the Missouri Compromise, the party expected him to resign his place as chairman of the Committee on Territories, in which event he, Atchison, was to resign the Presidency of the Senate, and take Douglas' place. Let it be recollected that at this time there was but one political party of any vitality in the field; at the prior Presidential election Pierce had carried every State but four. Clay and Webster, the great leaders of the Whig party,



had died in that same year; Seward had hardly attained a national leadership, and the strong men of the Whig party, Clayton, Badger, Benjamin, Toombs, Stephens, Bell, and Jones were Southerners, and on the test question of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise would doubtless affiliate with the Southern Democrats. The Abolitionists had no healthy political organization, and, to a politician's eye, the alternative appeared to be offered to Douglas either to quit politics or consent to the repeal of the time-honored Compromise.

Douglas could not deliberate long, the implacable Dixon being ready and anxious to take the "laboring oar," and even if he should fail, Atchison and others being quite as eager. So Douglas, thus, at the point of divergence, took the wide gate and broad road which led to political damnation. That he knew the measure he was about to espouse was morally and politically wrong can scarcely admit of doubt; he had denounced in advance any possible violation of this compromise; he had introduced two different bills without proposing its repeal; he had vainly remonstrated with Dixon on that subject. Still, waiving the moral question, it would appear, that in the stress of circumstances in which Douglas was placed, his decision was the expedient one; he was, on the whole, the most conspicuous leader of the only political party in the nation, of any courage. With his aid, the measure would certainly pass, and he would as certainly attain the Presidency in 1856, after which the deluge might come. He took no account of the reserved force of the people. In addition, even if things should go awry, he had five years

yet in the Senate, upon which he must render an account of his stewardship, and as he had succeeded, only two years before, in placating the people's wrath for his vote on the Compromise measures, he deemed it reasonably clear that he could do so again, if needs were, in 1858. Upon a balancing of chances, he decided to commit the bark which carried him and his fortunes to the political tide which flowed toward the Gulf of Mexico, and having decided to enter into a quarrel with fate, he resolved to bear it so that fate should beware of him for the future.

Having thus decided, he visited Senator Dixon (who was temporarily ill) at his lodgings and invited him to take a ride, during which he solicited the honor and danger of being the champion of the repeal of the Compromise—a distinction which was generously accorded. So on January 23 he reported a substitute for his original bill, making two Territories instead of one, and he incorporated a clause repealing the Missouri Compromise, on the alleged ground that it had been "superseded by" the compromise measures of 1850,—as flimsy and fallacious a pretext as could be conceived of. When this substitute was presented, there was great excitement all over the nation. Had the substitution of a king for our Constitutional executive been suggested, the alarm could scarcely have been greater, for the public mind recalled the relentless advance of slavery toward imperial power, and saw in this movement a longer stride toward national slavery than had ever before been dared.

The bill came up for consideration on the next day, but was, by common consent, made a special order for the 30th instant, and immediately an

address was drafted by Senator Chase and issued to the people of the North, showing the flagitious character of the measure and urging that the political power of the people be exerted in opposition. It received the signatures of Senators Chase, Hall, and Sumner, and Representatives Gerrit, Smith, Benjamin F. Wade, Alexander R. Dewitt, and Joshua R. Giddings. The country responded to the excitement in Congress, and no political event, neither the deadlock between Jefferson and Burr, nor the War of 1812, nor Jackson's onslaught on the National Bank, so profoundly stirred the feelings of the people.

Debate on the bill commenced by an exhaustive speech from Senator Douglas in its support, and was participated in by the leading debaters in the Senate on the Democratic side, and by Messrs. Seward, Hall, Sumner, Chase, Bell, and Houston, in opposition. The last session at which its consideration was had extended till daylight on March 3, when the bill passed the Senate by a majority of twenty-three.

Four days later the bill reached the Lower House, and was referred to the Committee on Territories, whose chairman was Richardson, of Illinois, the same whom Lincoln had aided in the Legislature to elect State's Attorney over Browning. Meanwhile, the power of the people was beginning to be felt in Congress, which rendered the ultimate decision somewhat doubtful, and the active opponents of the measure determined to make as gallant a stand in opposition as they could. Accordingly, on March 21 they moved to refer the bill to Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, which,

if accomplished and maintained, would probably dispose of the measure for that session; and it was so accomplished by a vote of 110 to 96. However, on the 8th of May, a resolution was adopted by a bare majority, to take up the bill, which was done and the bill discussed for two days, after which Richardson moved the previous question, or gave notice of his immediate design to do so, and thus force a vote without further parley. The Democrats felt assured of a sufficient majority to carry it through, it having been made an administration measure at the White House, as it also was a party measure at the Capitol, besides having the support of the pro-slavery Whigs. On the 11th the previous question was attempted, and filibustering, as it was called, was resorted to, and prolonged all through that day, the succeeding night, and the whole of the next day till midnight, when the legislative iconoclasts, fagged out with bad whiskey, yelling, shaking of fists, and discomfiture, raised the siege, and went home, cursing their unlucky stars.

But the stake was too great to be yielded up, and in a couple of days Richardson moved, and after a severe struggle carried through, a motion to take a vote after a discussion of four days. Discussion was then had, and while there was a majority in favor of the bill, under proper and authorized practice as then allowed by the rules of the house, the minority could have long retarded and probably ultimately defeated the bill.

One hundred and nineteen was the number requisite to constitute a quorum of the Committee of the Whole. Unless there was a quorum, nothing could be done except to rise and report

*no quorum*. The anti-bill men refused to vote on the measure to rise and report the bill for passage, in consequence of which but one hundred and three members voted. Under fair ruling, as the practice then was, no progress could be made, but Edson B. Olds, of Ohio, the chairman of the committee, falsely declared the vote carried, and leaving the chair, made his false report, that the committee had recommended that the measure do pass. The friends and opponents of the measure then commenced the "life-and-death" struggle; the party lash was applied without stint to the Northern Democrats, who were inclined to be recalcitrant, and the Southern Whigs, of whom Alexander H. Stephens was the most conspicuous, were bound to vote according to the apparent interests of their section; and so, on May 22, 1854, this, the most important bill ever before Congress, was passed by a vote of 113 to 100, and the pro-slavery advocates of both political parties supposed that they had now entrenched slavery behind adamantine bulwarks.

The last act in this national drama bore date May 20, 1854, when the President approved the bill and impressed upon it the *imprimatur* and sanction of law.

Senator Dixon, of Kentucky, who was the pioneer in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, served in the Senate only two and one-third years to fill out the uncompleted term of Henry Clay, who had always enjoyed the credit of being the father of that Compromise. He relates when Douglas came to him and solicited the privilege of bringing in a substitute for his previous bill and in that substitute including a repeal of the Compromise, Douglas then prophesied that

he would be reviled, mobbed, burned in effigy, etc., at his own home, but that he was prepared to accept all such ungracious consequences, etc.

The sequence justified his predictions. Douglas's home really was at Washington—but he hailed from Chicago, and when casually there stopped at the Tremont House, like any other transient; and having none but political business in Illinois, it being to secure the re-election of his colleague, General Shields, who had voted to repeal the Compromise, he deferred his visit to Illinois till fall, and accordingly, in September, he put in an appearance at Chicago, only to find Judd, Wentworth, Peck, all the newspapers, and the entire responsible public sentiment arrayed in deadly and implacable hostility against him. To attempt to stem such a current was a defiance of Fate itself; but Douglas was one of the most audacious of men, and he announced himself for a speech, and made an attempt to gain a hearing, but he was hooted down. However, on a second trial, he was listened to disdainfully but created no converts, and did not aid his cause. The State Fair was to sit in October, and in view of the excited condition of politics, and of the fact that the fair was to be held at the capital, there was a tremendous outpouring of public men congregated there; in point of fact, Douglas, Shields, and the members of Congress who had voted for the repeal of the Compromise had used their efforts to secure as large an attendance of their supporters as they could, while the opponents of the repeal had been, with less desperation, perhaps, also active in gathering at the scene of action. The political situation was peculiar; there was no national election on hand,



and no general ticket to be elected, except for State Treasurer and Superintendent of Public Instruction, and yet no election ever had taken place in Illinois before which aroused such intense interest and created such widespread excitement, for a Legislature was to be chosen to select a successor to Shields, and Congressmen to replace those who had voted for and against the Nebraska Bill, and thus to sit in judgment upon the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Shields was, of necessity, a candidate, but there was no organized move to designate an opposition candidate, since one of the Congressmen who had opposed the measure might have been selected, but none was. So when Douglas announced his purpose to speak on October 3 in the Hall of the House of Representatives at the Capitol, it was simply to render an account of his stewardship in form, but in substance to advocate the re-election of Shields and such members of the Lower House as had aided his political tergiversation. There was no formal or stated reason why Lincoln should reply, except from a general recognition of his superior ability to do so; no one else was mentioned in that connection, everybody seemed instinctively to indicate Lincoln as the champion, although he was a private citizen merely, with no political strand to bind him to the debate.

Lincoln was not even present at the commencement of Douglas's speech, but came in during its delivery. At its conclusion, an announcement was made that Lincoln would reply to it on the succeeding day. Accordingly, on the next day, he spoke for three hours, and made one of the greatest efforts of his life. It was a



terrible philippic against the Nebraska Bill; Douglas himself declared that he had heard nothing like it in the Senate. Lincoln had not only thoroughly prepared himself on all matters of fact and of record, but his feelings were thoroughly aroused. He was not only indignant, but alarmed; he then believed that it was indispensable that the Missouri Compromise should be restored. In the repeal of the Missouri Compromise he fancied that the moral sluiceway had been opened which would flood the entire Union with slavery; and that unless the dam was restored by the might of public opinion, a radical change would be wrought in the genius of our institutions. Freedom would be dethroned, and slavery made lawful alike in Massachusetts and South Carolina, Illinois and Texas, New York and Kentucky.

In that fall, Lincoln made a speech in reply to Douglas at Peoria on October 16, and another, independently of Douglas, at Urbana on October 24, the former being of the same tenor and import, substantially, as the Springfield speech, while the Urbana speech, having no political critics present, was more unguarded and less diplomatic. Lincoln then took a rest in a political sense (having been defeated for the Senate in January, 1855) till 1856, when he attended the Bloomington Convention as a delegate, said Convention having been called to represent all who opposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

His views on the subject of slavery as the question was then presented for practical consideration were fully expressed in a letter to his friend Joshua F. Speed, in the succeeding August, from which we extract as follows: "You

know I dislike slavery, and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it. . . . I do oppose the extension of slavery because my judgment and feelings so prompt me. . . . If Kansas fairly votes herself a slave State, she must be admitted, or the Union must be dissolved. But how if she votes herself a slave State unfairly; must she still be admitted, or the Union dissolved? *That will be the phase of the question when it first becomes a practical one.*"

In 1856 he was placed at the head of the electoral ticket, and canvassed the State, his general arguments being in antagonism to allowing slavery to be established in territory which had theretofore been consecrated to freedom, but with no practical specific method of preventing it.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ATTAINMENT OF THE PRESIDENCY

THE choosing from forty to sixty millions of people, embracing hundreds of men of known and recognized ability and fitness for the place, one of their number to be the conventional head of the Army and Navy and Civil and Executive departments of government, as well as the social head of the nation, is controlled by destiny. The will of the individual alone is powerless to bring him to the exalted station.

However, a statesman, sufficiently astute, may place himself in the road of destiny. Had Mr. Lincoln not entered the political arena in 1854, or at some later period, he would have been unknown even to destiny; that goddess does not make a President out of a simple country lawyer or a local politician. The candidate for this high office must align himself with the national spirit and movement of the time. Even Zachary Taylor won some comparatively petty victories at Palo Alto and Buena Vista. Had political merit and logical deduction decided the question in 1860, Seward would have been President in 1861; indeed, guided by that list, there were several who would have been preferred to Lincoln, for, tested by business methods, he certainly should not, and would not, have been chosen. And even after he was chosen, the heart

of the loyal American people sank in dismay, as his rapid and vacuous speeches *en route* to the inauguration, revealed an apparent feebleness incompatible with the giant task that was then on his hands.

I doubt if any man on earth thought seriously of Lincoln as a possible President on the morning of May 29, 1856. The only position he had held, which is deemed a stepping-stone to that unique place, was that of Congressman for one term, and in that place he achieved no eminence, but the reverse—indeed, it would seem as if his official life in Washington was a series of blunders. His method of attempting to oppose the Mexican War, and of trying to exorcise slavery from the District of Columbia, was peculiarly *mal-apropos*.

Since then he had done no substantial thing in the way of politics, except to make three speeches in 1854 against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and in favor of its restoration.\*

\* My attention has been drawn to a statement by the usually accurate D. W. Bartlett to the effect, that the nomination for Governor was offered Mr. Lincoln by the Anti-Nebraska party in 1854, but he told his friends, "No; I am not the man. Bissell will make a better Governor than I, and you can elect him on account of his Democratic antecedents"; and the writer adds: "So, giving to Bissell the flag it was universally desired that he, Lincoln, should bear," etc.

This is erroneous throughout. No candidate for Governor was elected or spoken of in 1854, and Lincoln was not mentioned in any responsible way, if, indeed, in any way whatever, for the candidacy in 1856. In fact, no one but Bissell was mentioned, with any emphasis. It was well understood that the candidate must be of Democratic extraction, and Bissell was nominated by acclamation as soon as the temporary organization was effected. I notice another error where

Such was his political standing on the morning of May 29, 1856, as he and I ate our breakfast together at the residence of Judge Davis in Bloomington, but before night he had been mentioned by a sage observer and responsible friend as a possible candidate for President, and the statement had been repeated to him by me; and was the germ which first was sown in his mind of hope for, and possibility of, attaining that proud position.

The genesis of the Republican party in Illinois, as also the genesis of Mr. Lincoln's advancement to the supreme headship of the nation, was as follows: Paul Selby, editor of the *Morgan Journal*, proposed a convention of Free State editors on February 22, 1856, at Decatur, and the convention met in the parlors of the old Cas- sel House, there being about one dozen editors present. Mr. Lincoln was also in Decatur, and in consultation with the members of the convention. Resolutions were adopted in opposition to the extension of slavery, in favor of the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, and the restoration to Kansas and Nebraska of the legal guaranties against slavery of which they were deprived. The convention also appointed a State Central Committee as follows: S. M. Church, W. B. Ogden, G. D. A. Parks, L. J. Pickett, E. A. Dudley, William H. Herndon, R. J. Oglesby, Joseph Gillespie, Gustavus Koerner, and Ira O. Wilkinson; and they recommended the holding of

it should not be: viz., in Nicolay and Hay's "Lincoln." The distinguished authors name Judge Davis and Senator Trumbull as in attendance at the convention. Neither was. Senator Trumbull was in his seat in the Senate, and Judge Davis was holding court at Danville.

a State convention at Bloomington on May 29, succeeding, and requested the committee to make suitable arrangements. This was done, Koerner, Ogden, and Oglesby not acting with other members of the committee. And this Bloomington Convention was of great practical and historical importance as laying the foundations of the Republican party, and as being the distinct starting-point of Abraham Lincoln's race for the Presidency.

To this convention Lincoln had been made one of the delegates by Herndon, his partner, in his absence, and he attended. Many great politicians were there; among whom I may mention Palmer (now United States Senator), Judd, Cook, Peck, Browning, Washburne, Farnsworth, Wentworth, Hatch, Dubois, Lovejoy, Herndon, Williams, Dickey, and Swett.

By virtue of his political standing alone, Lincoln would not have figured as a leader, either of the convention, or of the political movement then inaugurated. He had belonged to the minority party, and had always bestridden the losing horse, in political contests, except that he had been once elected to Congress, and even then his record was so unpopular that a Democrat was elected as his successor, although the district was a Whig one, as a rule. There were delegates in this convention who had achieved successful political careers, as Wentworth and Washburne, who had had several terms in Congress, Washburne being a Representative at the time, Judd, who had represented Cook County in the State Senate for sixteen years, and many others who controlled the local politics of their immediate localities, but by virtue of his recognized superior

*ability* Lincoln was accorded the post of honor in that convention.

Among human achievements which serve as pivots upon which great events turn, none is more potent than an utterance, a speech, or a letter.

In 1844, Henry Clay wrote a letter on the subject of the annexation of Texas which cost him his election; the Mexican War would not have occurred had he been elected, and the whole policy of government would have been different—California, with its rich possibilities, would have remained a Mexican province. James G. Blaine wrote some letters to one Mulligan, of Boston; their promulgation cost him the nomination for President in 1876 and cost him his election in 1884. He also was tempted while in Congress to make a satirical speech directed against Roscoe Conkling; had that speech remained unspoken he would have been President.

What shrewd political philosophy there was in Martin Van Buren's remark that he "would rather walk twenty miles to see a man than to write him a letter." So, too, with single speeches. Garfield's classic speech, in which he nominated John Sherman for the Presidency in 1880, caused himself to be selected as the candidate.

At the Bloomington Convention I have referred to, Mr. Lincoln made the principal speech; and it was the *chef d'œuvre* of the convention. That was the initial point of Lincoln's candidacy for the Presidency. It segregated him from the political map, and placed him on the pinnacle of Illinois politics.

In my "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln" I have given an elaborate account of Lincoln's relation



to this convention, and which I may here supplement by a few notes. One conspicuous matter is this, that while Lincoln did not, as a rule, betray enthusiasm under any stress of circumstances, he was in a state of enthusiasm and suppressed excitement throughout this convention; yet he kept his mental balance, and was not swerved a hair's-breadth from perfect equipoise in speech or action. We were at Judge Davis's house, a half-mile from the focus of political action, and thus out of the whirl of excitement. Archibald Williams and Judge Dickey were our companions, the former sleeping with Lincoln; and both were extremely conservative, and had great influence over Lincoln.

The public mind everywhere was in a feverish and excited condition, and this unwholesome condition was emphasized in the minds of the people's representatives assembled at this convention. Lawrence, Kan., had just been attacked, and the "Free State" Hotel and two printing offices destroyed. Governor Robinson of Kansas had been arrested without legal warrant in Missouri, his house sacked and fired, and himself chained out on the prairie, in default of a jail; Mrs. Robinson, and James S. Emery, a leading Free State man, were at the Bloomington Convention. Governor Reeder, who had just escaped from Kansas in disguise, was also there; and all three, necessarily and by design, aroused and excited the delegates. Charles Sumner had been beaten by "Bully" Brooks in the United States Senate, just one week previously, and was reported to be dying; and word had just come that Senator Trumbull had offered a resolution in the Senate, having for its aim the preven-

tion of Civil War and the restoration of peace in Kansas, which had been received with derision by Douglas and those of his political complexion. Lovejoy and the Abolitionists were urging extreme measures in resolutions which the Kansas colony fomented, and the street talk was all in the direction of radicalism. While O. H. Browning was making an excellent speech in the Convention, the crowd kept interrupting by calling for Lovejoy, and the former was obliged to yield the floor; the general sentiment was radical.

In the seclusion and privacy of our temporary home, Lincoln, Williams, and Dickey discussed the situation earnestly, all uniting in favor of conservative counsels, and they did more than all others combined in shaping the moderate and conservative course which was finally adopted by the convention. The general sentiment, undoubtedly, was in favor of most radical expressions; but, owing mainly to Lincoln's and Williams's monitions, a conservative course was adopted; and the following resolutions, among others, were adopted, chiefly upon Lincoln's suggestion:

*Resolved*, That we hold, in accordance with the opinions and practices of all the great statesmen of all parties for the first sixty years of the administration of the government, that, under the Constitution, Congress possesses full power to prohibit slavery in the territories; and that, while we will maintain all constitutional rights of the South, we also hold that justice, humanity, the principles of freedom as expressed in our Declaration of Independence and our National Constitution, and the purity and perpetuity of our government require that that power should be exerted to prevent the extension of slavery into territory heretofore free.

Lincoln put the situation to Judd and Peck in this way: "Your party is so mad at Douglas for

wrecking his party that it will gulp down anything; but our party [Whig] is fresh from Kentucky and must not be forced to radical measures; the Abolitionists will go with us anyway, and your wing of the Democratic party the same, but the Whigs hold the balance of power and will be hard to manage, anyway. Why," said he, "I had a hard time to hold Dubois when he found Lovejoy and Coddling here; he insisted on going home at once."

Governor Reeder was quite a lion to the multitude, but no lion to Lincoln. The latter, Williams, and myself were going to our rooms in the evening, from the Pike House, and we passed a crowd listening to Reeder, in the Court House Square. We listened but for a moment. "He can't overcome me," said Williams. "He would have to do a great deal to overcome my prejudice against him," said Lincoln, and we all turned away; in fact, Lincoln did not meet Reeder at all; he was deeply prejudiced against him for some reason.

The morning after the adjournment of the convention, as we came down town to take the Springfield train, we met several delegates, *en route* for the Illinois Central Railroad, and each one had to wring Lincoln's hand and say something complimentary of his speech of the day before. "Lincoln, I never swear," said William Hopkins, of Grundy, "but that was the damndest best speech I ever heard."

Of that speech, John L. Scripps, Herndon, and myself each tried to take notes. I succeeded measurably; the others failed ignominiously. My notes are very imperfect, but I reproduce, as best I can, from those notes, the principal parts

of that celebrated speech. (See "You Shall Not Go Out of the Union" in SPEECHES.)

On the 17th of June, after the Bloomington Convention, the first Republican National convention met in Philadelphia, and Lincoln polled one hundred and ten votes for Vice President; and from that time onward we who were close to him, Smith, Dubois, Herndon, Bill Jayne, J. O. Cunningham, and James Somers, used to electioneer each other in his behalf, while politicians of steadier poise looked on askance, if not, indeed, amused. The first newspaper that mentioned him as a Presidential possibility was the *Central Illinois Gazette*, published in Champaign, Ill., by J. W. Scroggs. On May 4, 1859, it printed the following articles, the first in the local column, the second in the editorial. Will O. Stoddard, Esq., afterward Lincoln's secretary to sign land patents, and later his biographer, wrote both articles, he being editor of the paper at the time.

#### PERSONAL.

*Our Next President.*—We had the pleasure of introducing to the hospitalities of our Sanctum, a few days ago, the Hon. Abraham Lincoln. Few men can make an hour pass away more agreeably. We do not pretend to know whether Mr. Lincoln will ever condescend to occupy the White House or not, but if he should, it is a comfort to know that he has established for himself a character and reputation of sufficient strength and purity to withstand the disreputable and corrupting influences of even that locality. No man in the West at the present time occupies a more enviable position before the people or stands a better chance for obtaining a high position among those to whose guidance our ship of state is to be entrusted.

## WHO SHALL BE PRESIDENT?

We have no sympathy with those politicians of any party who are giving themselves up to a corrupt and selfish race for the presidential chair, and are rather inclined to believe that the result will be a disappointment to the whole race of demagogues. The vastness of the interests depending on the political campaign now commencing, gives even a more than usual degree of interest to the question: "Who shall be the candidate?" Believing that a proper discussion of this question through the columns of the local papers is the true way to arrive at a wise conclusion, we propose to give our views, so far as formed, and we may add that we are well assured that the same views are entertained by the mass of the Republican party of Central Illinois.

In the first place, we do not consider it possible for the office of President of the United States to become the personal property of any particular politician, how great a man soever he may be esteemed by himself and his partisans. We, therefore, shall discuss the "candidate question" unbiassed by personal prejudices or an undue appreciation of the claims of any political leader. We may add, with honest pride, an expression of our faith in the leading statesmen of our party, that neither Chase nor Seward nor Banks nor any other whose name has been brought prominently before the people, will press individual aspirations at the expense of the great principles whose vindication is inseparably linked with our success. While no circumstances should be allowed to compel even a partial abandonment of principle, and defeat in the cause of right is infinitely better than a corrupt compromise with wrong, nevertheless, the truest wisdom for the Republican party in this campaign will be found in such a conservative and moderate course as shall secure the respect and consideration even of our enemies, and shall not forget National compacts within which we are acting and by which we are bound: and the proper recognition of this future of the contest should be allowed its due influence in the selection of our standard bearer.

Although local prejudices ought always to be held subordinate to the issues of the contest, it will not be wise to overlook their importance in counting the probabilities of what will surely be a doubtful and bitterly

contested battlefield. It is this consideration which has brought into so great prominence the leading Republican statesmen of Pennsylvania and Illinois. If these two states can be added to the number of those in which the party seems to possess an unassailable superiority, the day is ours. The same reasons to a less extent, in exact proportion to its force in the electoral college, affect New Jersey.

From Pennsylvania and Illinois, therefore, the candidates for President and Vice President might, with great propriety, be chosen. It is true that our present Chief Magistrate is from Pennsylvania, and other States justly might urge that a proper apportionment of the National honors would not give her the presidency twice in succession; but, while there are several good precedents for such a course of action, there is one point which outweighs in importance all others: to wit, *We must carry Pennsylvania in 1860*, and if we can best do it with one of our own citizens as standard-bearer, that fact cannot be disregarded with impunity. The delegation from the Keystone State will doubtless present this idea with great urgency in the National convention.

Aside from this, there are other points in favor of the two States mentioned, which cannot fail to carry great weight in the minds of all candid and reasonable men. They have both been distinguished for moderation and patriotism in the character of their statesmen, with as few exceptions as any other States. They are among that great central belt of States which constitute the stronghold of conservatism and Nationality. They are not looked upon as "sectional" in their character, even by the South. They, moreover, are, to a high degree, representative States. Where will our manufacturing, mining, and trading interests find a better representative than Pennsylvania? Or what State is more identified in all its fortunes with the great agricultural interests than is Illinois?

The States themselves, then, being open to no valid objection, we come to the question of individual candidates. Pennsylvania has not yet determined her choice from among her own great men, but as for Illinois it is the firm and fixed belief of our citizens that for one or the other of the offices in question, no man will be so sure to consolidate the party vote of this State,



or will carry the great Mississippi Valley with a more irresistible rush of popular enthusiasm, than our distinguished fellow citizen,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

We, in Illinois, know him well, in the best sense of the word, a *true democrat*, a man of the people, whose strongest friends and supporters are the hard-handed and strong-limbed laboring men, who hail him as a brother and who look upon him as one of their real representative men. A true friend of freedom, having already done important service for the cause, and proved his abundant ability for still greater service; yet a staunch conservative, whose enlarged and liberal mind descends to no narrow view, but sees both sides of every great question, and of whom we need not fear that fanaticism on the one side, or servility on the other, will lead him to the betrayal of any trust. We appeal to our brethren of the Republican press for the correctness of our assertions.

The next newspaper announcement was in the *Aurora Beacon*, published by John W. Ray, on October 5, 1859, but no one knew how deep and earnest the feeling for him was till the sitting of the convention in 1860.

The truth of history requires me to concede or aver that the proximate and superficial cause of Mr. Lincoln's nomination was adroit and astute political skill and management at the convention, but the ultimate and remote causes were discernible in Lincoln's own political genius, for the unembellished fact is, that he was inspired either on May 29 or June 20, 1856, or thereabouts, to compete for this high exaltation, and he wrought this enduring structure of his fame mainly alone. Seward had hundreds of well-trained, astute political henchmen and lieutenants, but Lincoln's few adherents were those whose efforts were, in



the main, muscular (running of errands and the like), of whom I am proud to have been one.

*Alone*, he trod the paths of high intent.

Herndon was almost his only mentor; Dubois and Bill Jayne constituted the committee of arrangements in Springfield; Davis and Swett in Bloomington; Lawson and Harrison in Vermilion, etc. Most of them worked *con amore*, chiefly from love of the man, his lofty moral tone, his pure political morality. In an essay entitled, "The Presidential Nomination," appearing in my "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln," the details of how the nomination was directly achieved will be found by those who may be curious to know them.

In the convention of May 29, 1856, Lincoln was, by common consent, placed at the head of the electoral ticket, and he entered actively into the campaign, making speeches in all parts of the State, except in Egypt (the southern part of Illinois).

In 1858, a Legislature was to be chosen in Illinois, upon which devolved the responsibility of choosing a Senator to succeed to Douglas's then unexpired term. All eyes were turned to Lincoln as the Republican candidate (and in point of fact, the State convention indicated him by a most radical resolution as "the first and only choice for Senator"), and he could not do otherwise than accept the nomination. While, however, his political friends were training him for the Senate, he was coaching himself for the Presidency, two years thereafter. Disdaining the lesser distinction, and aiming at the greater one, he carefully prepared and read before the convention the

celebrated "*House divided against itself*" speech of June 17, 1858, which lost him the Senatorship and gained him the Presidency. Herndon, who had approved of the speech before it was delivered, said in his bizarre and fantastic style: "*Of that speech Lincoln instantly died.*" Swett said: "There were ten lines in that speech which killed Lincoln." The keynote of this speech was not suddenly achieved by Lincoln, for in a fugitive speech made during the canvass of 1856 he had enunciated it; and he no doubt would have made it prominent in the canvass had not Judge Dickey, who heard it, implored him to suppress it. Lincoln claimed no credit for originating the idea of his speech. On the contrary, he said at Cincinnati in 1859: "But neither I, nor Seward, nor Hickman is entitled to the enviable or unenviable distinction of having first expressed the idea. The same idea was expressed by the Richmond *Enquirer* in 1856—quite two years before it was expressed by the first of us."

Mr. Lincoln was a constant patron of the Richmond *Enquirer*, and obtained his idea of the drift of popular sentiment in the South largely, if not, indeed, chiefly, from that organ. The following editorial article forcibly attracted his attention, the date being May 6, 1856:

Social forms so widely differing as those of domestic slavery and (attempted) universal liberty cannot long co-exist in the great Republic of Christendom. They cannot be equally adapted to the wants and interests of society. The one form or the other must be very wrong, very ill-suited to promote the quiet, the peace, the happiness, the morality, the religion and general well-being of communities. Disunion will not allay excitement and investigation, much less beget lasting peace. The war between the two systems rages everywhere and

will continue to rage till the one conquers, and the other is exterminated. If, with disunion, we could have the "all and end of all" then the inducement would be strong to attempt it. But such a measure would but inspire our European and American adversaries with additional zeal.\*

Lincoln read his speech to a little coterie of his friends, in advance of its delivery, and Herndon predicted: "Lincoln, deliver that speech, as read, and it will make you President." It was the leaven hid in public opinion, and ultimately it leavened the whole lump; it was bread cast upon the waters to be gathered after many days. Lincoln himself said: "This thing has been retarded long enough. The time has come when these sentiments should be uttered, and if it is decreed that I should go down because of this speech, then let me go down, linked to the truth—let me die in the advocacy of what is just and right." Yet none but Herndon approved of it in advance; and he, chiefly, from his belief in the unerring wisdom of Lincoln. Dubois bluntly told Lincoln, in presence of his inner circle of friends, that "*it was a damned fool speech;*" but had

\* Roger A. Pryor was then editor of the *Enquirer*, and probably wrote the article. Lincoln told me that at the Charleston Convention, which met at about this time, Pryor obtained his first concrete acquaintance with the Northern Democracy, and that he was perfectly shocked and dismayed at the exhibition. Lincoln said that Pryor was socially a polished gentleman, and that he looked on aghast at the low, profane, and whiskey-drinking crowds that poured out of the Northern cities as lobby delegates. I suppose he must have given vent to his feeling of disgust in his columns, and that Lincoln got his ideas there. This would be more probable from the fact that Pryor and his adherents detested the candidate of these Northern "bummers."

Lincoln not made it, he never would have been President; it was "a word spoken in season," and it constituted the turning-point in his career. With an astuteness and a political divination superior to all of his fellows, he foresaw the political future and firmly declared: "If I had to draw a pen across my record, and erase my whole life from remembrance, and I had one choice allowed me what I might save from the wreck, I should choose that speech, and leave it to the world just as it is."

On the day of Douglas's election to the Senate, Lincoln said to me: "I can't help it, and I expect everybody to leave us."

The political situation in Illinois was not satisfactory to any class except the discredited politicians who had nothing to lose and everything to gain by abnormal conditions of politics. Judge Douglas had found that the disaffection in the ranks of the Democracy by reason of the enactment of the Nebraska Bill was more than a revolt—that it was, in fact, a radical revolution; and when the administration determined to force Kansas into the Union under the Lecompton Constitution, he made haste to retrieve his past error, and ally himself to the Northern political protestants against the growing aggressions of the awful slave power. This was extremely dangerous ground for even so wily and versatile a politician to assume, for he could hardly hope to retain his standing with the Southern school of politicians if he wavered at all on the slavery question. The condition, however, was desperate; he had lost control of Illinois, and must devise some means to regain it, if he would remain in politics, for a Legislature was to be chosen in

1858, which was to choose a Senator in his place, and if he could not succeed himself his prestige would be gone forever. He must, therefore, recover some, at least, of the lost ground at home, even at the hazard of losing in the great arena of the whole nation. He, therefore, placed himself in the field as an avowed candidate for his own succession, and his shibboleth was "Anti-Le-compton." This was an adroit and wise course, and barely succeeded, and that in an entirely unexpected and novel way; for he gained as advocates of his cause, among others, Horace Greeley and John J. Crittenden, both of whom urged his re-election to the Senate. The influence of these distinguished men can only be known by an understanding of our local politics, which may be thus stated in general terms: The northern part of the State was peopled by immigrants from the Northern States, which gave a decided "anti-slavery" cast to the politics there; on the contrary, the southern part of the State was peopled by immigrants from Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, whose prejudices and predilections were favorable to the "peculiar institution" and were likewise Democratic in their party affiliations. But in the centre of the State there were several legislative districts the substratum of whose population was of the "Henry Clay" Whig school of politics, who hated Democracy, with all that the term implied, with religious zeal; but who despised Abolitionism in all of its manifestations and modifications with no less fervor. The contest promised to be close in the Legislature by reason of the fact that since the apportionment of the State into legislative districts in 1850 the southern part of the State had

not improved in an equal ratio and consequence with the northern portion, and hence a large numerical majority might be obtained for the Republicans, and yet the Legislature be Democratic. The political complexion of most of the districts was in no wise doubtful, but the old Whig districts were extremely so. Ordinarily, they would have sustained the candidates of the Republican party, who would have supported Mr. Lincoln, but in doing so they would be acting in harmony with Lovejoy, Coddington, Farnsworth, and the "anti-slavery" cohorts whom their souls abhorred. And Greeley, who had been their political mentor in the era of the Whig party, urged them, with the frantic and uncompromising zeal so characteristic of him, to support Douglas. Joined to this powerful influence, the Douglas adherents left no means unexhausted to convince them that the tendencies of the Republican party were to the unconditional abolition of slavery and the inundation of the whole nation with free negroes; while, to cap all, a letter from John J. Crittenden to T. Lyle Dickey strongly favoring Douglas was published clandestinely and without warning in these doubtful districts just on the eve of election, and before its views could be counteracted. These several elements elected Douglas, and in my judgment Governor Crittenden's letter was the dominating influence in the election and controlled the result. I here annex it—its electioneering tone is plain:

Frankfort, August 1, 1858.

My Dear Sir:

I read, some days ago, your letter of the 19th of last month, in which you state the substance of a conversation between us in relation to Judge Douglas, said



to have taken place in April last at the City of Washington. You ask if your statement is correct and you ask my permission to speak of it privately and publicly as occasion may prompt you. I remember the conversation to which you allude and the substance of it: it occurred at Washington during the last session of Congress, and most probably in April. Your statement of that conversation corresponds substantially with my recollection of it. As you state in your letter I did, in that conversation, speak of Senator Douglas in high and warm terms. I said that the people of Illinois little knew how much they really owed him. That he had the courage and patriotism to take a high, elevated, just and independent position on the Lecompton question at the sacrifice of interesting social relations, as well as old party ties, and in defiance of the power and patronage of an angry administration supported by a dominant party disbursing a revenue of some \$86,000,000 a year; that for this noble conduct, he had been almost overwhelmed with denunciation. That the attacks made upon him in the debate in the Senate were frequent, personal and fierce; that throughout the entire session, he must have felt the consciousness that he was in daily danger of being so assailed in debate as to force him into altercations and quarrels that might, in their consequence, involve the loss of honor or of life. Notwithstanding all this, he had kept his course firmly and steadily throughout the whole struggle, and had borne himself gallantly. I thought there was a heroism in his course calling not only for approbation but for applause.

In the above statement, I have rather confined myself to those particulars of our conversation suggested by your letter, than attempted to detail the whole of it. The above, however, contains the substance of what passed, and whatever else was said was in accordance with it. This conversation with you, Sir, formed but a part of many others of a like character which I held on the same subject. I often expressed my high opinion of that conduct of Judge Douglas on the "Lecompton" question. I expressed it frequently, fully and openly, and was careless who might hear or who might repeat it. Under the circumstances I do not feel that it would become me to object, or that, indeed, I have any right to object to your repeating our conversation when I



have, myself, so freely and so publicly declared the whole substance of it. I have thus answered your letter as I felt myself bound to do. I must add, however, that I do not wish to be an officious intermeddler in your election, or even to appear to be so. I, therefore, hope and request that when you have occasion to speak on the subject of this letter, you will do me the justice to explain and to acquit me of any such voluntary intermeddling or of the presumption of seeking to obtrude myself or my sentiments upon the attention of the people of Illinois. I am, Sir,

With great respect,

J. J. Crittenden.

T. Lyle Dickey, Esq.

Mr. Lincoln wrote to Governor Crittenden on the day after the election: "The emotions of defeat in which I felt more than a merely selfish interest and to which defeat the use of your name contributed largely are fresh upon me," etc.

I may say further, that after the defection of Judge Douglas from the Democratic party, on account of Lecomptonism, the administration of James Buchanan acted with extreme unwisdom in making an unrelenting war upon Douglas and his friends in Illinois. A strict list was made, and all office-holders who adhered to the recalcitrant Senator were summarily decapitated, and their places filled as a rule by political adventurers without character or standing in the party. The war was even so relentless as to embrace the establishment of an ultra-Democratic organ in Chicago to assail Douglas, and even the acquisition of the control of the Senator's own organ, likewise to break him down. These schemes, like spitting against the wind, resulted in their authors' discomfiture; the adherents to the "Buchanan" Democracy in Illinois were not so numerous as the accessions which Douglas made

from the temporary opposition, chiefly by reason of this unjust warfare upon him for a stand made by him on principle. So Buchanan's efforts, like those of Greeley, for a different reason, aided in the reelection of Douglas.

But the partisans of Douglas were not only sedulous to return him to the Senate, but likewise to make him the general candidate of the anti-extension of slavery party for the Presidency. This callow design was broached tentatively in Illinois and elsewhere, and gained auditors in unexpected quarters; even my deeply lamented friend, Swett, listened to the voice of the siren, and he and I had a heated discussion about it. Governor Bissell and Jesse O. Norton, in my presence, in January, 1859, at the Executive Mansion, in Springfield, mutually prophesied that Douglas would be elected President in the succeeding year, partly by Republican votes. This political ghost of the future disturbed Mr. Lincoln very much in 1859. He was then predestined as the candidate of his own State, and he viewed with alarm the evidence of the setting of the political tide toward Douglas. Lincoln talked with me about it, and I heard him talk to others about it, more than once, always with self-depreciation, but likewise always earnestly. But the people remained true to their party allegiance, and, while Douglas by an accident retained his technical place in politics, his party remained out of power for nearly forty years thereafter.

I here annex a personal letter from Mr. Lincoln to Governor Chase on the above subject, which shows his opinion of the close straits our party was in in the year 1858:

Springfield, Ill., April 30, 1859.

The Hon. S. P. Chase :

Dear Sir: Reaching home yesterday I found your kind note of the 14th, informing me that you have given Mr. Whitney the appointment desired; and also mentioning the present encouraging aspects of the Republican cause and our Illinois canvass of last year. I thank you for the appointment. Allow me also to thank you as being one of the very few distinguished men whose sympathy we in Illinois did receive last year, of all those whose sympathy we thought we had reason to expect.

Of course I would have preferred success; but, failing in that, I have no regrets for having rejected all advice to the contrary and resolutely made the struggle. Had we thrown ourselves into the arms of Douglas, as re-electing him by our votes would have done, the Republican cause would have been annihilated in Illinois, and, as I think, demoralized and prostrated everywhere for years, if not forever. As it is, in the language of Benton, "we are clean," and the Republican star gradually rises higher everywhere.

Yours truly,

A. Lincoln.

It chanced that, when Douglas returned to Illinois, on July 9, 1858, to take up his canvass for the Senate, Lincoln was there to argue a motion before Judge Drummond; and he attended and listened to Douglas' harangue at that time. At the request of his Republican friends in the city, he replied the succeeding night.\* Just one week

\* For text of this and the following speeches, see *SPEECHES* in the present edition.

later Mr. Lincoln made a speech at his home in the same tenor.

Mr. Lincoln had with some difficulty induced Douglas to hold a joint debate with him in seven different places in the State, and the first of these joint debates took place at Ottawa, August 21; at which Douglas opened the debate with a violent attack on Lincoln.\*

It is scarcely necessary to say that there was not one word of truth in Douglas's charges; but the distinguished orator evidently acted on the assumption that "a lie will travel forty leagues before truth gets on its boots." Lincoln kept his temper, however, and he made a most dignified and conclusive answer. (I may say that I had the honor to be Lincoln's companion *de voyage* on this occasion.)

The next debate was at Freeport, August 27, and was made memorable by reason of the trap which Lincoln baited with temporary expediency, and caught Douglas's chance of the Presidency. It occurred thus: At Ottawa Douglas had propounded to his competitor a string of not well-considered questions, easy to answer, and which Lincoln cautiously took time to answer; and then turned the tables by demanding "a Roland for an Oliver."

Lincoln's answers demonstrate conclusively that he was looking beyond the Senatorship, for he so answered as to lose votes in that canvass.

\* The *Chicago Tribune* thus exhibited the style of Douglas during the debate: "He howled, he ranted, he bellowed, he pawed dirt, he shook his head, he turned livid in the face, he struck his right hand with his left, he foamed at the mouth, he anathematized, he cursed, he exulted, he domineered,—he played Douglas."

In fact, he was then in an "Abolition" belt, and his answers were not at all satisfactory to that element. In his counter questions, however, he compelled Douglas to assert the doctrine of "unfriendly legislation," viz., that by police regulations the States could render the national enforcement of the Dred Scott decision inoperative.

This doctrine crushed all the life there was out of the Douglas boom for the Presidency. When Congress met, the South put Benjamin, of Louisiana, forward as their spokesman to serve notice on Douglas that he was "not in it" any more as a Presidential candidate, with any show of success or of getting the Southern vote.

Lincoln summed up Douglas's position as follows: "The Judge holds that a thing may be lawfully driven away from a place where it has a lawful right to be."

At the Brewster House, in Freeport, just before the second debate, Lincoln read to Washburne, Uncle Sam Hitt, Tom Turner, Judd, and two or three others, the questions he was going to spring on Douglas. Washburne advised against it. Said he: "Douglas will hold that, notwithstanding the Dred Scott decision, the people can exclude slavery. You give him the chance and he'll beat you on it." "All right," said Lincoln, "then that kills him in 1860, and that canvass is worth a hundred of this. I'm playing for larger game." It turned out exactly as he said, attesting the wonderful political prescience of Lincoln.

As Lincoln and I went north *en route* to the fourth debate, to occur at Charleston, September 18, he informed me of a plan of attack he was going to spring upon the Little Giant, which was to charge him with adopting the Toombs bill, which

would not allow a vote on the Lecompton Constitution, Douglas's especial pride and boast being the allowance of a popular vote—popular sovereignty, as he termed it.

Douglas's very tame answer attests the surprise he felt at the shrewd attack.

The remaining debates were held at Galesburg, October 7; Quincy, October 13, and Alton, October 15.

Lincoln was successful in securing the popular majority, but, owing to a gerrymandered apportionment, Douglas was elected to the Senate to be his own successor.

The joint debate, nevertheless, gave Lincoln a national reputation, and he began to get invitations to visit other States. During the ensuing winter he visited Kansas and was received with "open arms." At Leavenworth he came like a conqueror; he never had received such an ovation as that before. The whole city joined in the welcome, flags and banners waved, all windows, balconies, and sidewalks were filled with interested humanity, a procession was formed, and he, the central figure in it, was escorted to the hotel, amid the loud acclaim of the masses.

During that fall George E. Pugh was run by the Democrats of Ohio for Governor, his competitor being David Tod; and Douglas went there to help Pugh. The Republicans sent for Lincoln, and he spoke at Columbus and Cincinnati. His speeches on those occasions were among the very best speeches he ever made.

In October, 1859, Lincoln received an invitation from the Young Men's Republican Association of Brooklyn to deliver an address in Plymouth Church. This he accepted, indicating poli-



tics as his theme, and February 27, 1860, as the date. Throughout the winter he made most elaborate preparations, obtaining his facts from "Eliot's Debates," and writing out the speech in full. Reaching New York on February 25 he found that he had builded his fame better than he knew; that the leading Republican politicians were on the *qui vive* to hear him, and that to cater to this demand the place of the speaking had been changed to Cooper Institute, in New York City. When he appeared in this hall of so many stirring memories he found it packed, standing room being at a premium. The great platform was full of the most renowned Republican political leaders in New York and Brooklyn. After an introduction by the venerable William Cullen Bryant, in fit and complimentary terms, Lincoln delivered his address, the most recondite political speech made during the pro-slavery debate.

This great speech is worthy of study. It was the last elaborate speech he ever made. In it he departed somewhat from his former style. The close political student will notice a system, formalism, precision, and rigidity of logic not apparent in former speeches; a terseness and vigor of language of greater emphasis than was before known; an absolute pruning of all redundancies, both in thought and in expression. It was a massive structure of unhewn logic, without an interstice or flaw. Singular to say, the style, in some places, is almost precisely that of John C. Calhoun, yet the speech bears the same relation to the slavery issue, as it then presented itself, that Webster's reply to Hayne bore to "the Constitution and the Union" in 1830. It was a dignified, stately, solemn declaration of the concrete princi-



ples of liberty as they existed in the minds of the American people and as they would be enforced by them at the first opportunity.

It was a genuine revelation and surprise. The conservative *Evening Post* published the speech entire the next day by express order of its venerable editor, whose warmest commendation Lincoln also received. The entire press of the city eulogized it in the highest terms. On the last day of winter, in 1860, Mr. Lincoln awoke to find himself famous; on the first day of winter in 1860, he was President-elect of this mighty nation.

I can hardly portray the exhibition which Mr. Lincoln made of himself on the occasion of this trip. Knowing that he would be on dress parade, he went to a clothing store in Springfield, before he started, and procured a brand-new suit of ready-made clothes. Of course, they did not fit him—no ready-made suit ever did—so, in order to make the trousers appear long enough they were loosely braced, with the result of bagginess about the waist and thighs. In order that the waist of the coat should be near the right place, a garment was chosen in which the tails were too short, and the rest of it was too full. Packed in a valise the suit became badly wrinkled on the trip East, and when Lincoln donned it on the night of his speech it presented a series of ridges and valleys like the inequalities of a washboard, and exhibited telltale creases which made even Lincoln feel ill at ease, for the audience on the platform contained the *élite* of New York politicians, dressed in the most genteel fashion.

Lincoln was more embarrassed at the commencement than ever before on a like occasion;

yet, being satisfied himself with his speech, and seeing, as he progressed, that his audience was also satisfied, he was very soon "on his native heath." However much of rusticity there was in his appearance, there was no flavor of the camp or backwoods in his performance, and his auditory entirely forgot the homeliness of the orator in the charm of the oration.

After the meeting was over Mr. Lincoln was introduced to a great many of the leading men, and had quite an ovation. His timidity and embarrassment about his clothes had worn off, and he was as "free and easy" as he would have been in an Illinois crowd. The Athenæum Club invited him to its rooms, where they had a fine supper spread, and Lincoln was the lion of the hour. There was no formality, but there was, indeed, "a feast of reason and flow of soul" which lasted till the "wee sma' hours." Mr. Lincoln was perfectly at home. He

. . . tauld his queerest stories

with the result that the solemn walls of the club had never before echoed to such hilarity, and when the party broke up, and two gentlemen escorted Lincoln to the Astor House, every one of the party was pleased with himself and with all mankind.

Lincoln was not a stoic, neither was he an epicurean; but he *was* human, and on this occasion he acted on the adage, "when you have a good thing keep it." Consequently, he remained in this city for several days, seeing it in a judicious, moral way.

Invitations came from many parts of New England to him to stop in their towns and cities and

address them. It was known that he was to visit Exeter, where his son Robert was attending Phillips Academy, and he started on his tour of New England conquest. On March 5 he was at Hartford, and was escorted to the City Hall by the first company that had been organized of "Wide Awakes," those marching bands that played a conspicuous part in the campaign of that fall all over the country. Next day some of the leading citizens formed a committee of escort and showed him all over the city; that evening he spoke at New Haven to an immense audience. Next evening he spoke at Meriden; at Woonsocket, R. I., on March 7; and at Norwich, Conn., March 8, and at Bridgeport, March 10. He met with a continued ovation everywhere. His success was extraordinary, the sledge-hammer logic of the Illinois prairies wonderfully pleasing his audience. At New Haven, the Professor of Rhetoric of Yale College attended at his speech and gave a lecture on its rhetorical style the next day to his class. That evening, taking the train for Meriden, he heard him the ensuing night for the same purpose. Lincoln was informed of this, and was very much astonished at it. Having visited his son, he turned homeward, remaining over Sunday at New York, where he heard Beecher preach for the second time that trip. Then he returned to Springfield, having been absent four weeks. He was perfectly satisfied with his trip, there not having been a single *contretemps* or error in it; it was an unmistakable conqueror's march.

The public man who builds up a career while in official position has infinite advantages over the unofficial one. The former can impress his principles upon laws and measures of legislation—

can make himself concretely felt, and of actual use and acquire popularity by deeds. He can also speak in a greater or lesser degree *ex cathedra*, with the voice of authority, and gain listening ears. He has access to archives and bureaus, and documents, and his utterances, however rapid, will command respect and attention. "Hear me for my cause," he can say. The unofficial man must be of exceptional intellectual altitude to tower above his fellows. His voice must have a mighty diapason to be heard above the din. He must be a giant, indeed, if from his lowly position he can compete with the officially favored. Mr. Seward had been in official position for many years; had been, as it were, the official head of the Republican party, its guide, counsellor, and friend. He was the idol of the Empire State, and almost equally the idol of New England. His volubility and classicity of speech, and profundity of argument were wonderful, and he was a leader of men. His political conscience was pliable and elastic. His principles were, indeed, bounded, but the corner posts were a great ways apart. He was versatile and prolific of political *finesse*, and also of intrigue. Lincoln was guileless in the lower realms of politics, where Seward was matchless; but in the highest realms, Lincoln brooked no rival, and he had by unaccredited and independent labors on the hustings, within three years, placed himself on a conventional equality with Seward, with the latter's many years of training, and all the auxiliaries of a regency, his countless political friends and sycophants. In the whole nation Seward had barely one "foeman worthy of his steel;" it was *Abraham Lincoln*.

At this time the political outlook was cheering

for the Republican party. Douglas had been read out of the Southern wing of the Democratic party for the heresy which Lincoln had forced him to at Freeport. As he was the only exponent of his peculiar Democracy among the Democratic hosts at the North, it was obvious to even the superficial observer that, if that convention nominated Douglas the South would bolt and set up a candidate of their own; and that if the convention nominated any other than Douglas, especially if it did the bidding of the pro-slavery leaders, there would be no enthusiasm at the North—and the nominee of the Republicans would carry most of the Northern States. In short, no man but Douglas could hope to carry any of the Northern States; and it was apparent that Douglas could not carry any of the Southern States unless it might be one or two of the border States.

Norman B. Judd was the member of the Republican National Committee from Illinois. He was a sly, crafty, shrewd politician. While the Eastern members were assuming as a postulate and foregone conclusion that Seward's nomination was an accomplished fact, Judd's artful eye saw behind the gossamer veil of their assurance a chance for Lincoln, and he commenced his plans far ahead to achieve his nomination. Judd was also a candidate for the gubernatorial nomination in Illinois and hoped that he might achieve both his nomination and Lincoln's. Prior to 1860, all conventions had been held in the East; Baltimore being the great convention city. In fact, nearly all the conventions had theretofore been held there. Harrison, however, had been nominated at Harrisburg, and Frémont at Philadelphia. So Judd made the novel proposition in the committee

that the convention should be held at Chicago. He argued that the Democrats had departed from the ancient custom of meeting at Baltimore, and were to meet at Charleston; now, argued he, let us follow their example and meet in a region where we can make proselytes by the respect we pay to that region. He carefully kept "Old Abe" out of sight, and the delegates failed to see any personal bearing the place of meeting was to have on the nomination. Judd carried his point. He was a railway lawyer and he approached the various railway companies whose lines were in Illinois, and persuaded them to make very cheap rates of fare to Chicago during the convention week.

On May 10 the State Convention met at Decatur and, selecting delegates to the Chicago Convention, instructed them to support Lincoln for the Presidency. Judd was defeated for the nomination for Governor, but was elected as a delegate-at-large to the convention and chairman of the delegation. The convention met in Chicago on June 16. The railroads had made a cheap excursion rate from all parts of the State, and the city was filled to repletion with Illinoisans, all brimful of enthusiasm for the railsplitter candidate. The Seward *claque* was on hand, too, but not in such force. This was in every way a notable convention. Not until the middle of May was it definitely decided in what hall it should be held. The largest hall of the city was the Metropolitan, at the corner of Randolph and La Salle streets, and it was expected that the convention would be held there. In April preceding, Mr. Lincoln and I attended an entertainment in that hall, and we then talked of the possible scenes to



be witnessed there two months later. But sagacity ruled the hour. An immense crowd would be in the city ready to shout for *Uncle Abe*, and this hall would not contain a tithe of them.

In the early days of Chicago one of the chief hotels had been the Sauganash, kept by Alderman John Murphy and located at the southeast corner of Market and Lake streets. The Sauganash, however, had gone the way of all sublunary things and fallen into desuetude. At the time of which I write no structure was left. The site where it had been was low, covered with stagnant water and varied by the appearance of sundry tin cans, hoop-skirts, dead cats, and other *débris* attendant upon civic progress. The Market Street front presented a wide expanse, ample enough to accommodate any probable overflow from a convention hall. The site was at once secured, and a two-story frame structure erected which was, with no apparent sense or propriety, termed "The Wigwam." The Tremont House, five blocks east, was chosen as the headquarters of the Lincoln coterie, while the Richmond House was the headquarters of the Seward contingent. Right opposite the Tremont House the *Journal*, the evening Republican paper of the city, had its office, which was gay with banners, among which was one with the name: *SEWARD*.

David Davis, Stephen T. Logan, Leonard Swett, and Jesse K. Dubois were the leaders of the Lincoln forces, and they opened headquarters with a very feeble prospect in view, as things then appeared. The house was mainly filled with the Seward contingent, finely appearing and eminently talented men, with national reputations.

The leader was he of the Mephistophelian vis-



age, Thurlow Weed. There were George William Curtis, William M. Evarts, William Curtis Noyes, Joshua R. Giddings, Horace Greeley, David K. Cartter, John A. Andrew, Austin Blair, Carl Schurz, Caleb B. Smith, Richard Yates, Ozias M. Hatch, George Ashmun, William D. Kelley, Edwin D. Morgan, David Wilmot, George S. Boutwell, Frank P. Blair Sr., John A. Kasson, William T. Otto, Amos Tuck, Andrew Reeder, Thomas Corwin, Columbus Delano,—all of national renown. Even the *Times*, the Douglas organ, was forced to admit that it was a remarkably fine-looking body of men.

All was bustle and excitement, but everything was done with good nature. The original candidates were William H. Seward, Abraham Lincoln, Edward Bates, John McLean,—old Whigs; and Simon Cameron, Benjamin F. Wade, Salmon P. Chase, Nathaniel P. Banks—old-line Democrats. It became early apparent that the struggle would be between the two first named, and in point of fact Banks and Wade were dropped out of consideration before the convention met, which still left two Ohio men in the contest, McLean and Chase. Greeley was not an accredited delegate from his own State, but, as Oregon was then a great way off, the party there had delegated Greeley to appear for them, which he did. His efforts were in favor of “anybody to beat Seward,” and, considering Edward Bates, of Missouri, as the one best fitted to do it, he worked with the Blairs and with Maryland and Missouri to achieve that end. Yet on the day the convention met his paper published a telegram from him saying: “My conclusion, from all that I can gather, is that the opposition to Governor Sew-

ard cannot concentrate on any candidate, and that he will be nominated.”

Greeley, at that time, was a pariah among the delegates. On the Sunday morning before the convention I met him in Clark Street, coming from the Lake Shore Depot *en route* to the Tremont House, nearly a mile away, lugging a huge leather satchel, which he would change from one hand to the other every little while. There were but few people on the street at the time, but he would look into the faces of all whom he met with an air of bucolic simplicity. He was snubbed in the convention, as he really represented no constituency. There were but few Republicans in Democratic Oregon, and his sole weight in the convention was that of one vote. The New York delegates hardly knew him personally.

Nearly the entire delegation from Indiana came there with the specific design of securing control of the fat Interior Department in case of Republican success. They had agreed on a secretary of that department—Caleb B. Smith; a Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, formerly of Indiana; and on candidates for some of the minor offices. They then opened their political huckster shop and spread out their votes for inspection. As there was close intercommunication between Illinois and Indiana, and Lincoln had served in Congress with Smith, it was quite natural that they should give Illinois their support. The bargain was very soon made. Caleb B. Smith was to be Secretary of the Interior, Dole Commissioner of Indian Affairs; and the vote of Indiana was to be solid for Lincoln. He, therefore, started in with the votes of Indiana and Illinois.

The next block of votes that was lying around loose was the Cameron strength in Pennsylvania. This was more difficult to manage. Not having yet been made acquainted with Lincoln's ethical tendencies, Davis got Dubois to telegraph to Lincoln that they could secure the Cameron delegates from Pennsylvania if they might promise Cameron the Treasury. Lincoln replied: "I authorize no bargains and will be bound by none." Just ten words—the normal length of a telegraphic message! Not satisfied with this, however, he sent a copy of the *Missouri Democrat* to Herndon with three extracts from Seward's speeches marked; and on the margin of which he had written: "I agree with Seward's 'irrepressible conflict,' but do not agree with his 'higher law' doctrine." And he added, "*Make no contracts that will bind me.*"

Everybody was mad, of course. Here were men working night and day to place him on the highest mountain peak of fame, and he pulling back all he knew how. What was to be done? The bluff Dubois said: "Damn Lincoln!" The polished Swett said, in mellifluous accents: "I am very sure if Lincoln was aware of the necessities——" The critical Logan expectorated viciously, and said: "The main difficulty with Lincoln is——" Herndon ventured: "Now, friend, I'll answer that." But Davis cut the Gordian knot by brushing all aside with: "Lincoln ain't here, and don't know what we have to meet, so we will go ahead, as if we hadn't heard from him, and he must ratify it. The Cameron contingent was secured for Lincoln on the second vote.

The convention met and the Seward *claque* was allowed to fill the hall to repletion. An organiza-

tion was effected by calling David Wilmot (of "proviso" fame) to the chair. The various committees were appointed.

The second day was consumed in settling the rules and the platform. The Seward *claque* had "open sesame" on this day likewise. The platform was adopted.

When the second plank in the platform was reported, it did not have the quotation from the Declaration of Independence in it, and Joshua R. Giddings moved to put it in; but the convention, somehow, was timid and afraid to do it. Giddings became so disgusted and demoralized at this result that he left the convention. Afterwards, however, the matter was reconsidered, and George W. Curtis made a brief speech in which he shamed the convention for refusing to repeat the sentiments of the Continental Congress, and the quotation was adopted *nem. con.*

Next day the balloting was to take place, and by a political "turn of the wrist," known only to wicked Chicago, when the Seward *claque* were prepared to occupy the main floor of the hall as before, the same was preoccupied by the Lincoln *claque*. To the consternation of the Seward following they had to be content with their two days' largess, already enjoyed, in which there was no political utility. The convention was opened and the following candidates were put in nomination:

William H. Seward, of New York, nominated by William M. Evarts; Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, nominated by Norman B. Judd; William L. Dayton, of New Jersey; Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania; Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio; Edward Bates, of Missouri; Jacob Collamer, of Vermont; John McLean, of Ohio.

Balloting began. On the first ballot, Seward received  $173\frac{1}{2}$  votes; Lincoln, 102 votes; Cameron,  $50\frac{1}{2}$  votes; Chase, 49 votes; Bates, 48 votes; Dayton, 14 votes; McLean, 12 votes; Collamer, 10 votes; with scattering votes for Wade, Reed, Sumner, and Frémont.

On the second ballot Lincoln received the larger part of the votes that had been cast on the first ballot as complimentary to State favorites who stood no chance of being nominated. All of Collamer's came to him, 44 of Cameron's, 6 of Chase's, 6 of McLean's, etc. He gained 79 votes while Seward gained but 11, making the total: Seward,  $184\frac{1}{2}$ ; Lincoln, 181; the field,  $99\frac{1}{2}$ .

On the third ballot, this current of votes flowing to Lincoln became a flood, even Seward losing  $4\frac{1}{2}$  votes. Of the 465 ballots cast, Lincoln received  $231\frac{1}{2}$ , and Seward 180. 233 votes were necessary to a choice. David K. Cartter, of Ohio, then sprang upon his chair and announced a change of four votes from his State from Chase to Lincoln, completing his nomination. Delegation vied with delegation in changing to Lincoln, making his nomination virtually unanimous, and it was formally so ratified on the motion of William M. Evarts, of New York.

The nominations were then completed by the selection of Senator Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, and the convention adjourned, while the city was intoxicated with joy.\*

\* At the earnest request of Jesse K. Dubois, I hunted up W. R. Arthur, Superintendent of the Illinois Central Railroad, whom I found at McVicker's Theatre, and got an order for a special train to go *via* Toledo to Springfield in advance of the Committee, and to carry Dubois, Bill Butler, Judge Logan, and other of Lincoln's neighbors, so they could fix up things before the Committee should reach Springfield.

During the sitting of the convention Lincoln had been trying, in one way and another, to keep down the excitement which was pent up within him, playing billiards a little, town ball a little, and story-telling a little. When the news actually reached him he was in the editorial office of the *Journal*. He got up at once and allowed a little crowd to shake hands with him mechanically, then said: "I reckon there's a little short woman down at our house that would like to hear the news," and he started with rapid strides for home.

The canvass which ensued was spirited, Douglas leading a forlorn hope by canvassing personally and making speeches in all parts of the country where he thought he had any prospect of catching votes. It was a very humiliating and for that time unique spectacle. Never before had a man seeking this most exalted position gone about personally soliciting votes. The whole country was aroused. The "Wide Awakes" evoked the enthusiasm of the superficial, and the leading politicians were all active and enthusiastic on the stump, appealing to the patriotism and reason of the thinking masses. The State elections which took place in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania went so overwhelmingly Republican as to leave scarcely any doubt of Lincoln's election, but when the returns actually came in they were more than satisfactory.

The result was as follows:

POPULAR VOTE.	ELECTORAL VOTE.
Lincoln . . . . . 1,857,610	Lincoln . . . . . 180
Douglas . . . . . 1,365,976	Breckinridge . . . . . 72
Breckinridge . . . . . 847,953	Bell . . . . . 39
Bell . . . . . 590,631	Douglas . . . . . 12

February 13 following, John C. Breckinridge himself, resisting all allurements held out to him by those who supported him and by his political friends, then acting like a true man and a man of honor, presided over the canvass of votes and declared that Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin, having received the greatest number of votes for President and Vice President, respectively, were President and Vice President elect.



## CHAPTER XV

### INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT

On the first day of February, 1861, Mr. Lincoln and myself, designing to go East for about one hundred miles, left his house, and proceeded part of the way "across lots," to the Great Western Depot (now Wabash), on which line I had procured a pass for him. His baggage consisted of an old carpetbag which he had carried on the circuit for several years, and which was well worn and was in a state of collapse. No crowd then attended our truly democratic departure. Ten days later he again visited the same depot, but the incidents then were like to those of a royal progress, for he was then *en route* to the performance of the greatest mission ever entrusted to a mortal man.

A special train was provided, and the following named persons were of the party: Mrs. Lincoln and the three sons, Robert Todd, William Wallace, and Thomas (nicknamed "Tad"); Governor Yates, ex-Governor John Moore, Norman B. Judd, David Davis, Orville H. Browning, B. Forbes, Dr. W. S. Wallace (the President's brother-in-law), Ward H. Lamon, George C. Latham, Elmer E. Ellsworth, Lockwood Todd, Colonel E. V. Sumner, U. S. A.; Captain John Pope, Major David Hunter, George W. Hazard, J. M. Burgess, John G. Nicolay, and John Hay.

The train was under the charge of General W. S. Wood.\*

When the party was embarked Mr. Lincoln appeared on the back platform, and in an abstracted way, gazing mournfully at the little concourse of people who had assembled, made a valedictory to his townsmen, which was filled with religious emotion.

The train then moved eastward and the President-elect remained on the platform until the enlarging fields and diminishing houses indicated that he was beyond the limits of the city where he had achieved national fame; but he did not then know though he did fear that it was his *last* lingering glance.

On this journey the President spoke at Indianapolis, once to the citizens, and once to the Legislature; at Cincinnati, at Columbus, before the Legislature; at Steubenville; Pittsburg; Cleveland; Buffalo; Albany (twice); New York City (several times); Trenton (three times, once before the Legislature); Philadelphia (twice); and Harrisburg, before the Legislature; besides making short formal remarks at stopping-places along the route. [The text of these addresses will be found in SPEECHES, in the present edition.]

Throughout the long journey the highest demonstrations of respect and honor were accorded by the people of all parties and classes toward their future Chief Magistrate. Even Fernando Wood, then Mayor of New York, made an unobjectionable, though not very cordial,

\* Three of this party were army officers sent by General Scott and two were detectives furnished by Pinkerton. Some of the party left *en route*. Judd left at Harrisburg on the train after Lincoln.

speech of welcome, while nearly all the addresses of welcome were couched in such terms of respect and veneration as to leave no doubt of the excellent disposition generally entertained; and the enthusiasm of the masses attested the public devotion alike to the person of their Executive and social head and to the Government, then believed to be seriously imperilled.

In all places through which the train was to pass, great crowds were assembled, and not a single disparaging remark was uttered audibly. Apparently all was amity and good feeling, and those who had cast their votes for another were not at all displeased at the hearty enthusiasm evoked in which likewise they, in many instances, joined. Business was suspended in many places and a holiday taken. Gay equipages were provided for the presidential party, and the streets through which the cavalcade was to pass were profusely decorated with the highest artistic taste and patriotic design. The star-spangled banner was regnant and exalted.

At Indianapolis, a Republican Governor, Morton, greeted him; at Cincinnati, a Democratic Mayor. At Buffalo he was welcomed by Millard Fillmore, one of his predecessors; at Albany by Governor Morgan; and at New York City by that *ne plus ultra* of Democrats, Fernando Wood. At several places, as Syracuse and Hudson, platforms were erected, the design being that the President-elect should speak from them; but to accomplish that would have produced an unwarrantable delay, and he was obliged to decline.

The author of the "Reply to Hayne" once attempted to make a "by-the-way" speech at Alton, and the editor of the paper reported that "he beat

the air and bellowed and said nothing." So again at Rochester, after vainly attempting to say something for a long time, the eloquent defender of the Constitution abruptly closed by venturing, "I'm told you have a 175-foot waterfall here; no people ever lost their liberty who had such a high waterfall as that."

In a similarly false and illogical position was Mr. Lincoln placed when he made his Eastern tour in February, 1861. His important speeches in prior canvasses had been widely heralded, and his fame had acquired strength and momentum by a persistency of iteration and reiteration. Great intellectual feats were expected from his reported ability, and high moral and political utterances from his unique position, while obvious policy and imperious necessity demanded that he keep his best thoughts to himself, yet with no studied appearance of having done so. The net result of all was that he was expected to entertain the thronging masses, to make a favorable and popular impression, and yet omit all significant reference to that very line of remark which the people wanted to hear. In the first place Lincoln was that style of orator and man of the world who could not talk effectively about nothing. He must have something to say and somebody to convince.\*

\* The masked contempt with which both the "outgoing" and "incoming" President were regarded in some quarters, will be shown by this incident. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* had a cut representing "Old Buck" resigning the Chair of State to Lincoln. The *Chair* is in a most dilapidated condition. The dialogue was thus: *Buchanan*: "Mr. Lincoln, Sir, it is with infernal satisfaction I surrender to you the Presidential chair, not so sound, it is true, as when I took

In view of these drawbacks he spoke well, but did not equal public expectation. The people longed to hear from his lips the avowal of a defined and trenchant policy toward the incipient treason which was becoming epidemic in the cotton-growing States. They earnestly desired that he should exhibit a certificate that even as the crisis had come so also had come the MAN. Had he simply declared, as he did on May 29, 1856, the integrity of the Union, no limit could have been assigned to the spontaneous enthusiasm which he might have evoked. But he knew the dizzy eminence whereon he stood, and the gravity of the political situation better than the public, and it was quite clear to him that his paramount duty was to allow no obstacle to intervene between the anomalous political situation and the acquisition of the helm of State, not to alarm or inflame the conservative Southern mind and the border slave States, nor weaken the alliance or devotion of the Northern Democratic party to the Union.

Accordingly at Springfield, where he made his first speech, he merely took an affectionate leave of his neighbors, without any exhibition of his political intent. A similar policy controlled him at Tolono, where he, with excellent taste and dis-

it. You will observe, before *settin'* down, that *I've broke its back and bust its bottom*. Nevertheless, what is left of it is yours. Take it, and make yourself as happy as you can."

*Lincoln*: "Thank you, Mr. Buchannon—thank you. I accept this Cheer, Sir, with pleasure, Sir. I see 'nothing the matter' with it; 'nobody hurt.' If I fail to fill it, Sir, I hope to make up in *length* what I may fall short in *breadth*." The expressions, it will be remembered, are some rather vapid ones used by Mr. Lincoln *en route* to Washington.

cretion, said: "I am leaving you on an errand of national importance, attended, as you are aware, with considerable difficulties. Let us believe, as some poet has expressed it, 'Behind the cloud, the sun is still shining.'"

His second speech at Indianapolis, however, should have satisfied any reasonable, conservative citizen, for he then and there, in an undemonstrative, tentative, and indirect way, gave ample assurance that "the Federal Union must and shall be preserved."

Nor could anything have been in better taste or more neatly done than his almost total self-abnegation and his delegation of the responsibilities of the crisis upon the people themselves. The people are prone to fallaciously reason that a ruler has some occult power and unusual personal interest in the Government. The President-elect, at Indianapolis, conclusively dispelled this vain idea in a single sentence, thus: "It is *your* business and not *mine*. If the Union of these States and the liberties of this people shall be lost, it is but little to any one man of fifty-two years of age, but a great deal to the thirty millions of people who inhabit these United States, and to their posterity in all coming time."

In addition to his elaborate speeches he spoke at many of the way places briefly. It will be noted that this journey was very shrewdly planned, and gave the President-elect an opportunity to impress himself upon the Legislatures of the five great States of Indiana, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. I am inclined to think that the public generally was disappointed at the reticence manifested by him as to his policy, and at the intellectual feebleness of his



speeches. The crisis demanded a great leader, the people wanted assurances that he was one, and, if he had emitted Jacksonian flashes of patriotic fire, enthusiasm would have gathered force, like ocean waves. This, however, would have been of questionable wisdom. As I have said, Lincoln was better informed of the status of affairs than the public, and he knew of the supreme importance of getting control of the Government before any *émeute* or disturbance was made.

On the night of February 22-23, I passed through Harrisburg, *en route* for Philadelphia; and, on arising in the morning, was surprised to find my friend, Norman B. Judd, on the train. He informed me that he had come on board at Harrisburg; and in reply to my questions he indicated that he had grown so nervous at the noise and excitement of the journey with the President that he had concluded to slip quietly away where he could get some rest and tranquillity. He questioned me as to what I had heard about the journey so closely as to arouse my curiosity, and he whispered to me significantly, "I'll tell you more when we get to Philadelphia." What he had to tell I will now narrate substantially as he told it to me. Before I parted with Judd, we mentally thanked God that our friend, the President-elect, was safe in Washington. "You see," Judd said, "Pinkerton (our Pinkerton) had been engaged by the Philadelphia and Baltimore Railroad to watch their road, which there was reason to believe would be assailed at some point by the rebs to destroy communication with the North; and while so engaged, he learned that a plot was being worked up to assassinate Lincoln while he was passing through Baltimore. He informed me of



this in a letter which was delivered to me at the Burnet House in Cincinnati, but which I kept entirely private, not telling any of the party. Pinkerton also stated that he would advise me further during our progress eastward. I promptly replied to him, acknowledging receipt of his note, and urging him to prosecute his research. While we were at Buffalo on Sunday, I received another letter, saying that he was pursuing investigations and would keep me advised. On reaching the Astor House, at New York, I was summoned to a certain room in the upper part of the hotel. I found there a lady who gave her name as Warner (I think) and who had a letter from Pinkerton, introducing her as the chief of his female detective department. Her object in coming was to arrange a meeting for me with Pinkerton himself at Philadelphia. No place was then designated, but we agreed that I should be notified then. It seemed quite unnecessary to send a woman clear to New York to do what a telegram or letter would have done as well. Mysteries increased, for when I got to Philadelphia a man passed through the crowd, and gave me a fictitious address at the St. Louis Hotel. There I found Pinkerton under an assumed name awaiting me and with him Mr. Felton, president of the Baltimore Railroad. From their representations I became satisfied that a well-matured and organized plot did exist to kill Lincoln in Baltimore; and I then saw that something must be done. I arranged to have Pinkerton meet me at my room at the Continental, and sent for Lincoln, whom Pinkerton informed of the whole affair, strongly urging that the President go on through secretly that night. Lincoln was fully impressed with the

gravity of the situation and the necessity of action; but he was resolute in his purpose to raise the flag on Independence Hall and meet the Legislature at Harrisburg the next day. After that, he said, he would do as I said. I then had a conference with the officials of both railways, the telegraph people, and Pinkerton; and developed the following plan, which has been strictly followed, so far as I know: Lincoln should fill all of his appointments, and leave Harrisburg at six o'clock Friday evening on a special train for Philadelphia, at which hour the telegraph wires should be cut at Harrisburg; the Baltimore train should be held at Philadelphia till Lincoln was aboard, and then go on to Baltimore; Hill Lamon should go with Lincoln all the way, and Pinkerton should meet Lincoln and Lamon at Philadelphia, and go with them clear through; and Pinkerton should have some one secure the sleeping car sections from Philadelphia to Washington in rear of car, and Lincoln should be represented as an invalid. I was up nearly all night, getting these arrangements made, which none of our party as yet knew about, although they saw that something was *up*. When Lincoln got up next morning he found Fred. Seward there with a message from his father to the effect that he must come to Washington in a clandestine manner, as he had authentic evidence of the existence of a conspiracy to kill him as he attempted to go through Baltimore. This, of course, confirmed the wisdom of my plans, as Seward's information came from other sources than ours. I dismissed young Seward with a message to his father that Mr. Lincoln would reach Washington at six o'clock next morning. I then disclosed the

arrangements I had made to Lincoln, who was perfectly unexcited, but agreed to all. I told him I wanted the judgment of others of our party, to which he agreed; accordingly I got Davis, Sumner, Pope, and Hunter, and one or two others together and briefly told them what I knew, and what I had done. Davis was quite sceptical, I think because of the stigma which would rest on Maryland, where he came from; but finally, after insinuations of doubt on his part, both of the facts and wisdom of my plan, he said: 'Well, Lincoln, you have heard the whole story, what do you think about it yourself?' Lincoln replied quite carelessly: 'I've thought the matter over fully and reckon I had better do as Judd says. The facts come from two different and reliable sources, and I don't consider it right to disregard both.' 'That settles it,' said Davis, a trifle disappointed, I think, first because it was a slight on his State, second because it was *my* plan, and third because he had a poor opinion of detective business. Sumner was angry at the selection of Lamon, and he said grimly: 'One thing I want distinctly understood, that *I'm* going to Washington with the President. Such were my orders from General Scott, and I'm going to carry them out.' We all tried to reason him out of it, but made no impression at all and I was then sorry I told him anything about it. In fact, I am sorry I told anybody, for I have got in trouble with Sumner and it has done no good anyway. However, Sumner kept strict watch, and when Lincoln left the dinner table at Harrisburg, just before six, Sumner was on hand. I instructed Lamon what to do, and as Lincoln and he got in the carriage

to go I diverted Sumner's attention for a single moment, which threw him off his guard, and when he turned to get in the carriage, as he had intended, it was out of reach, the horses galloping on the way to the train. Sumner, to carry out his program, should have followed, of course, but he was stunned with anger, and lost his presence of mind. I never got such a scoring in all my life—I was fearful he would assault me. However, I was so glad that my scheme went through with nothing but a 'cussin' that on the whole I felt good over it, though I did not get a wink of sleep that night except what little I got on the train before I saw you. I came on to Philadelphia by the first train to get the news and to be within telegraphic reach and do anything necessary, for, of course, I could not be certain what might happen. I now see that so much planning and letting so many in the secret, at a time when we were all on public exhibition, was not the right way to do it."

Judd also informed me that his reasons for selecting Lamon were: First, Lamon was a *Southerner*—had the *Southern* dialect and appearance—and if any parleying should be necessary, he could ward off suspicion as to his charge better than a Northern man could, since it would not be presumed that a Southerner would have Lincoln in charge. Second, Lamon habitually carried two revolvers in a belt so ostentatiously that I knew it, and I believed he would use them effectively if necessary. Third, Lamon was not known as Sumner or Hunter was. Judd also informed me that Lincoln was to be represented as a sick man, and that when the conductor came around one of the party was to give him the tickets which had been bought for the President.

"Lincoln," said Judd, "was disguised no further than this: He wore the bobtail overcoat he had used all winter, and had a shawl, and soft felt hat he had borrowed for the trip. I have no doubt an attempt would have been made to kill him, but I also think, as we knew it in advance, we could have prevented it; but with the warnings we had it would have been criminal to have let the President be exposed to a needless risk for the sake of appearance. I will say that Lincoln did not show the least excitement or fear throughout, but took a sensible and unexcited view of it, and demeaned himself just as he would had Davis or any other of the party been the person in danger.

"I reached Baltimore," concluded Judd, "in the afternoon of the day Lincoln had passed through, and though it was rainy, I was out on the streets during the rest of that and the next day (Sunday) and was a witness of the deep disappointment felt by the roustabouts, street loafers, and low orders, that the President-elect was safely at Washington. At that time, I felt fully assured that a deep-laid plot for his assassination had been formed. I deem it idle to argue against this theory. It is a well-attested fact."

Just as daylight was breaking on the morning of Saturday, February 23, 1861, the night train from Philadelphia rolled, as usual, into the sole and dingy depot at Washington. The passengers hastily debarked and made their way through the narrow shed towards the exit in front, the last to leave being a party of three, one of whom, attired in a soft felt hat and bobtail overcoat resembling a sailor's pea-jacket, would have been noticeable anywhere from the contrast in the length of the man and the brevity of his

outward integuments, for his coat and pantaloons were altogether too brief for their wearer. But there were no spectators to take note of these peculiarities except one muffled-up individual who had long been standing in the shadow of a pillar and who hastily emerged as this party came forward, exclaiming, "You can't play that on me, Abe." The man in the pea-jacket overcoat exclaimed heartily, to all whom it might concern, "It's Washburne." Then the whole party shook hands all around, and all four, getting into a hack, were driven to the ladies' entrance of Willard's Hotel. These, and about three other persons, alone of the whole slumbrous city, were aware that the President-elect, the man whose name was in every newspaper in the entire civilized world, had thus clandestinely and furtively come to assume the charge of the Government.

Mr. Judd and Judge Davis each assured me afterward that they believed that a well-developed attempt would have been made to assassinate the President had he gone openly through Baltimore; but Mr. Lincoln said to me afterward: "I do not think I should have been killed, or even that a serious attempt would have been made to kill me unless some excitement had arisen; but Judd and other cool heads thought I had better take the course I did, and I reckon they were right; it ain't best to run a risk of any consequence for looks' sake."

A suite of rooms had been engaged for the President and his family on the second floor of Willard's, just over the main entrance and fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue, and thither Mr. Lincoln was at once conducted, where he proceeded to make a hasty toilet. While he was thus en-



gaged Senator Seward came hastily in, much disconcerted to know that he had misapprehended the hour of arrival and had lost the opportunity to greet his chief at the depot. He was heartily welcomed, and sat down to breakfast shortly thereafter in the private parlor in company with the President-elect and Washburne. At table a general view of the political horizon was taken, and the necessities of the hour canvassed.

Later in the day the members of the "Peace Conference" visited Lincoln and were presented to him. One of them, L. E. Chittenden, relates that Lincoln had an apt word for each of them and that he committed no mistake at all; that he answered every Union man in words of cheer and encouragement and every Secessionist according to his folly. Mr. Chittenden says of the incoming President: "He was able to take care of himself. He could not have appeared more natural or unstudied in his manner if he had been entertaining a company of neighbors in his Western home."

On the ensuing eight days Lincoln was occupied in receiving calls from party leaders, holding consultations on the subject of his Cabinet, not yet definitely settled, and other matters of policy in connection with the mighty trust underlined for him on the programme of history.

Among other privileges which he availed himself of was the making of a visit to the Capitol, which he had not seen since the summer of 1849, when he made a hurried visit to Washington to see President Taylor. Since then the plain and sombre hall of the Lower House had been converted into a gallery for statuary, and the Senate had left its original hall, so rich with classical



memories. Both deliberative bodies now sat in gaudy chambers indicative of the change from the sober days of stagecoach simplicity. Here the President-elect was received with enthusiasm by the loyal members and with cold disdain and supercilious curiosity by the others. Disguise it as we may, the Southern cause was more popular in Washington than the cause of the Union, and Lincoln and his forthcoming administration were reviled generally in Washington society.

Meanwhile the city was rapidly filling up with strangers, some animated by the patriotic desire to see the menaced President-elect safely installed in the White House, some dominated by idle curiosity; but the majority, probably, moved by a selfish desire to serve their country in some official capacity.

Caleb Smith and John P. Usher were then at the head of an immense colony of patriots bent on expelling the occupants of the Interior Department and rescuing that temple of prolific spoils from the dominion of the enemy. The ponderous and urbane David Davis, Judge of the Eighth Illinois Circuit, had engaged the most expensive suite of rooms at Willard's on the second story, corner of the Avenue and Fourteenth Street, four apartments distant from the President-elect, so that he might be in a comfortable place to respond to the invitation, which never came, to advise as to the early appointments.

Corydon Beckwith, the suave and distinguished Democratic lawyer from Chicago, with his wife, occupied the next suite, his undisguised object being to secure the promotion of his brother, then already high in the Commissary Department. Big men and extremely small men were there,

with small and great schemes. Most of them had a maximum appointment in view or in incubation, but were willing to take something considerably less. Judd was there, like Joey Bagstock, "sly, sir;—de-vil-ish sly." His name was on every office-hunter's lips. "Where's Judd?" "I'll see Judd." "Ask Judd." "Oh, I know Judd." "There goes Judd." "Judd!" "Judd!!!" "Judd goes *pop* into the Cabinet." "What did Judd say about it?" "Judd looks used up." "Judd'll do it." "Judd won't do it." "That's just like Judd." "Judd's pretty smart," etc. Davis vainly attempted alternately to look big with importance and anon to appear like a "looker on in Venice," but it was no go; he had one of his eyes on any portfolio and the other on the comfortable chair in the Supreme Courtroom, then draped in funereal crape. But no message came from the throneroom, so near and yet so far, to point the way he was to go.

Mr. Lincoln had written his Inaugural in January, in an unused back room in the same building as his office, with no adventitious aid beyond an old desk, one chair, a bottle of ink, a steel pen, a volume of Clay's speeches, one of Webster's, Jackson's Nullification Proclamation, and the Statutes of Illinois, which contained the Constitution of the United States. In this primitive situation, he prepared his first official utterance on plain foolscap paper, carrying it home at night as it progressed, and amending it. He finally engrossed it, and when he started to Washington, designing that it should not be out of his reach during the journey, he committed it to the custody of the same old carpetbag he and I had started East with but eleven days before. When

he looked for it at Harrisburg, however, lo! it was gone! It contained not only his Inaugural address but a large bundle of letters and other papers of indispensable utility at this supreme moment. Here was a mess! The day of Fate was in plain sight, advancing resistlessly with rapid strides, and here was this vital document, the product of so many free and unexcited hours, out of place. And letters, too!—letters whose exhibition might turn the world of politics upside down—besides other almost indispensable and unduplicated documents. Perplexed almost beyond endurance by the several alarming exigencies which pressed upon him, he privately, and without disclosing his anxiety to any but his son Robert, searched everywhere. Finally the delinquent satchel turned up in the general baggage room at the depot, in a pile of valises, the least tempting of them all to a thief, but containing one of the great treasures of political literature.

Lincoln read the Inaugural to Seward and one or two others, and to no more. Seward proposed some minor changes, which were adopted, and this document, destined to a classical renown and an imperishable fame, was ready for submission to the tribunal of history.

The Fourth of March arrived, bringing in its train a bright, sunny day, as if Nature had enrobed itself in spring attire in honor of the renaissance of loyalty to the Union. At 11:05 A. M. Messrs. Foote and Pearce, the Senate Committee, called at the President's room at the Capitol and escorted the venerable outgoing incumbent to a barouche in waiting, drawn by six horses. Driving rapidly to Willard's, they took in the President-elect, who, calm and imperturb-

able, was waiting, arrayed in his new Inauguration suit, with a new spick-and-span hat, and a gold-headed cane which some admirer had presented to him, and which, apparently, he had not learned to handle. A procession was formed consisting of military and civic societies, and a long line of carriages filled with Government dignitaries, which moved in stately and dignified procession through the Avenue to the Capitol. The carriage which contained Mr. Lincoln was flanked on both sides by military veterans heavily armed. Arriving at the Capitol, the President-elect was escorted to the platform which had been erected upon the Eastern flight of steps. Here, in the presence of an immense concourse of people and attended by the chief dignitaries of the Nation, in a clear, emphatic voice and a resolute and impressive manner, and with an air and mien of perfect self-reliance and self-possession, he delivered the Inaugural Address.

After Mr. Lincoln had concluded the reading of the address, the venerable Chief Justice administered the oath, which Mr. Lincoln received solemnly and with emotion. The Chief Justice ventured to bestow his benisons, the venerable ex-President offered his congratulations heartily, and the change of administration was accomplished—the renaissance was begun. “Old things had passed away, all things had become new.”

Mr. Lincoln reëntered the barouche, the ex-President followed; the carriage was driven rapidly to the door of the White House, the moss-troopers clattering alongside with clinking sabres. The President alighted, sought Mrs. Lincoln, who had preceded him and who now beamed upon him. The family and two or three

relatives sat together at luncheon, Mrs. Lincoln perfectly radiant with happiness. The President appeared relieved. Tad and Willie were jubilant. Robert was dignified.

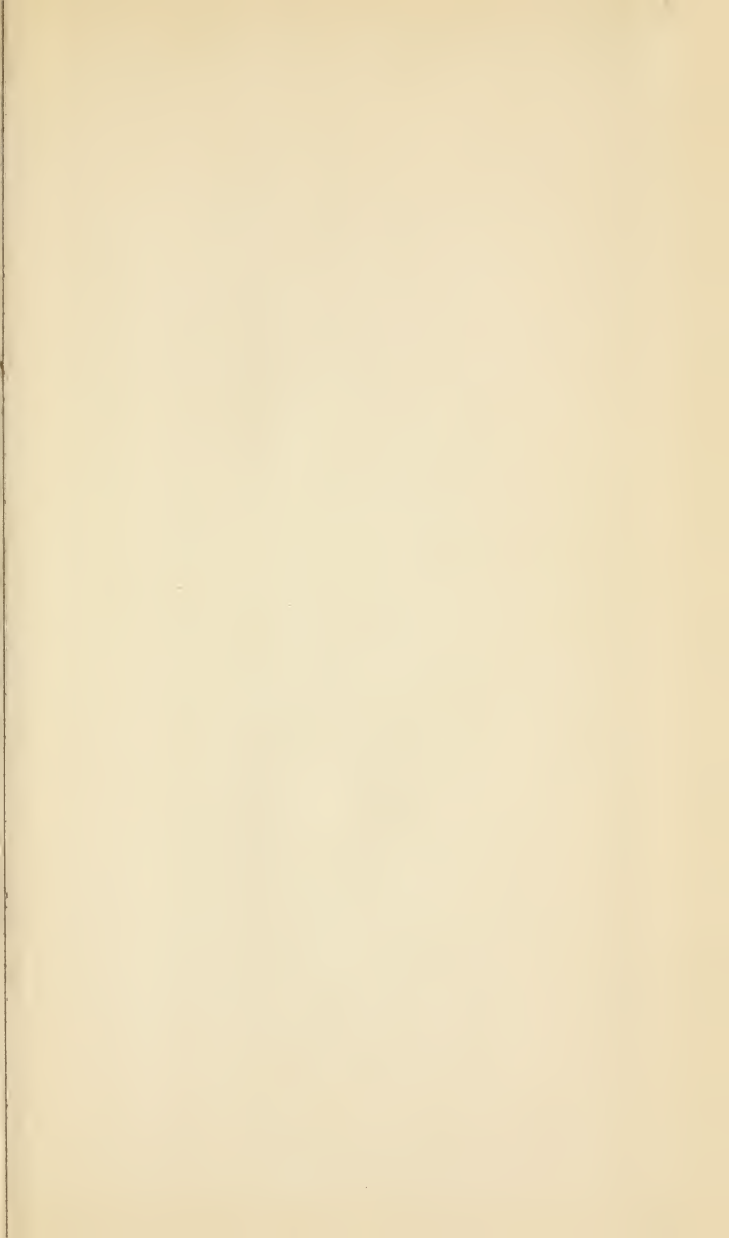
The life at the White House was begun.

1307259

6538-9

28

— 14









LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 558 228 8