

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN



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**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**







THE BOY LINCOLN READING BY THE LIGHT  
OF THE FIRE

*(After a painting by Eastman Johnson made in 1868)*



# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*BY*

EDITH L. ELIAS

*WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS*



NEW YORK  
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

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# Contents

## SECTION ONE

### *Years of Inexperience*

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. EARLY CHILDHOOD . . . . .	11
II. LIFE IN INDIANA . . . . .	17

## SECTION TWO

### *Years of Development*

III. SCHOOLDAYS . . . . .	25
IV. EVERYDAY WORK . . . . .	29
V. DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI . . . . .	34

## SECTION THREE

### *Years of Self-expression and Experience*

VI. BLACK HAWK'S REBELLION . . . . .	43
VII. AN ELECTION . . . . .	48
VIII. LAW AND POLITICS . . . . .	53
IX. PUBLIC SERVICE . . . . .	59
X. THOUGHTS ON SLAVERY . . . . .	65

## SECTION FOUR

### *Years of Public Recognition*

XI. IN CONGRESS . . . . .	73
XII. WAR, LAW, AND ELECTIONS . . . . .	80
XIII. THE SLAVERY QUESTION AGAIN . . . . .	87
XIV. A GREAT SPEECH . . . . .	93

# Abraham Lincoln

## SECTION FIVE

### *Years of Leadership*

CHAPTER	PAGE
XV. THE REPUBLICAN PARTY . . . . .	99
XVI. STRIFE IN KANSAS . . . . .	105
XVII. DRED SCOTT . . . . .	109
XVIII. JOHN BROWN . . . . .	119

## SECTION SIX

### *Years of Supremacy*

XIX. AT NEW YORK . . . . .	127
XX. GREAT SCENES IN CHICAGO . . . . .	133
XXI. PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES . . . . .	141
XXII. DIFFICULT TIMES . . . . .	148
XXIII. CIVIL WAR . . . . .	152
XXIV. THE END OF SLAVERY . . . . .	159
XXV. RENOMINATED . . . . .	166

## SECTION SEVEN

### *Triumph and Death*

XXVI. THE FALL OF RICHMOND . . . . .	175
XXVII. ASSASSINATED . . . . .	181
XXVIII. PEACE . . . . .	188

LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES UP TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN . . . . .	191
METHOD OF GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA . . . . .	192

# *Illustrations*

PAGE

THE BOY LINCOLN READING BY THE LIGHT OF THE FIRE . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE BOYHOOD OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN . . . . .	20
YOUNG LINCOLN WORKING OUT SUMS ON A SHOVEL . . . . .	30
LINCOLN AND THE INDIAN . . . . .	44
SLAVES AT WORK IN THE COTTON FIELDS . . . . .	90
JOHN BROWN GOING TO EXECUTION . . . . .	122
PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND GENERAL GRANT INSPECTING A BODY OF PRISONERS . . . . .	156
THE ASSAULT ON THE BATTERIES OF VICKSBURG . . . . .	164
THE SURRENDER : GENERAL GRANT AND GENERAL LEE AT APPOMATTOX . . . . .	176

*O Captain ! my Captain ! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is  
won,*

*The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and  
daring ;*

*But O heart ! heart ! heart !*

*O the bleeding drops of red,*

*Where on the deck my Captain lies,*

*Fallen cold and dead.*

*O Captain ! my Captain ! rise up and hear the bells ;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores  
a-crowding,*

*For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces  
turning ;*

*Here Captain ! dear father !*

*This arm beneath your head !*

*It is some dream that on the deck*

*You've fallen cold and dead.*

*My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and  
done,*

*From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won ;*

*Exult, O shores ! and ring, O bells !*

*But I with mournful tread,*

*Walk the deck my Captain lies,*

*Fallen cold and dead.*

WALT WHITMAN

## SECTION I

### *Years of Inexperience*

1809-1822

(FROM BIRTH TO THIRTEEN)

Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges. Let it be written in primers, spelling books, and in almanacs. Let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation.

*Extract from Lincoln's address before  
the Young Men's Lyceum, Springfield, 1837*

NOTE.—*The extracts from Lincoln's speeches throughout this book are given by kind permission of the Century Company, New York.*





## CHAPTER I: *Early Childhood*

**A**BRAHAM LINCOLN is one of the greatest names in the world. The parents who gave it to their boy were so poor that they lived in a house where there was only one room. But it matters very little whether houses are big or small. It is the men and women living there who make them either noble or mean. And thus, though Abraham Lincoln was born in a tiny, one-roomed cottage, through his uprightness, his hard work, and his natural cleverness he not only became President of the United States, but, what is more, he left in the world such an impression of nobility that as long as the world shall last he will be remembered and honoured.

It was a cold, dark day in February 1809 when Lincoln was born in a lonely, desolate spot in the backwoods of Kentucky. The little wooden house was not much better than a shed. The one room in it had to be used as a kitchen, dining-room, sitting-room, and bedroom, all in one. There was no door to keep out the cold draughts, but a large skin hung over the entrance and helped to make it warm, and a pile of huge logs crackled and glowed in the big, open fireplace. The window was only a square hole cut in the side of the wooden wall, through which the bitter wind rushed whistling in. On very cold days the skin of an animal shot in the woods near by would be fastened across this opening to shut out the freezing air, but this meant that the light would be shut out too, so that it was only on the coldest days that the window was darkened.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

All these inconveniences made the hut a very uncomfortable place to live in, but the baby boy, kept warm in his mother's arms, did not think it cold or disagreeable. It seemed to him a wonderful place—the most wonderful place in the world, because it was home. He loved to look at the hissing, leaping fire; to hear the wind blowing in through the roof and window, or under the door; to see his father come in with his gun; or to watch his mother cooking in the big pot over the fire the wild animal which his father had shot in the woods. He did not notice how poor the bed was; how few the pots and pans; how hard and bare the furniture. His tender mother cared for all his needs; his lively, happy-go-lucky father brought in plenty of food for their simple meals, and his sister Sarah, some two years older than himself, was always ready to play with him. So Abraham Lincoln was as happy as any other little boy in the world, and the days ran by very quickly in the little wooden house in Kentucky.

Thomas Lincoln, who was Abraham Lincoln's father, had lived in Kentucky all his life. He could remember the days when very few white men had lived there; when it had been a wild, uncultivated stretch of land, which the Red Indians used as a happy hunting-ground.

The States at this time were only thirteen in number, and all of them lay on the east side of America, between the coast-line and the great river Mississippi. All the land west of the Mississippi was uncultivated and only vaguely known, except to the Red Indians, who had hunted in it for so long that they had grown accustomed to think it belonged to themselves. And

## *Early Childhood*

so when the first Americans began to cross into these wild, lonely places, to stake out land, and to build wooden houses, the red men were furiously angry, and often made raids upon the new-comers or lay in wait to kill them. Abraham Lincoln's own grandfather, who came to Kentucky in 1780, was killed by one of these cunning foes, and Thomas Lincoln, his father, who was then a little boy, would have been kidnapped and carried off if his bigger brother, Mordecai, had not shot the Red Indian dead.

In time more settlers began to make their homes in Kentucky. At first only the bravest came, for there were many hardships to be endured, but gradually others heard of the new settlements, and followed in the track of the pioneers. The Red Indians were thus forced farther and farther back; but though they were seen less often they were still a danger, and every settler kept his gun ready, not only to kill the wild animals and birds which he needed for food, but, if necessary, to defend his wife and children from sudden attack.

In 1803 a very important change took place. Up till then the great tract of land lying between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains was owned by France. But in 1803—or six years before Abraham Lincoln was born—Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, bought the whole of this stretch of country for the American Government. By doing this he caused the trade of the country to increase enormously. There were no railways in those days, and, except in the towns, the roads were often only rough cattle-tracks, so that it was both long and expensive to send goods

## *Abraham Lincoln*

from one place to another. The cheapest and quickest way of carrying them was by boat, and when President Jefferson secured the land west of the Mississippi for America the river at once became the highway for trade. Up and down its splendid waters hundreds of boats passed daily; new towns sprang up on its banks; and rich merchants sent large cargoes down the river to the city of New Orleans, whence they were shipped to countries abroad.

Kentucky had already grown to such a size that some years earlier she had been admitted to the Union as a separate State, and so when little Abraham Lincoln was growing into boyhood he found himself living in a part of America which was rapidly becoming important. But for a long time he knew nothing of all these things. He lived in the backwoods, far away from any town, with only a few neighbours near. These people, like his parents, lived in comfortable huts, and were too busy killing wild animals for food, or making their skins into rough-and-ready clothing, to have time to think about what was happening in the more thickly populated parts of their State.

Lincoln's father was a restless, easy-going man, with some skill as a carpenter and a splendid shot. He had lived in the backwoods all his life, and he was never so happy as when he was out in the forest with a gun in his hand. The ordinary, quiet round of life was very irksome to him, and though he was a fairly good carpenter and builder, he would often throw down his task before it was done to catch up his gun and go off whistling into the woods. He seldom could stay long in one place, and so it happened

## *Early Childhood*

that when Abraham was only four years old the family left the little wooden hut which had so far been their home, and settled in a new spot, close to a stream, known as Knob Creek. The house was not much better than the one-roomed hut they had left behind them, but to the children everything was new and delightful, and they enjoyed the slow, troublesome journey which took them from one home to the other.

Abraham was a fine, sturdy little boy, tall for his age, and very strong. He loved listening to stories, and when the day's work was over the mother would gather her two children to her and keep them happy with her tales. She knew how to read and write, and she found time to teach Abraham his letters. There was no school in that lonely neighbourhood, but now and again a wandering schoolmaster would come into the place, settle there for a few weeks or a few months, and then go off again on his travels.

It was therefore not easy for the children who lived in these out-of-the-way clearings to get any proper education. Most of their parents did not mind about this. They thought it was enough if the boys knew how to chop wood and shoot, or help to build a cabin, and if the girls could cook and keep a house tidy. But Abraham's mother was different. She had been brought up gently herself, and she wanted very much to see her children educated. She was therefore full of delight when she found that a schoolmaster was coming for a time to Knob Creek. He would not be there for long—a month or two, or perhaps even less—and so, although Abraham was but five years old, he was sent at once to the little school,

## *Abraham Lincoln*

made up of a handful of children of all ages, gathered in from the homes which were in the neighbourhood. The schoolmaster did not teach the children very much; he knew very little himself, and the chief lesson was spelling. To his great delight Abraham Lincoln usually found himself at the top of the class. He was younger than most of the other children, but they had not been taught by their mothers, and so he easily outstripped them. He loved his lessons. The longer the row of spelling to be learnt by heart the better he liked it, and the harder the words the more pleasure he found in mastering them. Although he was young, he was a big, strong boy, very fearless, very straightforward, and never rough to those who were smaller or weaker than himself.

The first schoolmaster, Zachariah Riney, very soon got tired of his life at Knob Creek, and off he went to some new place. The little school was broken up, till a few months later, when it was opened by a second wandering schoolmaster, named Caleb Hazel, and again the children met for spelling lessons. But in a few weeks the new schoolmaster was tired of teaching; the school closed, and once more the children went back to their games and tasks at home. After that there was no school for a long time. Many of the children, no doubt, quickly forgot what little they had been taught. But it was not so with Abraham Lincoln. All he had learnt was firmly fixed in his head, and still firmer was the resolve to go on farther and learn more.

## CHAPTER II: *Life in Indiana*

THE Lincoln family had been barely three years in the little farm at Knob Creek when Abraham's father began to plan out another move. He had never been quite sure of the title-deeds of the Knob Creek home. More than once other men had appeared asking to see his claim and saying they had a better right to the land. Thomas Lincoln was too easy-going a man to worry his head over difficulties, and the best way out seemed to lie in removing to another home. There was nothing he liked better than to explore new country, and when a friend told him that across the Ohio, in Indiana, there were large tracts of land, easy to cultivate and unclaimed by anybody, he decided to go there and see what it was like.

With much heartiness he set to work and made a small but substantial flat boat. On this he put his tools and some barrels of whisky. Then, feeling like a Robinson Crusoe, he set off alone but in high spirits down the waters of the stream known as Rolling Fork, which flowed about a mile from his home. Before he got to the end of his journey disaster fell upon him. His boat caught in the rapids and turned over, but luckily he not only escaped drowning, but he was able to rescue nearly all his cargo. Nothing daunted by his mishap, Thomas Lincoln went ashore and began to look round for a man who would buy his barrels of whisky and tell him where the best land lay.

He soon found a customer for his liquor, and in reply to his other question he was advised to walk some miles farther north, where he would find all that

## *Abraham Lincoln*

he wanted. He took the advice, plunged into the forest, and presently found what his friend had said was true.

The land was fertile and well watered, but quite uncultivated. Dense thickets hindered his path, but in among the bushes were plenty of wild turkeys and other game, and to a woodsman who owned a gun, an axe, and a strong right arm there would be nothing difficult in clearing a space on which to build a log cabin, or in shooting enough game on which to live. After walking a few miles Thomas Lincoln came to a pleasant spot on a bend of the river known as Pigeon Creek, which showed signs of being inhabited. He quickly decided that this was the place for him, and he drove a stake into the ground to show he had made his claim, and then hurried off to the Government office to buy as much of the land as the money in his pocket would secure.

It was a long way to the office—seventy miles or more—and it was a good many days before he arrived there, hot, dusty, and very tired after his laborious tramp over rough cart-tracks, or through woods where there was no path at all to be seen.

He registered his name and paid part of the money for the land. Then he turned back and trudged on foot to his home at Knob Creek, where he told his wife and children he had found a new home for them. Abraham and Sarah were delighted at the idea of packing up and travelling through the woods for some days, but their mother felt it would be a long and tedious journey. True, the distance in a straight line was only fifty miles, but the cart-tracks they would have to follow twisted and turned and went up and down, till the fifty miles were nearly doubled.



## *Life in Indiana*

It was thus a good many days before the journey was ended, and Thomas Lincoln and his wife and children stood on the land which was now their own. The daily picnics by the way, and the nights passed under the shelter of trees, had been a great delight to the children, and when they arrived they were not at all dismayed to find no hut awaiting them. But even the happy-go-lucky father knew that a dwelling of some kind was necessary, and he quickly set to work to build a rough shelter they might call home. A few poles were driven into the ground, and the walls were then covered over with bark and leaves. The roof was made in the same way, and when this was done the shelter was ready. There was no door to it, for the whole of the fourth side was left open, and near this space a large fire was kept burning day and night, in order to keep the children and their parents from freezing as they slept. In this comfortless shed the Lincoln family lived for the greater part of a year. They arrived in November, and winter was upon them before much had been done. But winter had changed into spring, and summer days were at hand before Thomas Lincoln began to build the fine wooden house he had promised his wife should be hers. By September it was more than half done, and though there was a good deal of finishing work needed, the family very gladly began living in it. Though Abraham was only a little boy, he had helped his father to cut the logs, and when the household moved into it he felt very proud to think that he had had a share in the building. This early training with an axe made him strong and very skilful, and by the time he became a man he was six feet four

## *Abraham Lincoln*

inches in height and had a longer and a stronger arm than any of his friends. 'Honest Abe' he was often called, because he worked with all his might and dealt fairly with every one. If he had been asked what had helped him to win the name he would have said he had grown strong through his hard work in the open air as a boy, and that any good quality in him was the result of the influence of his tender, loving mother, who taught him to reverence all that is noble.

Not long after the wooden house was built a great sorrow fell upon the little home. Mrs Lincoln had never been strong, and when a new, mysterious disease broke out among the little cluster of settlers she fell ill with it and died in the autumn of 1818.

Her husband and children missed her terribly. There was now no one to cook their meals and keep the home comfortable; no one to sew their clothes; no one to look after them when they were ill or unhappy; no one to love them as she had loved them, to listen to all they had to say, and to kiss away their troubles. Very, very sad were the days after the gentle little mother left them for ever.

Through the whole of that long, unhappy winter little Sarah, who was only eleven years old, did her best to keep the home tidy. But it was hard work for her childish hands, and though she knew how to cook their simple meals, she could not make their clothes, and Abraham, who was growing fast, soon found his deerskin trousers were getting much too short. This, however, did not trouble him, and he seldom thought about his appearance except when the cold wind stung his bare legs. He grieved every day over the loss of his mother, and, boy though he



THE BOYHOOD OF LINCOLN  
"What they did I too may do"

Harry Watson



## *Life in Indiana*

was, he felt the only honour he could show her memory would be to get a travelling preacher to come and preach a sermon over her grave. In that desolate neighbourhood there was no church or chapel, but occasionally a travelling preacher would pass through the district, and all the people near would come together to hear him. Abraham knew one of these preachers who had been in the neighbourhood before, and with much effort he wrote him a letter and told him what he wanted. The letter had to be handed on from one to another till it reached its proper place, but in time it got to the minister, and little Abraham was intensely proud and very happy when one day the preacher rode into the settlement and preached a sermon beside Mrs Lincoln's grave. Few boys of nine who had lived all their lives in a lonely, unknown spot would have had the courage or the ingenuity to carry out Abraham's plan. But already Lincoln was beginning to show signs of the splendid determination and resourcefulness which later in his life were to place him in the President's chair.

In the autumn of the year when the preacher came to visit them Abraham's father took his gun and told the children he was going away. He kissed them both and told Sarah to look after the house till his return, and then, waving them good-bye, he set off. Some time before this some of Lincoln's relations had come to live near them, and one of them, a boy named Dennis Hanks, now lived with the Lincoln family. Thus there were three children left in the home by Pigeon Creek when Thomas Lincoln went off into the woods. Two or three weeks went by and still the father did not return. Was he lost, or had

## *Abraham Lincoln*

he gone away for ever? The children did not know. But they lived contentedly in their home, and though Abraham was too tender-hearted to kill wild animals, Dennis Hanks was a good shot with a gun, and he brought in plenty of game for Sarah to cook.

In this lonely, desolate fashion the autumn went by, till one day early in December, when the children suddenly saw their father coming back. He was not coming alone, but in a large wagon in which sat a woman and three children. Behind them was piled up a quantity of furniture, finer than anything Sarah or Abraham had ever seen. What could it all mean? Silently they waited for the wagon to draw up. Their father jumped down and kissed them, saying :

“Children, I have brought you a new mother and a brother and two sisters.” There was a general commotion while every one got out of the cart, and then Abraham and Sarah found themselves being kissed by a woman whom they felt sure they would love very much. She had a bright, happy face and seemed to make every one round her feel cheerful. Already the home seemed less desolate, and, in spite of the great change in their life, Abraham and Sarah felt happier than they had done for many months.

The new mother was a strong and capable woman. Her good furniture made the house look very comfortable, and she soon persuaded her husband to do all the finishing off which the walls and roof still needed. Before long everything was in its place, and the Lincolns' hut was admired far and wide as the handsomest cabin in the settlement. Better than this, Sarah and Abraham felt it was really home.

## SECTION II

### *Years of Development*

1822-1832

(FROM THIRTEEN TO TWENTY-THREE)

Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we, as a people, can be engaged in. That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance, even on this account alone, to say nothing of the advantages and satisfaction to be derived from all being able to read the Scriptures and other works, both of a religious and moral nature, for themselves.

For my part I desire to see the time when education—and by its means morality, sobriety, enterprise, and industry—shall become much more general than at present; and should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute something to the advancement of any measure which might have a tendency to accelerate that happy period.

*Extract from Lincoln's first public speech, in which he addressed the people of Sangamon County, 1832*





## CHAPTER III: *Schooldays*

LINCOLN'S new mother was not only a sensible woman, who made the home happy and comfortable for every one, but she was clever enough to realize the importance of a good education, and when she discovered that Abraham was fond of books she made up her mind to help him as much as she could. Sometimes when the other boys were playing games Abraham would sit with one of the few treasured books of the household in his hand, lost in the interest of what he was reading; but another day he would be the noisiest among them all, and though his companions might tease him because of his fondness for books, they knew quite well that if it came to a race or a rough-and-tumble fight 'Abe' could beat any of them. He was fast growing into the size of a man, and with his long, lean, powerful arms he could hit harder than any other boy in the neighbourhood; they forgave him for outdoing them in the schoolroom because he also outdid them in the field. There was one sport only in which he did not shine, and that was the killing of wild animals. Though he had early been taught how to use a gun, he could not bear taking life from any creature, and his shooting never went farther than a solitary turkey, which he one day killed in a moment of excitement. The tender-heartedness which later in life made him take the side of the defenceless slave, or protect from punishment the soldier who had turned tail in battle, or pardon the man who had thoughtlessly committed a crime, was already to be seen in the boy, who, perfectly strong in body and

## *Abraham Lincoln*

brimming over with energy, could not bring himself to trap a squirrel, or change a happy, flying bird into a little blood-stained heap of feathers. Years after, when he was President of the United States, and a young soldier had been sentenced to death for deserting his post, Lincoln took the death-warrant, saying: "I will put it in my pigeon-hole for 'leg cases.' There are," he went on, "cases you call by that long title, Cowardice-in-the-face-of-the-enemy, but I call them, for short, my leg cases. If Almighty God has given a man a pair of cowardly legs, how can he help running away with them?" The humour, the tenderness, and the decisiveness which underlie this remark all had their beginning in the early days in the backwoods, where a long-legged, long-armed, warm-hearted boy was unconsciously building up a character that would some day make him respected as a man of the highest nobility.

The kindness of his new mother made life very happy for Lincoln, and it was largely through her energy that he was sent with the rest of the children to a school which was opened in the settlement in 1822. Abraham was thirteen at the time, and very eager to learn. He would willingly have walked many miles to get any kind of instruction, and the news that a schoolmaster was actually going to live near his home seemed too good to be true. The lessons did not go very far—reading, writing, spelling, and a few easy sums, that was the most the teacher could teach his pupils. Abraham could easily out-spell the rest, and he was soon at the top of the school. At the same time he was just as much of a boy as the

## *Schooldays*

others, and a book of his, still preserved, in which he had scrawled triumphantly,

Abraham Lincoln,  
His hand and pen,  
He will be good,  
But God knows when,

proves that he was not above enjoying himself after the fashion dear to school-children all the world over.

The school was not a great success, and no one except the Lincolns had any enthusiasm for it. By and by the master himself got weary, and the little wooden schoolhouse was shut up. It had been built with great pride by the fathers of the children who were sent there, and though it had no boards for a floor, no glass in its windows, and a roof through which the rain very often soaked, in Lincoln's eyes it was a true temple of learning.

After a holiday of two years the school was reopened by a new master. Lincoln was again one of the pupils, but to his disappointment the new master grew tired of his business even sooner than the other had done, and once more the door of the schoolhouse was bolted. This was practically the end of the school education Lincoln ever got, and when he was President he was more than once heard to remark that if all his schooldays were added together they would not come to a twelvemonth.

But though he got little help from others, Lincoln was all the time his own teacher, and he taught himself much more severely than any one else would have done. Once he had taken a book in his hand he was never content till he had plucked the heart out of it.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

To half know a thing was not enough for him. He did not rest till he had mastered it thoroughly. As he grew older he taught himself law, surveying, and a dozen other difficult things. The boy who had learnt to struggle with an axe before he was nine years old grew into the man who was not afraid of tackling the tree of knowledge and splitting it open by sheer hard work.

By the time he was seventeen Lincoln looked a man. To his indulgent stepmother he still seemed a boy, but his father thought it high time for him to do a man's work. He had never been idle, but there was a difference between a boy's help and the labour expected from a man. It was now time for Lincoln to take his place among men.

## CHAPTER IV: *Everyday Work*

FOR the next three years Lincoln remained at home. There was plenty of work for him to do, and all day long, he was busy, either chopping logs or raising crops or helping to clear away the thick tangles of brushwood which stood in the way of the settlers. There was little or no excitement in his days. Each day was very much like the one before. It seemed likely that he would lead just such a life as his father had done, living till the end of his years in the remote backwoods and knowing nothing at all of the world beyond the few miles he had ever travelled.

But though for the time being Lincoln was well pleased to do what his father told him, he dreamt of very different things and steadfastly looked forward to the day when he would be a full-grown man and free to go into the wider world of which he knew so little. As the settlement on Pigeon Creek grew larger, and new families began to make it their home, men came into the neighbourhood who talked of wider affairs than the building of a log cabin or the raising of enough grain to feed a family, and whenever they talked they found in Lincoln a ready listener. Every scrap of information he could pick up of what people said and did in big towns was so much new knowledge to him, and his quick imagination filled in the rough sketches the men gave him. Some years before this he had read Weems's *Life of George Washington* and he had never forgotten it. Washington was thenceforth his hero among heroes, and when he was downcast because of his own few opportunities he

## *Abraham Lincoln*

would remember the difficulties Washington had conquered, and resolve that he would do his utmost to imitate his courage. He began to try to make speeches, and whenever he could get any one to listen to him he would stand up and make an oration. As a rule he usually found an audience, for Lincoln had a persuasive way with him, and he was always deeply in earnest about what he had to say. A round of good-natured clapping from the men who listened was more than enough reward for him. The feeling of mastery was kindling in him ; in a shy way he felt he enjoyed addressing other people. He liked to feel they were listening to him, that in some degree at least he could move their thoughts. Such pleasure did not spring from conceit. Lincoln's wholesome upbringing and his natural modesty saved him from the faults of a lesser man. Greatness was stirring in him ; genius was at work in his mind, fitting him to become presently the true master of men.

During the seasons when there was not a great deal of work to be done on the farm Lincoln spent some of his time as a ferryman on the river Ohio, where he ferried passengers across from Kentucky to Indiana. This was new and exciting work. At Pigeon Creek there was very little coming and going. The people who lived there were too busy earning their daily bread to have time or money for travelling. They lived a quiet, hard-working life, seeing few strangers and enjoying few pleasures. To the youth, fresh from the quiet round of the Creek, it seemed 'the height of everything splendid to steer a ferry-boat. The passengers he carried appeared to him different from the men he knew at home. They



YOUNG LINCOLN WORKING OUT SUMS ON A SHOVEL  
W. Rainey, R. I.





## *Everyday Work*

were not settlers or farmers ; many of them worked in offices ; they lived in towns and mixed with other men. As he ferried them across the broad stretch of the river, Lincoln felt that now at last he was beginning to be in touch with the busy world of which he had dreamed, and whither, some day, he meant to go.

To fit himself for this great future enterprise he spent every spare minute he had in reading any book that came his way. When the cold winter days came, and the rippling surface of the river turned slowly into menacing blocks of ice, there was no more ferrying to be done, and Lincoln had to return to Pigeon Creek. There he found more than enough household tasks to keep him busy. He chopped wood, carried water, and helped his father in all there was to be done. No one could work better than he ; few could do as well. When his long, strong arm seized the axe the logs would soon be split up ready for use, and if there were heavy weights to be carried it was always Lincoln who could take the most. In spite of his great strength he was always ready to help those who were weaker than himself, and he was never in too great a hurry to pass by even an animal crying for aid. He would jump into a stream to save a dog, or scramble up a tree to put back a wounded bird. This instinct for gentleness never left him, but continued throughout his life to be one of his most lovable qualities.

During the long, happy winter days at home Lincoln's mind was busy upon the problem of how he could get into touch with the bigger world of which he had had a tantalizing glimpse. He thought that

## *Abraham Lincoln*

he would try to make a boat of his own and then offer to carry goods in it for traders. His father was quite willing for him to make the attempt, and so in his spare time Lincoln built a small, strong-looking flat-boat, every bit of which was fashioned by his own hands. As the owner of a boat, however clumsy and home-made her appearance, Lincoln felt he was considerably nearer to the outside world, and in imagination he saw himself mixing in city crowds and enjoying all the pleasant sensations that life in a town could give him. In a small way he was already something of a speaker, with an easy command over words. Daily papers he had never seen; books were rare and dear possessions, to be read over and over again. The few which had come in his way in life he knew almost off by heart. The smallness of his library had been an advantage to him. It had forced him to read attentively, since he could not afford to spare a word, and being quite without newspapers and journals of any kind he knew nothing of the ready-made phrases which are part and parcel of the thought and speech of a hurried journalist. Lincoln's language was homely, and his images were drawn from incidents and objects in daily life, but he was free from anything theatrical or tawdry, and too natural in his outlook and too frank in his comments deliberately to aim at producing an effect. He was just a simple, large-hearted boy, full of healthy curiosity about life, and ready to spend himself in the service of others. To the end of his life Lincoln lost neither his simplicity nor his earnestness. He cared deeply about things. Everything mattered. He never upheld a cause in which he did not believe, and

## *Everyday Work*

thus he had no need to cultivate the cunning persuasiveness of an orator who, not caring very much on which side he speaks, is like a plant that has no root, and for a few hours makes a brave show and then withers and is cast away. Lincoln, on the other hand, threw his roots down deeply, and, being firmly planted, withstood every blast of criticism or abuse.

In time his audiences became aware that he never supported a cause in which he did not personally believe, and because he believed they began to do so also. It was this high note of conviction which made his speeches so powerful. He meant every word he said; and if he thought it right to say a thing, he said it, without first considering whether it would be likely to please or vex his hearers. 'Honest Abe' he had been called by those among whom he worked with his hands, and when fortune brought him into the larger and more difficult world of politics he could still claim the title. Fame and position became his, but they left him the same at heart, and in the White House at Washington he was just what he had been in the little home at Pigeon Creek—as eager to play his part in the world and as determined to play it in the way that seemed to him right.

## CHAPTER V: *Down the Mississippi*

LINCOLN launched his little flat-boat successfully on the Ohio, but it was a clumsy vessel and hard to manage, and he very soon gave it up to join in an expedition planned by his friend Allan Gentry. Gentry was taking some goods for his father to New Orleans, on a large, heavy boat, known as a broadhorn, and he now asked Lincoln to accompany him. Lincoln did not hesitate over his answer. He had been born with the courage and the curiosity of an explorer, and the very thought of seeing a town made his blood tingle with excitement. He felt more like a king setting out to conquer a new country than a poor boat-hand when he stood on the broadhorn and helped to push her down the waters of the majestic Mississippi.

To a youth who had scarcely been more than a mile or two from home, the adventure was a journey through fairyland. On either side of the river he could here and there catch sight of large sugar plantations, whose owners lived in long, wooden houses, sheltered from the sun by wide verandahs. On the edge of the river-swamps rose giant trees, among them the tall and sombre cypress, like a mournful sentry keeping watch over the treacherous bogs. Beyond were cane-brakes, and beyond these again wide open prairies on which flourished the live-oak and the splendid magnolia.

The management of the broadhorn took most of Lincoln's attention, but he also had eyes for the new

## *Down the Mississippi*

beauties through which he was passing. Along the lower reaches of the river the forests were denser and more silent. The axe had done little work here. Tall and menacing, the trees stood in possession of the earth, their branches laden with the beautiful but deadly Spanish moss, hanging in ribands, like tattered banners, motionless, lovely—unmistakable signals that the tree was doomed and would by and by perish, choked by its garlands.

Between the thick stretches of foliage a keen eye might catch the glimmer of a lagoon, looking like a line of silver in the light, but in reality sinister and dark. Splendid fruit-trees added colour to the scene, rose-bushes covered with a thousand blossoms, jasmine running wild. To Lincoln it was all a coloured dream; everything was new; everything was full of beauty.

As the two youths got farther on their way the river became more crowded and lively. Big boats and little boats jostled one another—tiny craft and great sailing vessels, homely flat-boats, and wide, cumbersome broadhorns. On the Mississippi there was more than enough room for them all, and Lincoln began vaguely to realize that the world was even bigger than he had pictured it.

At last New Orleans came in sight. The broadhorn was safely anchored, and Lincoln and Gentry were free to go ashore. Lincoln had never seen a town before and at first the noise bewildered him. But this feeling of discomfort was soon swallowed up in the delight he found in the passing to and fro of the people, the hum of their conversation, and the brilliant splash of colour made by the dress of the

## *Abraham Lincoln*

women. Fresh from the solitude of Pigeon Creek, it seemed to him like a fairy tale. Little did he think that he himself was the fairy prince who would some day be famous not only in New Orleans but throughout America and the whole world.

After finishing their business Lincoln and Allan Gentry prepared to return home. They had proved themselves capable and clever young men. A captain who had watched them offered Lincoln a place as a hand in his boat. Lincoln refused. He was not yet more than nineteen years of age, and he knew that his father felt he had the right to his son's service for the next two or three years. So back from New Orleans to Pigeon Creek they journeyed, and once more Lincoln settled down to the ordinary hard daily work of the homestead. He returned to find an air of excitement in the home. His father, Thomas Lincoln, though now middle-aged, had not yet lost his desire for change, and he was thoroughly tired of Pigeon Creek. He had now lived there some years, and he was wearying to be off. Some of his relations, including Abraham's cousin, John Hanks, had lately settled in Illinois, and they wrote wonderful accounts of the advantages of their new home. Why not come too? they said to Thomas Lincoln, and he began to say impatiently, "Why not?" His clever, capable wife was less ready to risk a move, but when letter after letter told the same tale she declared herself willing to go.

And so the great change was made, and the Lincolns once more sought a new home. More preparations were needed this time than on the earlier journeys. Lincoln's stepsisters had now married, and they and

## *Down the Mississippi*

their families were going with them, so that to leave Pigeon Creek meant a great upheaval. Fortunately Lincoln was there to help with the preparations, and his strong arm and his readiness to do anything to help made him a very useful member of the party. John Hanks, delighted to hear they were coming, had already staked out a claim for them, and he promised also to help to build a house. In these circumstances all seemed fair and hopeful when the little cavalcade set off one morning early in March in the year 1830 to travel to Decatur, which stands not far from the Sangamon River.

The distance they had to travel was not above two hundred miles. An express train to-day would cover the journey in four hours, or perhaps even less. But in the whole of America at this date there was not a railway. In England, George Stephenson's great triumph, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, just finished, was a marvel to the world. Few realized as yet how much steam was to do. Meanwhile, even between towns travelling was a wearying, troublesome affair, and in districts where at best there were only cart-tracks journeys were very slow and laborious. When the Lincoln family set off in their wagon from Pigeon Creek to Decatur, it took them two weeks to cover the two hundred miles they had to go. Abraham was an invaluable helper on the road. No one could handle the horses better than he. Through shallow rivers, or deep mud, or over tracks rough with uncut stones, he patiently urged them on, never losing his temper over the little accidents of the way, but keeping every one else merry and happy by his cheerfulness and his quaint remarks about the ups and

## *Abraham Lincoln*

downs which befell them. If anything went wrong, instead of getting angry Lincoln would usually make some amusing remark, and turn into a joke what would otherwise have been a disagreeable incident.

Even the longest and roughest journey at last comes to an end, and in time the Lincolns reached Decatur, where with every one's willing help the new house was quickly built. It was well they were soon comfortably settled, for the winter set in with terrible keenness, and snow fell to such a depth that ever after it was spoken of as 'the winter of the deep snow.'

With the coming of spring and the gradual thawing of the snow, Lincoln began to think what his own plans were to be. He was twenty-two, and if ever he was to get a footing in the world it was high time to make a beginning. A friend named Denton Offutt came to him with a proposal. His father wanted to ship some goods down the river to New Orleans, and he had heard that Lincoln had already made a successful journey there. He therefore asked him to join in the new expedition, and when Lincoln gladly accepted the offer, a little crew, consisting of Lincoln, his stepbrother, John Johnston, and his cousin, John Hanks, set off in a flat-boat, with Dennis Offutt as captain. Lincoln was in high spirits over the new enterprise, and as they got nearer and nearer to the great town and the river became alive with vessels of every size and shape, he felt himself rising into an ecstasy of excitement. But in New Orleans his joyousness received a sudden check, for it was there he first saw a slave-market. On his earlier visit Lincoln had had no time to explore the less fashionable quarters, and he did not know that slaves



## *Down the Mississippi*

were actually bought and sold in the streets of the town which seemed to him as dazzling as El Dorado. That cruelty and misery should lurk in the dark corners of this splendid place made him feel sick and ill with shame. Surely in a town so wonderful every one must be happy. But those sad groups of silent, big-eyed slaves, huddled together to be inspected by any likely buyer, froze Lincoln's heart and made him realize for the first time in his happy, wholesome life that splendour and misery are often not far apart, and sometimes even go hand in hand.

A few weeks later, their business being settled, Lincoln and his friends returned home. To his companions he seemed just the same as ever, as full of jokes, as ready for a prank, as prepared for a game, or, if necessary, as ready to fight. But the shock of the sight of the slave-market had left an impression that could never be wiped out. Already he was beginning to brood over the problem of slavery, which was henceforward to occupy a large part of his mind. The boy who was too kind-hearted to trap a bird or a squirrel shrank indignantly from the very thought of enslaving men, and in his mind he instinctively took the side of the captives. The visit to New Orleans thus marked an important era in his life and made him begin definitely to think about the sufferings of others. Once he had realized that any one was being treated cruelly or unjustly, there was no doubt where his sympathies would be. Since the days when he had waded into an icy stream to rescue an imploring dog, Abraham Lincoln had always been the champion of the weak and defenceless.

Shortly after Lincoln's return home, Mr Offutt,

## *Abraham Lincoln*

the father of his friend Denton Offutt, determined to open a small general shop in the little village of New Salem, some twelve miles below Springfield. He had noticed Lincoln's ability and the clever way in which he had helped to carry through the trip to New Orleans, and he now wrote and invited him to become the manager of the little store. Lincoln willingly answered "Yes," and made haste to take up his new occupation.

New Salem was a very small place indeed, but in comparison with his old home it was large and lively, and as manager of the general village store Lincoln felt he was indeed a man. His ready humour and good-nature made him a favourite with every one. The shop quickly became the meeting-place of the village, where men and women would come to do their bit of shopping and to chat with 'Abe.' Better even than his good-nature and his quaint way of expressing his opinions to the shoppers was his strict honesty. A buyer once handed him too much money, and Lincoln could not rest till he had gone after him and handed it back. Another time when by an accident he weighed out too little tea for one of his customers, as soon as he found out his mistake he weighed out some more and took it round to her home. 'Honest Abe' they liked to call him, and Lincoln never had any prouder title given him. Honest in thought, in word, and in deed, there never was any occasion in his life when he feared to look an enemy in the face, or shrank from having any of his actions, whether public or private, examined by the eagle eye of truth.

## SECTION III

### *Years of Self-expression and Experience*

1832-1842

(FROM TWENTY-THREE TO THIRTY-THREE)

I go for all sharing the privileges of the Government who assist in bearing its burdens : consequently I go for admitting all whites to the rights of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).

If elected I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me.

While acting as their representative I shall be governed by their will on all subjects upon which I have the means of knowing what their will is, and upon all others I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interests.

*Extract from a letter written by Lincoln appearing in  
the "Sangamon Journal," June 1836*



## CHAPTER VI: *Black Hawk's Rebellion*

**I**N spite of Lincoln's popularity, the little shop in New Salem did not succeed in making money for its owner, Mr Offutt, and it was not very long before, in Lincoln's words, it 'winked out.' When a store has 'winked out' there is no more work either for its owner or his assistants, and once more Lincoln was faced with the problem of what to do next.

While he was still hesitating, news arrived that the Red Indians were in rebellion, under the Sac chief known as Black Hawk. Ever since the Americans had begun to cross the Mississippi and make settlements in the old hunting-ground of the Indians the red men had found themselves steadily driven farther and farther back. They felt bitterly angry as they realized that lands which they had long thought of as their own were being seized by the white men, but they could do very little to prevent the change, for the white men were stronger and far more numerous and better equipped than the half-savage Indians could ever be. Little by little the Indians had to give way, till at last some of their chiefs grudgingly signed a paper by which they agreed to give up to the white men all the land in the north of Illinois, in return for which they were allowed to claim a stretch of land on the west of the Mississippi. This treaty had been made with the consent of most of the chiefs, but there was one, Black Hawk, who swore he would never agree to it. He said that the white

## *Abraham Lincoln*

men had stolen the Indians' lands, and therefore he regarded them as his bitter enemies and declared he would never acknowledge them as his masters. Black Hawk was head of a tribe known as the Sacs, and he now made an alliance with another tribe, and together the warriors boldly crossed the Mississippi, saying they had come to take back the lands in the Rock River Valley which had been unlawfully seized by the white men. The news of the rebellion caused great alarm among the settlers, and when farm after farm began to be burned, landmarks removed and crops destroyed, a volunteer army rapidly sprang into being to put down Black Hawk and his men.

Among those who volunteered was Lincoln. His shop had 'winked out' and he had no new work on hand, and moreover the idea of fighting attracted him. Six feet four in height, with an arm like a sledge-hammer, and well used from childhood to enduring hardships and toil, he had all the qualities most needed by a soldier, and it was not very surprising that his comrades quickly voted him their captain. He was delighted at the honour, and afterward he used to say no compliment he had ever received pleased him more than this. None of the men in his command were trained soldiers, and they had very little idea either of discipline or of doing quickly what they were told. Lincoln had plenty of common sense to help him, and he could be firm and stern in giving orders, but it took all his tact and skill to manage these willing but very difficult soldiers of his. Fortunately he could outshine any of them in the games they played, and his splendid strength



LINCOLN AND THE INDIAN  
E. F. Skinner





## *Black Hawk's Rebellion*

made them respect him and inclined them to obey him.

Lincoln's fine sense of justice once brought him into a dangerous position with his men, and but for his courage he would have lost the day. A half-starved, sullen Indian made his way into the camp. The soldiers, grown savage through days of idle waiting, were ready to kill any stranger, and they cried out at once: "He is a spy! Shoot him." The bewildered Indian, seeing mischief was afoot, timidly held out a paper signed by General Cass, saying that the bearer was a friend to the white men and ought to be allowed a free pass.

"What!" muttered the men, "let him go free! Why, it's a forgery. General Cass never signed that order." Several rifles were pointed at the unhappy stranger, and the next minute he would have been dead if Lincoln had not sprung in front of him crying, "Men, this must not be! He must not be shot by us."

For a moment the rebels paused, then one of them shouted:

"This is cowardly on your part, Lincoln."

"If any man thinks I am a coward, let him test it," replied Abraham Lincoln.

"You are larger and heavier than we," said another.

"You can guard against that. Choose your own weapons," retorted the captain. There was a pause; a silence; then one by one the rifles were lowered, and Lincoln knew that he had won the day. If he had been less brave, if he had blinked an eyelid in fear, or stepped back but half a pace, nothing could have saved the camp from riot. His absolute lack

## *Abraham Lincoln*

of fear was his strongest weapon, and the men who had been ready to threaten him, now became his devoted admirers, and boasted of him to their friends.

This gift of dealing quickly with a crisis was always Lincoln's greatest safeguard in life. He thought rapidly, and held firmly to his line of action, never considering himself, or his own comfort, or any danger that might befall him, but going straight to the point, and acting with a bold decisiveness that drew a chorus of praise even from his enemies. In the army, it was said, "he attracted men and officers as with hooks of steel," and when he had risen into greatness and become President of the States he still kept his old magnetic power, and thus he gradually endeared to him not only the men who worked daily with him, but the whole of the nation whom he toiled to serve.

Day after day went by and Lincoln's soldiers still waited for instructions from headquarters which never came. The men began to grow restless and long for freedom. They had only volunteered for a few weeks' service, and as soon as the term was over they demanded their dismissal. To pacify them they were disbanded and allowed to return to their homes. Captain Lincoln was now an officer without any men, but he did not hesitate about what to do. He had set out to fight against the Indians, and he therefore quietly enlisted as a private in a battalion often known as the Independent Spy Battalion, commanded by Captain Iles.

In this new capacity Lincoln faithfully served his term in the war, but without coming into contact with the fighting forces. Black Hawk and his few

## *Black Hawk's Rebellion*

bold followers were no match for the white men, and after a short spell of sharp fighting the Indian chief was captured and brought before President Jackson. In the whole of his life the Sac leader had never seen a city such as Washington, and he had never dreamed of magnificence to match what he saw in the White House, but nothing could abash his brave old heart, and when he saw the President he spoke to him simply, as one chief to another, saying sadly but bravely, "I am a man, and you are another. I did not expect to conquer the white people. I took up the hatchet to avenge injuries which could no longer be borne. Had I borne them longer my people would have said: 'Black Hawk is a squaw. He is too old to be a chief. He is no Sac.' This caused me to raise the war-whoop. I say no more of it: all is known to you."

With the capture of brave Black Hawk the war came to an end. The volunteer soldiers were dismissed, and Lincoln now made his way back to New Salem. His short experience as a captain had given him his first real taste of governing men, and afterward, as a private, he had been able to study the methods of command used by men accustomed to planning campaigns and giving orders. Among the officers who visited his camp was one named Zachary Taylor. Years afterward Taylor was to become President of the United States of America. Little did any one think that Private Abraham Lincoln would also some day win that high office. Still less did the thought occur to Private A. Lincoln himself.

## CHAPTER VII: *An Election*

**B**EFORE Lincoln had set off on the Black Hawk expedition he had put down his name as a candidate to represent Sangamon County in the State Legislature. The elections were to take place in August and four men would be chosen. A good many men were anxious to be elected, and there were no less than thirteen names put before the electors. Among these names was that of Lincoln, but through his absence in fighting against the Indians he had not much time to prepare any elaborate speeches in which to urge his claims. Nevertheless he came back in time to send out a circular to all the people in the county explaining his views. It ran :

“ FELLOW CITIZENS,

“ Having become a candidate for the honourable office of one of your representatives in the next general assembly of this State, in accordance with an established custom and the principles of true republicanism, it becomes my duty to make known to you, the people whom I propose to represent, my sentiments with regard to local affairs. . . .

“ Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow-men by rendering myself worthy of their esteem.

“ How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young and unknown to many of you ; I was born and have ever remained in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy

## *An Election*

or popular relations or friends to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the county, and if elected they will have conferred a favour upon me for which I shall be unremitting in my labours to compensate. But if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined."

In addition to this plain confession of his intentions, Lincoln made one or two simple speeches before the country-folk in his neighbourhood. These people, who, like himself, had all their lives been used to hard work and plain food and clothes, felt themselves drawn toward the tall, awkward-looking young man, whose long arms and large hands spoke of hard toil, and whose over-short trousers told a tale of poverty. Many of his listeners knew him personally, and had already made up their minds to vote for him, and they now busied themselves in persuading any strangers among them to support the claims of 'Honest Abe.'

At this time in America's history there were two great political parties in the country. One of these had existed for a long time, and its followers were called Democrats. Andrew Jackson was its leader at this time. The other party was quite new, and the men who upheld it were known as Whigs. One of the chief men among the Whigs was Henry Clay, whom Lincoln deeply admired. For years he had studied Clay's speeches and believed in them, and he now ran as a 'Clay' man. Although the great Civil War was still a long way off, there was already

## *Abraham Lincoln*

a good deal of difference in opinion between the North and South. The northern part of the States was full of thriving towns where the people busied themselves manufacturing all sorts of goods. They found plenty of buyers for their articles in their own country, and therefore they did not want to have a great many things sent in from abroad lest there should be too much competition. They thought that by charging a high tariff on all goods coming into the country they would be able to prevent them being sold too cheaply, and by this means they would get a good price for whatever was made at home.

This view did not meet with applause in the South, where the people made their living by growing cotton instead of manufacturing goods. The Southerners saw that by making other countries pay a high duty on everything sent to America, the prices of everything in America would be kept very high. This would be no advantage to the Southerners, who would have to buy them, although it might be quite agreeable to the Northerners who sold them. In the South, therefore, the people were anxious to have a low tariff instead of a high one, and so there began to be a tug of war between the North and the South.

This feeling of difference between the two did not improve with time, but rather grew worse, till at last in 1832—the year when Lincoln was standing for the Legislature—the people who lived in South Carolina came together and declared that if the North persisted in forcing a high tariff upon them South Carolina would separate itself from the other States and secede from, or leave, the Union.

## An Election

Here was a terrible dilemma! No one had ever dreamt of breaking the Union of the States that had so proudly declared their independence in 1776, and the very thought that it was possible for South Carolina to imagine such a thing threw the other States into anxiety.

“What shall we do if South Carolina goes out?” Northerners began to ask. But bolder spirits flung back the answer:

“South Carolina shall not go out. If she does it will be as good as saying we are not a nation. Once in the Union, for ever in the Union. Every State must think first of the Union, and then of its own interests.” To this South Carolina stubbornly replied, “A State must think first of *itself*, and then of the Union.”

Matters were in this awkward condition when Henry Clay made a good suggestion, by which he persuaded South Carolina to stay in the Union upon condition that the high tariff should be gradually lessened till it became quite low. This wise idea succeeded in pacifying both the North and the South, and for the time being the cloud blew over.

Lincoln had watched the crisis with interest, and he had learnt a great lesson from it. His quick eye never let any change in politics pass by unnoticed, and the movement in South Carolina convinced him once and for all that Henry Clay was right and that the Union must never and under no circumstances be broken. This conviction grew steadily in his mind till it became the chief article in his political faith. Dearer to him even than the abolition of slavery was the preservation of the nation, and to

## *Abraham Lincoln*

keep the Union unbroken became the passion of his life.

When the lists of the election for the Legislature from Sangamon County were made known, Abraham Lincoln was not among the winning four. His name came eighth on the list of thirteen competitors. But though he was not elected, he had done very well for a young man who was unknown except in his own little neighbourhood, and so he was "not very much chagrined," but hoped for better things next time. If the voting had depended on New Salem alone he would have got in easily with every vote in his favour, but there were many other districts to be included in the voting, and among the people in these districts Lincoln's was an unknown name. His friends in New Salem, who beamed on the young man and told him not to worry about his defeat, felt they had supported a man who, had he been elected, would have been a very good member of the Legislature, but not one of them imagined that this same homely, ill-clad young man would one day be chosen to fill an office far higher than anything the Legislature could offer, and that instead of being known only to the little cluster of country people who lived in New Salem he would be known all over the world.



## CHAPTER VIII: *Law and Politics*

**L**INCOLN was disappointed to find that he was not elected to the Legislature, but he had too much common sense to think it was the end of his career. In all probability there would be another chance presently; in the meantime he must work. The question that troubled him most was 'the problem of making enough money to buy food and clothing for himself. The little shop was shut: what could he do? Odd jobs were the only immediate means of earning a living, and he offered himself for any kind of work. He chopped wood or worked in the fields, drove wagons or carried parcels for his neighbours, who were all ready to give 'Abe' a helping hand. But in New Salem there were no rich men, and the most willing among his friends could only offer him very humble assistance. On the other hand, Lincoln did not want fine food, and he had never worn any but the most homely clothes. His wants were easily satisfied, and he could make a very little money go a very long way. If he had plenty to eat, enough clothes to keep him warm, a friend to love him, and a book to read, he was as happy as a king. In between the tasks by which he earned enough money for food and shelter he read every book that came his way. If he had work to do, he would fling himself into finishing it quickly, and then when he had done in an hour what would have taken another man two, he would feel he had earned a whole hour for reading, and he would turn to his

## *Abraham Lincoln*

book. He always carried at least one volume in his pocket, and pulling it out he would find a shady place beneath some tree and lie there reading till it was time to get on with the next piece of work. The books he read were many of them about law, for since boyhood Lincoln had set his heart on being a lawyer. He had a great reverence for justice. He delighted also in hearing speeches, and thus he was never happier than when he had the chance of going to the law courts to listen to some trial.

Lincoln's friends and employers were well aware that although he might sometimes seem idle and inattentive to anything but books, there was no better or more honest workman in the country. He always faithfully carried out his work before he took up his book, and those who called him 'lazy' knew very little about him.

"Lincoln," said his cousin, John Hanks, "was a lazy, a very lazy man. He was always reading, writing, scribbling, ciphering, writing poetry and the like." But on another occasion, when this same John Hanks was describing Lincoln the woodcutter, he said :

"My, how he could chop! His axe would flash and bite into a sugar-tree or sycamore, and down it would come. If you heard him felling trees in a clearing you would say there were three men at work, by the way the trees fell." This is not the picture of a lazy man! The real truth is that whatever Lincoln did he did it with his might, whether it was chopping down a tree, building a log cabin, reading a book, fighting, or making an election speech. It was impossible for him to be half-hearted or luke-

## *Law and Politics*

warm. What he did he did thoroughly, and on the few occasions in his life when he took a holiday, or actually was 'lazy,' it is quite safe to say he utterly cast away work and played, or was simply 'lazy,' in the same thoroughgoing spirit.

All this time Lincoln was living in New Salem. In the days when the village was first built every one hoped it would grow into a large and flourishing town. Instead of this it dwindled and grew smaller, while Springfield, some few miles distant, grew steadily bigger. Month by month people left to settle in Springfield, or one of the other towns near, till only a handful of people remained. Lincoln meanwhile had been made postmaster of the hamlet, and once a week he received the letters from the travelling postman. There were not many letters—a score at the most for the whole of the village—so that the duties were not very heavy. The postage was not as a rule paid by the sender, and thus part of Lincoln's business was to collect the money due from the receiver. This money was then called for occasionally by a Post Office official. There were often many months between such visits, and meanwhile Lincoln would keep the coins he had received from the country-people carefully wrapped up in a little bag, to hand over to the collector when he next came round. This might not be for a year or more, but there was no fear of the money not being safely there. 'Honest Abe' had not won his nickname for nothing, and every one knew that if the coins were in Lincoln's care they were as safe as if they were locked up in a bank.

The duties of the little post office gave Lincoln

## *Abraham Lincoln*

plenty of spare time for reading, and his learning and cleverness became such a matter of common talk that presently a friend named Mr Calhoun, a county surveyor, who was short of an assistant, offered to take him into his service if he would undertake to learn surveying. Lincoln was never afraid of tackling something new, however difficult, and before very long he had so well mastered the art of measuring roads and calculating the area of lands that he was a valuable helper to Mr Calhoun.

This new work lifted Lincoln for the first time in his life into the position of a skilled workman with a trade of his own. So far he had done a great deal of hard work with his hands. He had been a carpenter, a woodman, a carter, a farm-hand, a boatman, a shop-keeper, and a general handy-man, but he had never done work that depended more upon his brain than upon his fingers, and he found surveying a new and delightful occupation. He was no longer a boy, but a man of twenty-five, with a splendid frame and a well-trained mind. Nevertheless he was still very ignorant of the world, and knew very little of life beyond Springfield. Though the backwood days were long since over, it seemed very unlikely that he would ever rise into public greatness. A seat in Congress was the height of his ambition, and even that seemed a wild dream little likely to come true. But Lincoln seldom amused himself with thinking much about the future. He found in the present more than enough occupation, and he was always so busy wringing the full worth out of each day's experience that he had little or no time for idle thoughts, however pleasant. Many a shrewd, hard-thinking

## *Law and Politics*

man with Lincoln's abilities, and awake to his own powers, would by now have been busy considering how he could best fit himself to get some benefit for himself from the State. But Abraham Lincoln was not the man to make his own advantage his first consideration. No one ever cared less for possessions than he. Money meant nothing to him, except as a means of buying what was necessary in life. Houses, carriages, fine clothes, and all the many possessions that go with wealth he not only did not strive to obtain, but he did not care for them. If he had money, he spent it in getting whatever he needed; if he had not got it, he did not worry. Long experience of living on very little had shown him that wealth is by no means as necessary as many people imagine, and that there are few things man cannot do without. This fine carelessness about things which most men hold dear did not vanish with increasing importance, and it is even said that on the day when he travelled up to Washington as President-elect he had to borrow part of his fare from a friendly admirer. Thus in setting himself as a candidate for political honours it may safely be said that Lincoln's one thought was simply to be of public use, and he could always truly look men in the face and say, "There is nothing I have craved for myself."

At the moment, however, Lincoln was still a long way from the honours of the White House. He was just 'Honest Abe' of New Salem, a fine young man of twenty-five, able to hold his own with any one either in cutting down trees, in working in the fields, in running a race on the village green, in making a stump speech in the village store, in managing a

## *Abraham Lincoln*

handful of untrained soldiers, or in measuring out a road. Another election for the Illinois Legislature was at hand. In the last one, though not elected, Lincoln had done very well. His name had been eighth out of thirteen competitors. This success encouraged him to stand again. The election was to take place in August 1834. As before there were thirteen candidates. Among them was Abraham Lincoln.

## CHAPTER IX: *Public Service*

WHEN the results of the 1834 election for the Illinois Legislature were published, Lincoln's name was this time among the first four from Sangamon County. He was now a public man, with public duties to carry out. It was an important change in his life, and had a great deal to do with shaping his after-career. Lincoln was twenty-five years of age, but in mind he was older than his years, and more than ripe for a share in the government of others. He had often dreamt of being a lawyer, or even a judge, but he had not yet realized that it was the inborn statesman in him from which these instincts sprang. His experience in the Legislature revealed his powers to himself as well as to others, and the fine spirit of his declaration in which he said that he now considered himself a servant of all those who lived in Sangamon County, whether they had voted for him or not, made it plain that he was able to take a broad view of his responsibilities. Unlike so many politicians, he did not set himself merely to win the applause of those who supported him, but put before himself the far larger and better aim of serving the whole of the district which he had the honour to represent.

This width of view, which sets Lincoln apart from other men, was part and parcel of his nature. Public office did not spoil him, nor make his aims narrower. To the last day of his life he was the servant, not of the party who put him into power, but of the country. And though no man was ever a better patriot, he did not neglect the claims of the world. The generous

## *Abraham Lincoln*

sweep of his eye passed beyond the bounds of America and took in the claims of suffering humanity everywhere. Wherever there was misery or oppression Lincoln's sympathy reached out to it, no matter among what race it was found.

Lincoln's election in 1834 gave him a public position, but it did not make him wealthy. During the session he was obliged to be in attendance at Vandalia, which was then the capital of Illinois, but when the term was over he came back to the dwindling village of New Salem, where he worked among his friends as zestfully as ever at any odd occupation that came his way. A lawyer friend and colleague, Major Stuart, who had been elected at the same time as Lincoln, had been very kind to him for years, lending him law books and encouraging him to study. Seeing that Lincoln had now worked his way into public office, Major Stuart again encouraged him to qualify to be a lawyer, and Lincoln, only too delighted at the prospect, gave every spare moment to the study which he found so fascinating. Thus 'Honest Abe' began gradually to turn away from the simple forms of labour by which he had hitherto earned his living and to incline more definitely toward studies which were calculated to strengthen his intellect and develop the wonderful natural logic of his mind. In 1836 he was re-elected to the Legislature, and again in 1838 and in 1840, during all which time he was unconsciously "pluming his wings for a flight," and preparing himself for the high office presently to be his.

Most of Lincoln's energy in 1836 was given to a campaign in which he opposed the Democratic candidate



## *Public Service*

for the Presidency. He had always been a great admirer of Henry Clay and a thorough believer in the principles of the Whig party, and he now threw all his strength into helping to oppose Martin Van Buren, the man whom the Democrats wanted to put into office. Lincoln was determined that as far as it lay in his power he would help to win this cause in favour of the Whigs. Up and down the country he went, making stump speeches to all who would listen to him, and speaking with such earnestness and sincerity, that his audiences, deeply stirred by the sense of his conviction, came away feeling that they had listened to a man who not only knew how to speak but who meant every word that he uttered. Once more 'Honest Abe' was proving himself worthy of his name, and binding fresh followers to his views, not by a smooth manner, fine clothing; or any attractiveness of appearance, but by the force of his arguments and the deep conviction which rang in his voice and shone in his face.

The Democrats, who were the members of the opposite party, prided themselves on representing the hard-working, toiling classes of the country, and they often used to speak of their opponents, the Whigs, as "silk-stockinged gentry," "rag barons with lily-white hands," and in other terms of contempt. But for once these epithets missed their mark when Lincoln stepped upon the platform as the champion of the Whigs. Though he was now a member of the Legislature he was still dressed in the oldest and most homely clothes. No one who saw him could mistake him for anything but a plain, hard-working man, who had all his life been used to toil with his hands, who

## *Abraham Lincoln*

had eaten the plainest of plain food and suffered all the hardships of the poor. This appearance stood him in good stead at a certain public meeting, where the chief speaker on behalf of the Democrats was Colonel Dick Taylor, a dandified man, who had carefully covered up his finery for the time being. The Colonel was in the full sweep of a speech in which he professed to scorn luxury. The labouring classes, he said, were "the bone and sinew of the land"; it was they upon whom the greatness of the country depended. At this point by an unthinking gesture he tore away his plain covering and displayed the brave clothes underneath. With his usual ready wit Lincoln seized the opportunity. Jumping upon the platform, he put his very large, toil-coarsened hand on his breast and said:

"Here, gentlemen, is your 'rag baron with the lily-white hands.' Here, at your service, is one of your 'silk-stockinged gentry'! Yes, I suppose I am even a bloated aristocrat!" He had no need to say any more. Roars of laughter filled the hall and people rocked about with merriment. For all practical purposes the meeting was over; victory once more lay with 'Honest Abe.'

Nevertheless, in spite of his industry and his tireless efforts, all Lincoln's speeches on behalf of the Whigs could not bring their candidate into office, and Martin Van Buren, the Democratic hero, was elected. But Abraham Lincoln's speeches were not forgotten. By them he had passed from village fame to a wider renown.

As a boy Lincoln had rapidly grown to the height of a man, and if there was any touch of vanity in him

## *Public Service*

it was in regard to his inches. Six feet four in height, he easily overtopped most men, and even when he was President it was said that on more than one occasion he made a tall visitor submit to being measured by himself, saying briefly, "Let's see who is the taller," and nothing really pleased him more than to find the advantage lay with himself. In the same way, although he had the deepest tenderness and pity for all creatures that were weak, in speaking of a man he often dwelt upon his height, and would refer to him as "the smallest man I ever saw," or in some other way which showed that he was keenly alive to the difference in size between them. It so happened that in 1836, when Sangamon County sent up its delegates to the Legislature, they were all big men, and being nine in number they got the name of 'the Long Nine.' Tallest of all was Abraham Lincoln, the 'chief' not only in inches but in intellect and in greatness.

One lasting benefit carried out by 'the Long Nine' was the removal of the capital of Sangamon County from Vandalia to Springfield. For a long time Springfield had been developing rapidly, and it had become the natural centre of the county, so that it was a great convenience when through the efforts of 'the Long Nine' it took its place as the capital. New Salem, the little village to which Lincoln had belonged for so many years, had at one time been expected to grow into a thriving place, but its growth had been hindered, and instead of becoming larger it got smaller. To Lincoln it had been 'home' for so long that it was very dear and familiar to him, but it was not by any means the most helpful back-

## *Abraham Lincoln*

ground for a young man anxious to make his way in the world, and consequently it was a great benefit to him when a friend, who saw that Lincoln was rather hampered by the place in which he lived, in 1837 invited him to come and share his home in Springfield.

This was the very chance Lincoln needed. He thankfully accepted it, and immediately went to the capital, where he tried to get work as a lawyer. His old friend Major Stuart lived at Springfield, and soon after Lincoln's arrival he asked him to join his firm as a partner, and thus before the year 1837 was out Lincoln had the proud experience of seeing his name flourishing by the side of Major Stuart's as 'Stuart and Lincoln, Attorneys at Law.'

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## CHAPTER X: *Thoughts on Slavery*

**I**N the years during which Lincoln was a member of 'the Long Nine' in the Legislature for Sangamon County the question of slavery was not very often mentioned. People were used to the sight of slaves, and the idea that it was wrong to keep them had not yet taken hold of the nation. There had been slaves in America ever since 1619, when a Dutch ship brought a cargo of African slaves to Jamestown. Since then hundreds of slaves had been imported, till the practice was so common that it was seldom remarked upon. This traffic in slaves was soon found to be a splendid way of making money, both for the owners of the ships with the carrying trade and for the masters who bought the negroes and made them work without wages. Not only America, but England, was to blame for this terrible trade in human beings. English shippers found that money rolled into their pockets through the conveyance of the poor black people to America, and the Government more or less forced America to take their cargoes. Most of the Americans were quite willing to have a share in the bargain. Slaves were cheap to buy and they could be trained to work hard, and so both Englishmen and Americans cheerfully went on with the hideous business.

Ever since his second voyage to New Orleans, when Lincoln had first seen the slave-market, the thought of the suffering negroes had dwelt in his mind. But he was not a man to let kindness of heart triumph

## *Abraham Lincoln*

over his sense of justice, and though he hated the idea of slavery he was also convinced that to abolish it instantly would be to make out of a great evil a worse one. This view, which he held throughout his life, was not shared by every one. There were many people who saw no harm in slave-keeping; who declared that the negro was better off, and better cared for, working as a slave in America than he would be in his natural home. These were the pro-slavery party. On the other hand, there was a small, but steadily growing, band of men who wanted to do away with slavery altogether, and at once. These were the Abolitionists, who first began to be heard of in 1833.

Lincoln carefully considered both views, and though he promptly agreed that slavery was wrong and ought to be put down, he could not bring himself into line with those who wanted to abolish it without any thought of the consequences that would follow. His own opinion was that slavery must be discontinued gradually, and that this was the only safe way both for masters and slaves. He held that the masters would need compensation for the loss of their slaves, and that the slaves would need some protection in the place of their masters. Thus when the question happened to be brought up before the Legislature to which 'the Long Nine' belonged Lincoln and one or two others left a record in writing of their exact opinions on the matter. This is what they wrote:

“ Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

## *Thoughts on Slavery*

“ They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils.”

From this record it is plain that though Lincoln hated slavery he was not an Abolitionist, in so far as he believed that to free the slaves suddenly would be a bad thing both for the slave as well as for his master. The masters had paid money for their slaves, and as there were about four million negroes in the country, it was clear that they represented a great deal of money. At the same time they were not mere chattels, but human beings, who, whether willingly or not, were living in America. Out of this last fact sprang the question, Ought they to have a vote in the country which they were forced to call their home ?

Before this question could be settled several things had to be considered. To give them a vote meant putting political power into the hands of a huge number of people unaccustomed to taking any share in public life, and giving them great importance in a country to which they did not by birth belong. These were two of the chief problems for those who studied the question of slavery, but above them rose a third question, more important even than either of the others, namely, Was slavery morally right ? Or was a man who bought a human being and looked upon him as his property doing a wrong which ought not to be permitted by law ?

This last consideration now began to ring loudly in the ears of every American citizen. The Abolitionists were ready with their answer, and they promptly

## Abraham Lincoln

replied that slavery was morally wrong. The pro-slavery party just as promptly declared that slavery was not only justifiable, but right. Between these two sections lay a large number of people who maintained that though slavery was wrong, it ought not to be abolished all at once. Foremost among these more careful students of the question was Lincoln, who boldly held that though slavery was morally wrong, "immediate and complete emancipation *would also be a moral wrong.*"

Thus the question of slavery was gradually forcing itself into notice, though several years were still to pass before it was to become of burning importance to the nation in general. The Civil War was a long way off, and except for the handful of Abolitionists, and a few thoughtful people such as Lincoln, very few men troubled their heads about the matter. All their lives they had seen slaves in their midst, and they were well content to let them remain there. But it was not so with Abraham Lincoln. He was by no means content to let things remain as they were. At the same time he was also unwilling to set the negroes into a rapid and bewildered freedom, which would be worse, and more dangerous to themselves, than bondage. The problem of finding the best way out of the difficulty was never very far from his thoughts, but he said little about it to any one. He had not yet found an answer to it, and he seldom spoke on any subject till he had in his own mind laid down the lines upon which he meant to go. Of this much, however, he was certain: justice must come even before mercy; and from this conviction no one could move him.



## *Thoughts on Slavery*

It was about this time, when a hundred new problems were beginning to stir in his mind, that Lincoln met Stephen A. Douglas, a young man who was to be his political rival for many years. Douglas was a few years younger than Lincoln, and he was a good deal smaller in height. From his six feet four inches 'Abe' could comfortably look down on his rival, but on every other point they were fairly matched. Douglas had a powerful brain, a very attractive manner, and a knack of getting his own way. In manner and appearance he easily outshone Lincoln, who still appeared in a coat that was too short and trousers that seemed to have shrunk. Douglas had been born in a humble home, but he had been more fortunate than Lincoln in seizing those advantages which help a man in after-life. He had had a good education, and he knew how to stand before an audience without feeling awkward or ill at ease. "The Little Giant," his admirers called him, and they proudly pitted him against the uncouth, long-legged, plain-featured Lincoln. Many a time after the date of their first meeting Lincoln and Douglas stood together as rivals on a public platform, and when the Douglasites began to talk of "the Little Giant chawing up old Abe," the followers of Abe used triumphantly to point out that Abe couldn't be 'chawed.'

While Lincoln was thus unconsciously preparing himself for the great career which lay in front of him he was making his living by doing a good deal of hard work both in Springfield and in the country places round. His partnership with Major Stuart did not last very long, and he worked for a short time

## *Abraham Lincoln*

with Judge Stephen T. Logan. This connexion was followed by a partnership in 1843 with a lawyer named William H. Herndon, with whom Lincoln remained till he gave up law to take up the labours of the White House.

As a lawyer Lincoln was remarkable for his honesty and for his efforts to persuade people to settle their difficulties between themselves rather than in the law-courts. The calculation of fees never entered Lincoln's head when he was advising a client. Fees honestly earned he accepted as his due, but he never tried to make business merely for the purpose of bringing money into his own pocket.

"Discourage litigation," said this remarkable lawyer; "persuade your neighbours to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how a nominal winner is often a real loser—in fees, expenses, and waste of time. As a peacemaker, the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough."

On another occasion he turned to a fellow lawyer and said: "Swett, the man is guilty. You defend him; I can't." In spite of his tender-heartedness, in spite of his love of mercy, Lincoln was never blind to the difference between right and wrong, and to defend a man whom he knew was a rogue was not only distasteful to him, but a thing he could not do.

## SECTION IV

### *Years of Public Recognition*

1842-1856

(FROM THIRTY-THREE TO FORTY-SEVEN)

Let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belaboured—contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man ; such as a policy of ‘ don’t care,’ on a question about which all true men do care ; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to disunionists, reversing the Divine rule, and calling not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance ; such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did.

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

*Extract from a speech by Lincoln in the Cooper Institute,  
New York, February 1860*



## CHAPTER XI: *In Congress*

**I**N 1842 Lincoln married Mary Todd, a lively, good-looking girl from Kentucky. Her sister was already married to one of the Sangamon 'Long Nine,' and it was at their house that Lincoln had first met his bride. Although the hard days when he had had barely anything to call his own were gone, Lincoln was still very far from being rich. He was too kind-hearted and too honest to make much money out of law, and when he was first married he and his wife lived for some time at a humble inn in Springfield. By and by he built a plain but comfortable wooden house, and here they made their first home. Poor as he was, every one in Springfield knew and respected Lincoln. No one was a greater favourite, and there was no one who was more trusted and loved.

For eight years Lincoln had done good service as a member of the Legislature, but in 1840 he refused to stand for another election. The Legislature only managed the local affairs of the State, and though to belong to it was an honourable and important thing, Lincoln was beginning to feel that he would like a share in larger national matters.

At the head of the entire country was the President, who was assisted by a number of secretaries, chosen by himself. Below the President and his secretaries were two important bodies of men, who had a direct share in ruling the country. The first of these was the Senate, to which each State sent two members, and the second was the House of Representatives, consisting of some hundreds of members. The

## *Abraham Lincoln*

Senators were elected for six years, the members of the House of Representatives for two years. The whole body assembled to make new laws, discuss national questions, and to govern the country, and thus it got the name of Congress. It was toward Congress that Lincoln now turned his thoughts. He had won enough public success to convince him that he was able to influence and inspire people, and in Congress he saw that he would be more useful to his country than he could ever be if he were to remain a private citizen. He therefore decided not to stand again for the Sangamon Legislature, but to try to get nominated in the next election as a candidate for Congress.

Two quiet years thus passed away. The country was undisturbed and prosperous. For the time being the slave question appeared to be forgotten. The slaves, so their owners said, were well cared for and happy. Why trouble about them? Ever since 1820 the boundaries of slavery had been fixed. In that year the large State of Missouri had been admitted to the Union as a slave State. A great many people had opposed its admission. They dreaded the increase of slavery. They knew that every time a State came into the Union it meant that two Senators would be elected to represent it, and if the new State were in favour of keeping slaves, then the Senators representing it would certainly uphold slavery. On the other hand, even if a State came in as a free State the Senators chosen to represent it might not be opposed to slavery; for though the men in the free States did not keep slaves, they were not all opposed to slavery, and thus it did not follow that the Senators

## *In Congress*

elected by the free State would be against slavery. One of them, or even both, might be in favour of slave-keeping. The greater the number of pro-slavery Senators, the more power, naturally, they had in Congress, and the less chance there was for the members opposed to slavery to make their voices heard. Thus it became a very important question, whenever a new State was admitted, to know whether she came in as a free State or a slave State.

Now when Missouri wanted to come into the Union she applied as a slave State. All the opposers of the slave traffic immediately tried to prevent her admission, and the country was in a great state of excitement when Henry Clay came forward in 1820 with a Bill which afterward became famous as the Missouri Compromise. Clay was a man who always tried to keep the peace if possible, and in his Bill he urged that the limits of slave districts should be definitely fixed, that Missouri should be admitted as a slave State, but that after her admission no State should come in as a slave State which was above the line  $36^{\circ} 30'$  on the map ; or, in other words, that in future all States lying above the south line of Missouri, or west of her western boundary, should be free. This fixed a line above which slavery could not go, and every one hoped that the question was settled for ever, and that the slaves would now be left in their present condition and that no one would hear any more about them. But though the question was put to sleep for the time being, it was not to remain asleep for ever. By and by it would awaken, fresher and stronger for its long rest, for, as one of the newspapers cleverly put it :

## *Abraham Lincoln*

To twice kill dead a rattlesnake,  
And off his scaly skin to take,  
And through his head to drive a stake,  
And every bone within him break,  
And of his flesh mincemeat to make,  
To burn, to sear, to boil, to bake,  
Then in a heap the whole to rake,  
And over it the besom shake,  
And sink it fathoms in the lake,  
Whence, after all, quite wide awake,  
Comes back that very same old snake !

The slave question was the 'old snake,' now apparently dead, but by and by to rise up more full of life than ever.

While matters were still in this quiet condition there was an election for Congress in 1844. Lincoln was chosen as a Whig candidate. In spite of his many friends and the fact that he was a growing favourite, he found himself defeated at the poll. He did not, however, lose heart. "Next time," he said, "I will get in." His keen mind had begun to realize that soon great things would be afoot, and he determined to fight his way into Congress in order that he might publicly serve his country in the crisis he was certain was not far off. He therefore bided his time and waited for another opportunity. Meanwhile an election for a new President drew near, and Henry Clay was a candidate.

Ever since his boyhood Lincoln had greatly admired Henry Clay. He saw in the Whig statesman the embodiment of all his own opinions, and he flung himself into supporting Clay with the whole of his strength and enthusiasm. The Democratic candidate,



## *In Congress*

James K. Polk, was not a man of such wide renown as Clay, and Lincoln confidently expected that his idol would get in. To help to bring this result about he canvassed the country-side, making speeches in Clay's favour not only in Illinois, but also in his old district of Indiana. These speeches made a great impression on the men who flocked to hear them. Their fairness, their shrewd sallies, and their splendid logic showed very clearly that Lincoln had passed far beyond the limits of an everyday speaker and had become an orator with a statesmanlike grasp of affairs. There was never anything mean or little in his speeches. He sincerely thought more of the cause at heart than of any personal advantage, and on many occasions he made his listeners so oblivious to any one or anything except the matter for which he was pleading that he lifted them on to a nobler level, where they forgot about themselves and their little aims, and became, like the speaker, aglow with a desire for self-sacrifice.

To Lincoln's intense disappointment Clay was defeated in the election, and in 1845 James Polk, the Democratic choice, stepped into power at the White House. Polk's success had a wider importance than some people at first imagined. He came in as an upholder of slavery, and his election was of supreme interest, because Texas at the moment was begging for admission to the Union as a slave State. Her claims had been strongly supported by the Southern States, where slavery was strongest. The fact that there were more slaves in the South than in the North was not merely due to the fact that the North, generally speaking, looked upon slavery as wrong, but was

## *Abraham Lincoln*

caused also by the natural conditions of the South, which led her to need slaves much more than the North. In the North most of the men and women workers were employed in manufactures, the preparation of which needed skilled labour, such as white people could best give. But in the South, with its warm, trying climate and its rich, moist soil, cotton was the chief means of making money, and since the negro slaves could stand heat which would overcome white men, it became a fixed rule to employ them in the cotton fields.

As time went on the rich cotton owners relied more and more on the labour of their slaves, and especially was this so after 1793, when a clever young man, named Eli Whitney, invented a cotton gin, or machine, by which one man could easily clean in a day as much as 50 lb. of cotton. The whole of the wealth of the rich South thus depended very largely upon the labour of slaves, and it was evident that cotton-growers would not give up their negroes without a struggle. Cotton grew easily in their neighbourhood; the fields were thick with crops; no men were so suited by nature to gather these crops as the negroes, who were accustomed to a hot climate and could stand a long day in the fields without fainting. If their slaves were to be taken from them, the great cotton-growers in the South would lose their best helpers, and instead of being rich they would be thrust into poverty. This consideration made them shut their ears to the argument that man has no right to make a slave of a human being, and in reply they said that they cared well for their slaves, many of whom were devoted to their masters. In some cases this was perfectly

## *In Congress*

true, but nothing could alter the fact that by keeping slaves one man was using another as if he were no better than a horse or a dog to be bought and sold at his master's will.

Matters were in this position when an agitation about Texas broke out. Up till 1822 Texas had been one of the few possessions of Spain in America, but in that year Mexico had gained her freedom, and Texas, after first being acknowledged as a territory of Mexico, had made herself independent. Most of the land was wild and undeveloped, and for a long time it had not been thought worth quarrelling about, but gradually the country had grown more civilized and better worked, and the population had increased very much. As a result of this improvement, in 1844 the citizens sent in a claim for admission to the Union. The triumph of James K. Polk and his election as President of the United States had an immediate effect on the fortunes of Texas. Without waiting for Polk's term of office formally to begin, Congress agreed to the demands of Texas and she came into the Union. Her admission meant that there would be two new Senators, who would naturally hold pro-slavery views. This was a fresh blow to the upholders of freedom, who felt they must now work harder than ever if they hoped to defeat slavery, in so far as every pro-slavery Senator meant another gun in the fortress which the reformers were out to demolish. Things did not look very well for the anti-slavery party, when suddenly the attention of every one was turned by the news that Mexico had gone to war with Texas over the question of her geographical boundary line.

## CHAPTER XII: *War, Law, and Elections*

THE United States went to war with Mexico over the boundary line of Texas. The Legislature of Texas held that the river Rio Grande marked the end of their territory, but Mexico declared that the line must not be fixed so far west as the river. The patch of ground between the two points was not of much value. It was wild and overgrown and of no great size. But, looking into the future, some men saw that the strip of land which then seemed worthless might later on become very fertile and useful, and because of this neither side would give way.

In these circumstances there was nothing for it but to go to war, and the new President, James Polk, not at all unwilling that there should be some fighting, sent orders to General Zachary Taylor to march against the Mexicans. The General, who was an old and experienced soldier, was not anxious to rush into warfare, but the command of the President had to be obeyed and accordingly he made preparations for a campaign. 'Rough-and-Ready' his men called him, because once he had made up his mind on any point he always set about carrying out his plans as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. The chief thing at the moment was to defeat the Mexicans, and now that he had taken the business in hand 'Rough-and-Ready' prepared to finish it as fast as he could.

To do this he gave chase to the Mexicans, and

## *War, Law, and Elections*

followed them into their own territory, where he met them in battle. From the beginning of the campaign it had been plain to every one that the Mexicans were sure to be beaten, but the enemy fought very bravely and General Taylor's task was not so easy as he had at first thought it would be. Seeing this, 'Rough-and-Ready' redoubled his efforts, hoping by this means to end the contest quickly. A good many Americans had not been anxious for the war at all. They thought the point in dispute was not worth the sacrifice of so many men, and they declared that if President Polk had not been in favour of fighting the matter would have been settled without coming to blows. Among those who opposed the struggle was Lincoln, who did not hesitate to say in a speech which he made in Congress that the Mexican war had been "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President."

Meanwhile many brave and courageous men had left their homes and gone to take part in the fighting. Hundreds of them never came back. A year passed; the war was still raging. But in spite of their long and valorous resistance the Mexicans were beginning to realize that the Americans would win, and less than two months after Lincoln's speech the end came. The Mexican Legislature agreed to give up a huge tract of land to the United States Government, and upon this peace was concluded. By this transaction President Polk secured territory "equal in area to Germany, France, and Spain combined." It was a splendid triumph for him, and of great value to the United States; but nothing could bring back to life the heroic men who were buried on the battlefield,

## *Abraham Lincoln*

and while there was great national rejoicing over the victory of the States, many homes were full of mourning.

While the war was still raging in Mexico, Lincoln had won a seat in the House of Representatives at Washington, and he was now a member of Congress. This had given him the opportunity to make the daring speech in which he laid the blame of the Mexican war at the feet of President Polk. In Congress he was an odd and ludicrous figure in an assembly of well-dressed, smooth-spoken men. Lincoln never learnt the art of wearing his clothes comfortably, and he always managed to give the impression that he had outgrown his coat and trousers. His unusually large hands never lost the stamp of hard toil; they were anything but 'lily-white,' and announced loudly to every one that their owner knew how to work. His strong, rugged face was not handsome even in the eyes of his friends, and his enemies, referring to his giant height and his overlong arms, would speak of gorillas and hint a connexion, or jeer at him as the wild man from the backwoods. None of these taunts ever troubled Lincoln. He was too large-minded and noble a man to allow himself to be offended by slights or sneers. Malice hurt him, but he never repaid it in kind, and he quickly forgot it in the ready excuses for the slanderer which flashed into his generous mind. He was too honest to try to hide his origin, or to pretend that he had sprung from anything but the humblest home. Nor did he go to the other extreme and affect an unnatural pride in his lowly birth. He was simply and naturally himself, ready to describe to the curious any part of

## *War, Law, and Elections*

his life about which they were inquisitive, but stating his facts simply and clearly, so that he seemed neither ashamed nor ostentatiously proud of them. 'Honest Abe' his friends still called him. It was the description he most liked to hear, and the term he most thoroughly deserved.

But between the lawyer's office in the little town of Springfield and the House of Representatives at Washington there was a wide difference, and though Lincoln found that even in Washington there were many simple men who were ready to welcome him into the homely familiarity he had known at Springfield, there were others who were more hedged in by conventions and could not bring themselves readily to accept the eccentricities of this new member. At Springfield he was a leading figure. In Washington he was only one among many. No Congress ever held a larger number of clever men than the assembly of 1846, and Lincoln could not hope to romp into fame when he was one of a company which included the celebrated orator Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, the passionate upholder of the rights of South Carolina, Andrew Johnson, who later became the seventeenth President, and many other men of ability and genius.

Among this brilliant company Lincoln was only a plain countryman who had a long way to go before he could win the ear of the nation. He wisely kept himself a good deal in the background, and at the end of his first short session he was still more or less unknown. His speeches against the Mexican war revealed him as a stern upholder of the Whig doctrines, and, more important than this, as a man who was not afraid to have views of his own, or to express them

## *Abraham Lincoln*

publicly. But on the whole the end of the session left him pretty much in the position he had been in at the beginning, and if any one had ventured to point him out as the man who would some day become a President as famous as the great George Washington himself, he would have been laughed at as an idle dreamer and a teller of fairy tales. "What!" Lincoln's enemies would have cried, "That man—that gorilla—be President and famous! Never, while the United States exist, shall that fellow rule at the White House." His friends, however, took a different view. "Honest Abe is the equal of any man living," they used to say quietly. "Who knows what he may become before his life is over?" As for Lincoln himself, questions of future greatness seldom passed through his mind and certainly never stayed there. He was much too busy unravelling immediate problems to waste his time in thoughts of a future that might never come. His business was to learn how best to do his duty to the State, and therefore in these early days in Congress he listened eagerly to others, and steadily gathered impressions which he digested or rejected in his characteristic way. Up till now he had had few opportunities of hearing the speeches of great politicians, and he found himself deeply moved by some of the addresses he heard. "I just take my pen," he wrote at this time, "to say that Mr Stephens of Georgia, a little, slim, pale-faced, consumptive man, with a voice like Logan's, has just concluded the very best speech I have ever heard. My old withered eyes are full of tears yet."

With the close of the Mexican war General Zachary Taylor became more and more of a popular hero, and



## *War, Law, and Elections*

when there was a new election for the Presidency in 1848 it was suggested that 'Rough-and-Ready' should have the honour of leading the nation. As a political party the Whigs had been opposed to the war, but, once begun, they had supported it and now they applauded the choice of the old soldier. He had no more hearty supporter than Abraham Lincoln. Not content with expressing his own desire that Taylor should be elected, Lincoln went up and down the country making speeches in the General's favour. Many of these orations were delivered in Illinois, where he was best known and carried most weight by his words.

In due time Zachary Taylor won the election and became President, and Lincoln not unjustly hoped that he would show that he had appreciated his services by giving him some public office. The post he coveted was to become Commissioner of the General Land Works at Washington. It was an office where he felt he would be at his best, and he was confident that he could carry out the duties well. To his great disappointment it was given to another, probably not from any ill-will on President Taylor's part, but because Lincoln was more or less unknown to him, and like the majority of people he had not yet discerned in this awkward-looking giant any special promise of future greatness. To the General, Lincoln was only one of a host of helpers and supporters, and he no doubt thought he was more than repaying him for his electioneering efforts when he offered to make him Governor of the Oregon Territory. Lincoln was frankly disappointed. Oregon was a long way off, right across the lofty Rocky

## *Abraham Lincoln*

Mountains. If he went there would he ever again be heard of in Washington? Moreover, so far off from the centre of things, would he be able to help to ease the problem of slavery which was daily taking deeper hold of his mind? With all these reasons against exiling himself, Lincoln hesitated to accept the post, and his wife's steadfast opposition to the idea of going so far afield finally decided him to refuse the office. He therefore returned a polite but firm 'No' to the President, and once more he stepped down into private life at Springfield. As a lawyer his services were always in demand among those who knew of his unflinching honesty, and a few very quiet but busy years at home followed. Though for the time being he was out of the public eye, Lincoln was gathering strength for the greatness which lay before him, and these peaceful, happy years were not without their importance in his unconscious preparation for an office far higher than any he could have found in Oregon.

## CHAPTER XIII: *The Slavery Question Again*

**T**HE imaginary line which the Americans had drawn, dividing the land that was free from the land that was slave-owning, cut through California, so that although the greater part lay above the line  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , some of it lay below. The people in the Southern States of America therefore hoped, and even expected, that California would be allowed to enter the Union as a slave State; the North was just as resolved that she must be free. The discovery of gold in California made the question all the more important. Scores of would-be-rich young men hurried off to seek their fortunes across the Rocky Mountains.

It will be remembered that every State had the right of electing two Senators, who held office for a period of six years. Therefore if California was to be admitted as a free State she would in all probability return two Senators who would be opposed to the traffic in slaves. The South knew that if this were to happen its power would be correspondingly lessened, and the North would gain in political influence.

Matters were in a state of great excitement when Henry Clay, the statesman who was always quick to see a way out of any difficulty, came forward with a plan he thought would please every one. To satisfy the North he suggested that California should be admitted as a free State, and to please the South he suggested that Congress should pass a severe law about runaway slaves, by which edict any man in a

## Abraham Lincoln

free State who found a fugitive slave taking shelter should not help him to gain his freedom but take him back to his master. This was a very important law from the point of view of the South, as it practically declared that slaves were 'property,' which was only another way of saying that once they belonged to their master, either by being bought from another owner or by being born of a slave, they belonged to that master entirely, and were as completely in his power as his horses or his dogs.

Thus although Henry Clay's compromise on the one hand helped the opponents of slavery, on the other hand it did a great service to those who believed in keeping slaves. At a time of such unrest, however, people were glad to find any way out of the difficulty, and in 1850 Clay's ideas were put into a Bill and became law. Many men now said, "Well, there's an end of all this slavery discussion at last. We shall never hear any more about it"; but a few of the shrewder and more thoughtful realized that the question was not by any means settled, but coming gradually to a climax, after which anything might happen.

These prophets soon found what they feared coming true. The Bill only pacified men for the time being, and presently dissatisfaction began to gather. The Southerners were vexed because California had been allowed to enter the Union as a free State, and the Northerners hated the runaway slave clause, which forced them to hand back a fugitive slave to his master.

A passionate plea for altering these conditions appeared in 1852 when Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe published her story, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This moving

## *The Slavery Question Again*

narrative, which first appeared in *The National Era*, quickly leapt into world-wide fame and had an immense influence upon public opinion. Many who never concerned themselves with social or political problems, either from want of time, disinclination, or because they did not understand them, read this simple story and became fervently on the side of the slaves.

These developments in the national attitude toward the question of slavery were keenly watched by Lincoln. He saw that before long a storm was bound to come. For the moment there was peace, but there were clouds in the sky. What would be the best way of dealing with the deluge when it burst? This was the question that he thought about from morning to night. Meanwhile there was a new Presidential election, and in 1853 Franklin Pierce began to rule in White House. He was a Democrat, and though not a Southerner, he was inclined to show special favour to the South. His election, therefore, made still stronger the cause of the Southern slaveholding States.

Since the time when he had refused the post of Governor of Oregon, Lincoln had been living a quiet, simple life at Springfield, so busy in his law occupations that he seemed almost to have forgotten the problems of politics. Like the rest of the nation he was startled in 1854 by the news that the Missouri Compromise was in danger of being repealed, and the idea of such a catastrophe drove him into sudden and decisive action. The pleasant familiarities of Springfield and home and the practice of law had been sufficient to fill his attention lately, but with this new and sudden danger in front of him he

## *Abraham Lincoln*

instinctively prepared for a fight, and brushing aside all thoughts of personal convenience or comfort he marshalled his energies for a bigger campaign than any he had yet endured. If the Missouri Compromise was to be repealed, then the pro-slavery party would be immensely strengthened, and the condition of the slave would be a hundred times worse than ever it had been. Besides this, who could tell where the believers in slavery would stop once they had got a free hand? At present there were slave States and free States, but suppose slavery gained ground? Suppose the slave-owners were to triumph? What if there were no free States at all? "We shall," said Lincoln, a little later, "lie down pleasantly dreaming that the people of Missouri are on the verge of making their State free, and we shall awaken to the reality instead, that the Supreme Court has made Illinois a slave State." This fear, though as yet unspoken, was already alive in Lincoln's mind, and he thought fearfully of a day when the dark cloud of slavery might oppress the whole land. To prevent this he once more flung himself heart and soul into politics, and by this means he came up against his old rival, 'the Little Giant,' Stephen A. Douglas.

While Lincoln had been forced to spend the greater part of his life unheard of by the larger world, Douglas had been surely and rapidly making his way to the top of the hill. He had many gifts which Lincoln was without, and since he was ready to adapt himself to the wishes and beliefs of his party he was always popular and very much liked. Lincoln's sterner character, and his rigid refusal to yield to popular wishes if they clashed with his personal conviction,



SLAVES AT WORK IN THE COTTON FIELDS

Florence Meyerheim





## *The Slavery Question Again*

gained him the admiration of men who could appreciate his strength of mind, but offended shallower men who followed public opinion instead of seeking for conclusions of their own. These latter people always found Douglas a much more agreeable speaker than Lincoln, and whenever he appeared on a public platform he was attended by a crowd of enthusiastic supporters. In the present contest, therefore, Douglas began with a good many advantages. Handsome, popular, well-mannered, and a good speaker, he was at first sight easily superior to the awkward, plain-featured, untutored Abraham Lincoln. Nevertheless, those who believed in Lincoln were ready to uphold him against the world, and when they heard he was entering the lists against Douglas they did not for one minute doubt but that instead of 'the Little Giant' 'chawing up' 'Honest Abe,' Douglas would find himself the person 'chawed.'

The Bill which sought to repeal the Missouri Compromise was not called by that name. The instrument of repeal was only one clause in a wider Bill which was known as the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. At this time Kansas and Nebraska were wild and undeveloped districts, where only a small handful of settlers lived. Douglas now (1854) proposed that these two districts should be organized as territories, and that the question whether they should be free States or slave States *should be decided by the people actually living there.*

At first sight this seemed a very reasonable plan. Douglas called it the doctrine of 'popular sovereignty,' and under that name it was hailed by a great many people as a sensible and splendid idea.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

“What could be better,” they said, “than to let the people actually living there decide for themselves whether they would like slaves or not?” But Kansas and Nebraska both lay north of the geographical line fixed as the boundary of slavery by the Missouri Compromise, and therefore, unless the Bill were repealed, they would both be obliged to come into the Union as free States. ‘Popular sovereignty’ could not be tried unless the terms of the Compromise were altered. To get over this difficulty a clause repealing the Compromise was therefore added to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. This was only a matter of convenience, so the upholders of the Bill argued; it would not really affect the States in any way; it was only throwing down an obstacle which stood in the way of the people in these two new territories, Kansas and Nebraska, to prevent them from using their own judgment. Surely every man had a right to decide for himself whether he was in favour of keeping slaves or not? and in the same way, every State ought to have the right, by which the whole of its citizens joined together would have the power to decide whether they would have their State a free State or a slave State.

This reasoning caught the fancy of a large part of the nation, and without thinking what the actual consequences of doing away with the Missouri boundary might be, or what tyranny might be hidden under the pleasant features of ‘popular sovereignty,’ thousands of men impulsively decided that Douglas was right and his new Bill a splendid measure. Popular feeling was decidedly on the side of ‘the Little Giant’ when Abraham Lincoln stepped quietly in.

## CHAPTER XIV: *A Great Speech*

LINCOLN realized at once that the new question over Kansas and Nebraska was only an indication of a great crisis. With more than his usual solemnity he prepared himself to fight against the proposal of Douglas—the outwardly attractive suggestion that the people in Kansas and Nebraska should themselves decide whether their States should be slave or free. At Springfield, and afterward at Peoria, he spoke in the same solemn vein, and men who had been accustomed to hearing him add glitter to his debates by shrewd thrusts of humour or amusing stories complained that he was getting too serious. “No one laughs,” they said; “why don’t you introduce a few of the stories you are famed for relating?” To this Lincoln replied gravely: “The occasion is too serious. The issues are too grave. I do not seek applause, or to amuse the people, but to convince them.” It was no time for merriment or for relaxation, but an hour for soberness of thought, when men must gird up their loins and prepare to do battle for what they held to be right.

Lincoln had never been the man to pretend a belief, and now when he stood before his hearers and tore to shreds the comfortable and attractive doctrine of ‘popular sovereignty,’ which was supported by all the brilliance of Douglas’s clever tongue, he seemed like some prophet of old risen from the dead to announce a crusade of righteousness. This impression was all the stronger because it was well known that

## *Abraham Lincoln*

he was not a speaker who spoke at random or who chose his words to accord with the inclinations of the people before him. He had always thought for himself, and said what he thought, and in this mood of new intensity his words fell from his lips not merely with a deliberate but a final air. The most careless grew grave before such solemnity. The faces of his audience fell into stern repose; their set brows and motionless bodies told how deeply they were attending; the whole building was caught in a hush. The Kansas and Nebraska problem swelled into a world-question. The glory of being free suddenly illumined the mind of every man present. The blackness of slavery stood out with terrible and startling distinctness, and each one realized as never before what it really meant to be bound by no living man. In clear-cut, convincing words Lincoln declared that there was no better doctrine than the doctrine of self-government. But real self-government and the self-government approved of by Douglas were two very different things. Self-government allowed a man to govern himself; it did not permit him to govern another man. If a man kept a slave, then that slave had no self-government. "When the white man," said Lincoln, "governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism. . . . There can be," he went on, "no moral right in the enslaving of one man by another. . . . Little by little, but steadily as man's march to the grave, we have been giving up the old for the new faith. Near eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are

## *A Great Speech*

created equal ; but now, from that beginning, we have run down to the other declaration, that for some men to enslave others is a 'sacred right of self-government.' These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and Mammon." In uttering these last grave and powerful words Lincoln drew himself to his full height, and the audience, gazing fascinated at his tall form, motionless with passion, felt a sudden, firm conviction that here was the truth.

Douglas and Lincoln had been friendly rivals for many years. Over and over again circumstances had happened to bring them up against each other. 'The Little Giant' was himself a man of great ability, but he knew that in Lincoln he had found his equal, if not his superior. His friends were inclined to laugh at 'Honest Abe,' to make fun of his homeliness and his awkward ways, but Douglas himself knew better, and when, in connexion with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, he was urged to meet his rival in public debate, he remarked to those friends who said he would soon make an end of the backwoodsman: "Gentlemen, you do not know Mr Lincoln. I have known him long and well, and I know I shall have anything but an easy task. I assure you that I would rather meet any man in the country, in this joint debate, than Abraham Lincoln."

While people were still talking about Lincoln's great speeches an election for a new Senator drew near. The Whig party stood by Lincoln and hoped to secure the honour for him. It was a position Lincoln would very much have enjoyed. A Senator held his seat for six years, and for a long time this office had been the height of Lincoln's ambition.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

Not once, nor twice, but many times in his life disappointment had come his way, and though he was prepared to fight for the honour with all his power, he was also prepared to take a defeat cheerfully. When the contest opened he discovered that he had against him not only a pure Democratic candidate, but an Anti-Nebraska Democrat, or a member of that branch of the Democratic party opposed to the Nebraska Bill which Douglas wished to carry through. Lincoln quickly saw that if he himself were not standing many people who would vote for him would vote for Lyman Trumbull, the Anti-Nebraska Democrat; whereas, if he still remained in the contest, some men would vote for him and some for Trumbull, with the result that neither would get enough to beat the Democratic candidate. Therefore, rather than let this catastrophe happen, he withdrew from the contest in favour of Trumbull.

As Lincoln had foreseen, Trumbull was elected, and though by standing aside Lincoln had lost the post he had coveted, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had defeated the Democratic party and that Illinois was now represented by an opponent of Douglas. Delight in this victory was, however, presently mingled with bitter disappointment, for although the opponents of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill were gradually gathering strength and importance, they were still not powerful enough to defeat the vote of the Democrats, and accordingly in 1854 Douglas carried his Bill, and Kansas and Nebraska were called upon to decide for themselves whether they would be free or whether they would be slave-owning.

## SECTION V

### *Years of Leadership*

1856-1860

(FROM FORTY-SEVEN TO FIFTY-ONE)

When the white man governs himself, that is self-government ; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism. . . . Near eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are created equal ; but now, from that beginning, we have run down to the other declaration, that for some men to enslave others is a ‘sacred right of self-government.’ These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and Mammon ; and whoever holds to the one must despise the other.

*Extract from speech by Lincoln at Peoria,  
Illinois, 1854*





## CHAPTER XV: *The Republican Party*

**W**HEN a cannon boomed out from Washington City in May 1854 all who heard it knew that it meant that the Kansas-Nebraska Bill had become law. Some men smiled with satisfaction at the sound, but the faces of others grew dark and lowering. Here and there little knots of excited people discussed what the passing of the Bill would mean. "The triumph of Nebraska," cried one man. "Her ruin," answered another. Both parties were agreed on one point, that the upholders of slavery had gained a success, and that slavery was stronger than ever. "All the more reason why we should fight against it even harder than before," said the courageous, but less bold reformers turned away sighing. The future, they felt, was very black. Who could say what the end would be, or where slavery would stop?

Presently these dark reflections seemed justified by news which came from Boston, where an escaped slave was dragged from his refuge and conducted by an armed guard to the ship which was to convey him back to his master. The master owned him, and therefore by law he must be returned. But humane onlookers who watched the procession and saw the poor wretch, one against many, felt their hearts stirred with pity for him, and the question, "Is it right for one man to own another?" kept repeating itself in their minds.

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill had become law largely

## *Abraham Lincoln*

because a great many people had never paid any serious heed to the position of the slaves, but the problem was now being thrust upon them so forcibly that they could not pass it by. In this change lay the slaves' greatest hope. The stronger grew public feeling against slavery, the more chance was there of the public voice making itself heard. Thus the sight of the Boston slave going back into bondage had a greater influence than the miserable fugitive ever knew. "Why should we, who have no slaves," said the Bostonians, "be obliged to uphold a trade that we abhor?" and one more stone was thus loosened in the strong castle of slavery.

Before very long the opponents of slavery found a new cause for alarm. It was whispered that the Government were trying to buy Cuba from Spain. The reason they gave for wanting Cuba was that the island would be of great value to the States in matters of commerce and trade. "In what way will she be useful?" asked shrewd men. "Her only importance will be in the production of cotton and the trade in slaves. This talk about her value to the nation is merely a blind. The annexation is only wanted by the slave-owners as a means of strengthening their hands. Why should we, who detest slave-keeping, have to pay heavy taxes for the purchase of Cuba merely to put money into the pockets of slave-dealers?"

Thus a fresh outcry arose, which was only one more proof that the opponents of slavery were getting bolder and more determined not to be deceived by the wiles of unscrupulous politicians.

While all these new ideas were in the making great changes began to take place in the political parties

## *The Republican Party*

which were known in the country. The Democrats came out openly as the supporters of slavery; the Whigs began to break up and separate; while a small group, nicknamed 'the Know-Nothings,' grew a little more important. These 'Know-Nothings' were so called because they were secretly organized and concealed their true opinions. They were vague in their ideas, and had not much influence. One of their chief principles was to oppose the Roman Catholics upon any question whatsoever.

In addition to these three bodies a new party began to be formed. It consisted of men drawn from any party, but united in an opposition to slavery. They called themselves Republicans, and rapidly began to be of importance. Here at last was a political body with which Lincoln was entirely in sympathy. He threw himself into pushing its interests, and in 1856 took a leading part in organizing the Republicans of Illinois. This State, owing largely to its size, contained men of every shade of political opinion, and it was not very easy to gather together all those who held Republican views and group them into a whole. Lincoln gave all his energy to the task, and in 1856 he delivered a great speech at Bloomington, Illinois, in which he helped to launch the Republican party. He spoke with great earnestness and solemnity, and during his speech he referred to the brutal attack made upon Charles Sumner, who had spoken in Congress against what he called "the crime against Nebraska." As a result of his violent speech Sumner was assaulted in the Senate Chamber by a furious caller, who beat him so fiercely about the head that he was nearly killed. This

## Abraham Lincoln

cowardly attack infuriated people against the assailant, and made many men go over to the anti-slavery side.

“The fearless Sumner,” said Lincoln, “is beaten to insensibility, and is now slowly dying; while Senators who claim to be gentlemen and Christians stood by, countenancing the act, even applauding it afterward in their places in the Senate.” From this incident he went on to point out that the country was living in the midst of alarms; that no one could say what the future might hold. An hour went by and Lincoln was still speaking. Audience and reporters alike were held fascinated by his earnestness. The pens dropped from the reporters’ fingers and they forgot they were there to take notes of the speech. Among them one only remembered his work, and from his jottings has been reconstructed what is known as Lincoln’s ‘lost’ speech.

As he approached his climax Lincoln cried, “The conclusion of all is that we must restore the Missouri Compromise. We must highly resolve that *Kansas must be free!* We must reinstate the birthday of the Republic; we must reaffirm the Declaration of Independence. . . . We must make this a land of liberty in fact, as it is in name. But in seeking to attain these results—so indispensable if the liberty which is our pride and boast shall endure—we will be loyal to the Constitution and to the flag of our Union, and no matter what our grievance—even though Kansas shall come in as a slave State; and no matter what theirs—even if we shall restore the Compromise—we will say to the Southern disunionists, ‘We won’t go out of the Union, and you SHAN’T.’ ”

## *The Republican Party*

He stood upon the platform, a gigantic, triumphant figure. In front of him the audience also stood. They had risen to their feet in their excitement and stood waving their handkerchiefs and cheering themselves hoarse. Under the inspiration of 'Honest Abe' all these men had leaped to the realization of what their future course must be. Slavery must, if possible, be put down once and for ever; but more important still, *the Union must be preserved*. This doctrine, that the United States must in no circumstances separate from one another, was the heart of Lincoln's political belief. He fought fiercely for the protection of the slaves, but still more fiercely for the protection of the Union. Once let the Union be broken, he argued, and there would be no America. The rights for which men had given their lives in the War of Independence, by the breaking of the Union, would be lost for ever. Such a gigantic catastrophe must at all costs be prevented, and hence, although no man felt more sympathy with the slaves and no man had a greater instinctive love for freedom, Lincoln placed the preservation of the Union before even the emancipation of the slaves. Because of this doctrine he lost favour with many of the Abolitionists, who were so engrossed with the idea of freeing the slaves at once that they were blind to the national dangers which Lincoln's clear judgment showed him lay ahead.

Not many months after Lincoln's great speech in Illinois another Presidential election drew near. Stephen A. Douglas hoped to be nominated by the Democrats, but they chose as their candidate James Buchanan; the Republicans named John Frémont.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

During the exciting weeks before the election both Democrats and Republicans were busy making speeches. As usual, Lincoln took his full share in the work, and night after night he spoke urging the claims of Fremont. But the Republican party was still young, and when the ballot was taken it was found that Buchanan had won. His election was in many ways a disappointment to 'the Little Giant,' who had hoped himself to be nominated for the office. At one time it had seemed almost certain that Douglas would be the next President, but latterly the tide had turned against him. His support of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill had robbed him of many of his old admirers, and in his many efforts to be popular he had succeeded in pleasing very few. Buchanan, therefore, passed into the position which Douglas had reasonably imagined would be his, but which he was now never to enjoy.

## CHAPTER XVI: *Strife in Kansas*

**A**LTHOUGH the Kansas-Nebraska Bill had been passed by Congress the difficulties in the country, so far from being over, were only just beginning. Who was to get the upper hand in the government? That was the vital question. "We will govern," cried the supporters of slavery. "You shall not," grimly replied the free-State men, and thus Douglas's doctrine of 'popular sovereignty' began to be put to the test.

According to the reasoning of 'the Little Giant,' the question whether the State should be slave-owning or free would be settled by the opinions of the people living in it. If, out of the whole population, there were more 'free' votes than 'slave' votes, then the State would be free. But if there was a majority of 'slave' votes, then it would be a slave-owning territory. This, at least, is what Douglas had *said* would happen; his doctrine was now to be tested; how would 'popular sovereignty' stand the trial?

The answer to this last question was eagerly waited by large numbers of people who were anxious that the pleasant picture of self-government sketched by Stephen A. Douglas should become reality. But alas for their hopes! No sooner did the Bill become law than there was a perfect scramble for the possession of the land. Over the borders of Missouri tumbled a horde of rough Missourians—'border ruffians,' as they were called—racing pell-mell to stake a claim in the new territory in order that they might each have a

## *Abraham Lincoln*

vote. Such votes would naturally all be in favour of the slave-owners, and therefore the greater the number of these 'ruffians,' the less chance there was for the upholders of freedom. They were not real settlers, but men who were ready to go anywhere for money, caring nothing at all about the country upon which they had flung themselves.

The North, meanwhile, heard of the Missourian invasion of Kansas with alarm. They realized at once that unless the number of Northern pioneers was greater than that of the Missourian settlers there was not the smallest chance that Kansas would be a free State. The spirit of rivalry awakened in their breasts, and they too hastily prepared to enter Kansas, to defeat the intentions of the South.

Large wagons were brought out and packed with women and children and household goods, and the long procession of Northerners journeying to Kansas started off. They had much farther to go than the 'border ruffians,' and often they had to travel by the longest roads because the people in slave-owning districts forbade them a passage. They felt they were men on a crusade, out to win a fight against evil, and the great American poet John Greenleaf Whittier put their thoughts into words when he said :

We cross the prairie as of old  
The Pilgrims crossed the sea,  
To make the West, as they the East,  
The homestead of the free.

We go to rear a wall of men  
On Freedom's southern line,  
And plant beside the cotton-tree  
The rugged Northern pine.



## *Strife in Kansas*

As a result of these two invasions into Kansas there were two distinct populations. One, representing the South, desired slavery; the other, representing the North, desired freedom. The feeling between the two was so high that there was almost a state of war between them. In his speeches in favour of 'popular sovereignty' Douglas had drawn an attractive picture of a community where men lived together in friendship and voted fairly whether slavery should be up or down, where peace and happiness were always to be found, and where the popular will was cheerfully obeyed by the lowliest subject. The reality was very different from this hope. Instead of the rural happiness pictured by Douglas there was strife; instead of the meek, happy-hearted settlers there were fierce bands of men, ready on the smallest provocation to fly at the throats of one another; instead of calm wisdom ruling in the council chambers there was rioting and quarrelling; instead of men at work with pruning-hooks in the fields, the hedges hid the dark figures of men with daggers in their belts; instead of safety and security there was daily dread and fear; and two men never met in the road without the quick, secret thought, "Perhaps here is my enemy."

Scarcely had the Northern settlers succeeded in making their homes secure when an election took place. The Missourians were determined not to be defeated at the poll, and just before the voting began some hundreds of men poured across the borders from Missouri and then claimed the right to vote as citizens of Kansas. By this means they flooded the ballot-boxes and won the election. When the result

## *Abraham Lincoln*

was known they were highly delighted, and a Constitution was immediately drawn up in favour of slavery. The free-State settlers were furious at the result of the trickery. They declared that they would not obey the slave-party laws, but make a Constitution of their own, and they promptly elected a new Legislature, which was strongly in favour of freedom. The Missourians retorted in turn by refusing to acknowledge this new Legislature, upon which the Legislature declared that it was the only real governing body, because in the first election many of the voters had not been real citizens of Kansas.

The struggle between the two parties grew so bitter that the Government at Washington was forced to take part in it. The case was carefully examined, but the free-State men knew from the first that their cause was hopeless, and when the decision was announced they found their worst fears realized. Congress not only upheld the first, or Missourian, Legislature, but it declared that any one not obeying it was rebelling against the State and would be punished. A troop of soldiers sent down to keep order showed that the Government in Washington was in earnest. For the time being Kansas sank into quietness; but it was a terrible quietness—the quietness that goes before a storm. Meanwhile the Republican party was gathering strength. Lincoln's keen eye was keeping watch upon all that was happening. An uneasy sense of coming danger began to fill the minds of the slave party with alarm.

## CHAPTER XVII: *Dred Scott*

**I**N 1857, through the action of a slave, the struggle between the pro-slavery party and the free-State men came to a head. Dred Scott was a slave owned by a doctor who lived in St Louis. Presently the doctor left his home and went to Rock Island, in the free State of Illinois, where he settled for a time. He took with him his slave, Dred Scott. After living at Rock Island for about a year, Dred Scott was taken by his master to Fort Snelling, in Minnesota, where he became friendly with a negress, purchased as a slave by his master. In time the two slaves were married and a child was born to them. By and by the doctor wished to go back to his old home. He packed up and returned, and at the same time he took with him his two slaves and their child. Dred Scott objected to the removal of himself and his family. He said that by taking them into a free State their master had made them free, and that their child, born in free territory, could not become a slave. So certain was he that he was right that he took the case into court and claimed the freedom of himself, his wife, and his child.

The news that a slave was bringing an action against his master caused the greatest excitement. Slave-owners were not accustomed to the notion that a slave could have ideas of his own, still less did they like to think that he would dare to announce them in public. Who was this impudent Dred Scott? And what did his worthless life matter to any one? The fellow must be taught his place. A slave in the law-courts! What next, pray?

## *Abraham Lincoln*

But the Dred Scott case was not to be pushed out of sight so easily. On two occasions it came up in the courts of Missouri. Once it was decided in Scott's favour, and once against him. To settle the matter it was taken to the Supreme Court of the United States, where it was tried all over again before nine judges.

Even in this high court of justice the judges did not agree in their opinions, but the majority were against Dred Scott, and he therefore lost his case. Very astonishing was the announcement of the court declaring that a slave was property, and being property he was no citizen, and being no citizen he could not bring a case into court; but still more astonishing was the decision that a master might carry his slaves about with him wherever he went, and that even if he were to settle in a free State the slave, being property, would remain just as much a slave as if he were in a slave-owning district. "What!" cried the North, "slaves can be carried by their masters into free States and still remain slaves! Then what, pray, is there to prevent slave-owners from settling in our free territories and keeping their slaves exactly as if they were in slave States? What becomes of the free State? Its freedom is only a farce, and there is no real difference anywhere. At any moment the free States may be flooded by slave-owners bringing their slaves and we shall be powerless to prevent them. What is the use of calling us free States if slave-owners can settle among us and hold their slaves here as securely as in their own homes?" This difficult problem was not likely to be settled in a moment, and the Dred Scott case became a national question.

## *Dred Scott*

While the nation was being stirred by this new aspect of the slave problem Kansas was still in a state of great unrest. The struggle between the two parties had become so fierce that it was not an uncommon thing for a man meeting another in a lane to demand of him fiercely, "Are you in favour of freedom or slavery?" It happened sometimes that the two who met held the same views, when they would shake hands and wish each other well. But if they chanced to belong to opposite parties then a quarrel would follow, and sometimes one man would even kill the other, or both might be wounded. Such a state of affairs kept the country-side in constant anxiety.

Meanwhile a stream of Northern settlers continued to pour into Kansas, and their coming did a good deal toward improving matters. They were strong, sturdy fellows, who meant to make homes for themselves in the new territory to which they had come, and they did not intend to let the 'border ruffians' have their own way in everything. In time the 'borderers' began to find themselves outnumbered, and being for the most part men of a restless disposition they began to weary of their new life, and gradually to drift back to Missouri. Their departure gave the free-State settlers fresh hope, but all expectations were dashed to the ground when the elections were held and it was found that the pro-slavery party had carried the day. The free-State men knew quite well that such a result could only have been gained by cheating, but they were powerless against it. The new Legislature met at Lecompton and drew up a pro-slavery Constitution, upon which they asked

## *Abraham Lincoln*

Congress to admit them to the Union as a slave State. The President of the United States was James Buchanan, a man with friendly inclinations to the slave party, and he was prepared to grant what Kansas asked when an unexpected opponent to the scheme arose in the person of Stephen A. Douglas. 'The Little Giant' was a Democrat and a supporter of Buchanan, so that his protest startled his listeners into more than ordinary attention. He had said more than once in public meetings that he did not care whether slavery was voted up or down, provided that the voting was carried out according to his doctrine of 'popular sovereignty'; and 'popular sovereignty'—so people said—was being exercised in Kansas. Surely Douglas should have been satisfied? What was the reason for this sudden change of front?

On being questioned as to the meaning of his speech, Douglas replied that he believed in a popular election, but only if it was conducted on fair lines. The Lecompton Constitution, he declared, was the result of an unfair election, and therefore he was opposed to it. He added that if the election could be held again on a just basis, with the result still in favour of the Lecompton Constitution, then he would be prepared to uphold it; but without this second election he felt it his duty to oppose the admission of Kansas into the Union.

In these arguments Douglas may have been honest enough, but his critics were not slow to point out that his term of office as a Senator was nearly over and an election was at hand. The new Senator would be elected by the free State of Illinois. Would free-

## *Dred Scott*

State men be likely to vote back into office a man who was upholding the hated Lecompton Constitution? On the other hand, would President Buchanan ever look favourably on a Senator who had dared to oppose him? Faced by these two difficulties, Douglas decided to risk offending the President rather than risk losing the votes of the free-State men of Illinois, and he therefore firmly refused to support the admission of Kansas as a slave State without a second election taking place. Very black looks now became his portion in Washington. Buchanan had so far regarded him as one of his strongest supporters, and he was very ill pleased at the news of this defiance. He argued with him, and even threatened, but 'the Little Giant' was no coward and he steadfastly refused to give way. As Buchanan very well knew, Douglas had great influence not only among the people generally, but with the members of Congress, and his desertion was freely talked of both inside the House and without. "So Douglas is opposing Buchanan over this Lecompton affair," men said to one another, and they began to reconsider the question, and to inquire more closely into what the Lecompton Constitution implied.

This discussion prevented the upholders of the Lecompton Government from rushing through their Bill without inquiry. They had hoped to get Kansas made a slave State at once, without any questions being asked; but now this troublesome Douglas was bringing the matter into public notice, and who could tell what might happen next? Thus the Lecompton supporters grumbled among themselves, while the free-State men redoubled their

## *Abraham Lincoln*

efforts to put obstacles in the way of the slavery group. Buchanan, meanwhile, silently watched the way things were going, annoyed that the matter was slipping out of his grasp, but powerless to prevent it. The end came when Congress finally decided that Kansas should not be admitted until a second election had been taken. If this election, which was to be conducted with strict fairness, should again be in favour of the Lecompton Constitution, then Kansas should at once be admitted as a slave State ; if not, she was to remain a territory.<sup>1</sup>

By joining the Union, Kansas would gain a good many advantages, not the least being the grant of a large strip of land. But in the eyes of the free-State men no advantages could make up for the evils of having slaves in their midst, and they fought hard to overthrow the Lecompton Legislature. The election was held in January 1858, when the bitterness of winter was over everything, but the hearts of the voters were hot with the excitement of the fight. When the poll was announced, and it was made known that there was a majority of ten thousand people against a slave Constitution, excitement rose to fever pitch. The national battle against slavery had begun. The defeat of the Lecompton Constitution sounded a warning in the ears of the slave-owners. Slavery was doomed. The steady growth of public opinion in favour of freedom showed which way the struggle would end. The battle had already begun, although few as yet realized that the trumpets of war had been sounded. The refusal of ' the Little Giant ' to accept

<sup>1</sup> In the United States a ' territory ' is a division of the country not yet admitted to the full rights of a State.



## *Dred Scott*

the Lecompton Constitution was to lead to much greater results than any one at the moment imagined.

The Lecompton Government was barely overthrown and the freedom of Kansas established when Douglas had to face a new election. As a Senator he had been in office for six years, but his term was now over. His action in helping to defeat the Lecompton Constitution had won him a great many friends in the free State of Illinois, and he hoped very much to carry through the election in his favour. He stood as a Democratic candidate. Who was to be his opponent? Who would be the candidate chosen by the Republicans? Douglas half hoped that the Republicans would not choose any one, but let himself be re-elected without opposition, and some of the Republicans were quite ready to do this because of what he had done for Kansas. But there were some among the Republicans who did not trust him. They remembered that he had said he did not care whether slavery was voted up or down, and they felt that this was no man to represent a party pledged to oppose slave interests. They therefore chose Abraham Lincoln as their candidate, and once again 'the Little Giant' and Lincoln found themselves rivals.

Lincoln opened his campaign with a very solemn speech. His shrewd eye had already seen signs of a coming struggle, and he believed that the nation would before long be facing a crisis. "A house divided against itself," he said, "cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or

## *Abraham Lincoln*

the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the farther spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

"What a very unwise speech!" many of Lincoln's friends cried. "It will irritate the North and make the South more furious than ever. Surely it would have been better not to dwell upon the differences between us at this moment. He will never be elected Senator. He has ruined his chances." To some extent their criticisms were true. Lincoln's plain speaking was not the best way to secure votes for his election, but he was looking into the future, and not thinking of the moment. He saw that before long the country would be face to face with national problems, and he could not forbear from giving his warning. Like most prophets he was unbelieved at the time; later on both friends and enemies realized the truth of his words.

Although Lincoln disheartened some of his friends by making what they considered an 'unwise' speech, he was very anxious to win the election. For many years a seat in the Senate had been the height of his ambition. It would give him power; it would put him into office for no less than six years. He therefore resolved to leave nothing undone that might help to make him the winner, and with this end in view he challenged Douglas to a series of debates. "Splendid idea," laughed the friends of 'the Little Giant'; "you will easily outshine this rough fellow from nowhere." But Douglas was silent. He

## *Dred Scott*

knew Lincoln's ability, and though he accepted the challenge he was by no means so sure of his success as his friends seemed to be. Seven debates were arranged at seven different towns. On each occasion Douglas and Lincoln were to appear on the same platform, one was to speak an hour in opening, and the other an hour and a half in reply, and then the opener was to have the last half-hour to close in.

The announcement of these debates aroused the greatest interest. Both Douglas and Lincoln were known to be good speakers, and long before the first meeting was due to open the hall was packed with listeners. Douglas had plenty of wealthy friends to support him and they took care he should make a brave appearance. They drove him to the hall in a special car, trimmed with ribbons and flowers, and conducted him on to the platform amid a buzz of applause. Smartly dressed, well fed, and protected from any fatigue on the journey, Douglas had everything in his favour. Lincoln, on the other hand, had no fine friends. His clothes were always shabby and ill-cut, and he looked what he was, a poor man to whom life was a constant struggle. But when it came to a battle of words Lincoln was at least a match for Douglas. Night after night he harassed him with keen questions and drove him into a corner for his reply. The flags and flowers which decked the hall faded from the view of the audience as they bent their eyes upon the speaker whose eloquence held them enthralled. Lincoln was determined to make his hearers realize the danger with which the slave party threatened them. "Put this and that together," he cried, "and we have another nice little

## *Abraham Lincoln*

niche, which we may, ere long, see filled with another Supreme Court decision declaring that the Constitution of the United States does not permit a State to exclude slavery from its limits. . . . Such a decision is all that slavery now lacks of being alike lawful in all the States. . . . We shall lie down pleasantly dreaming that the people of Missouri are on the verge of making their State free, and we shall awake to the reality, instead, that the Supreme Court has made Illinois a slave State." Douglas made light of the point raised by Lincoln. He maintained that whatever the decision of the Supreme Court, it could never be carried out except with the help of local police regulations, and that therefore every State was really independent, and that the right of the people to have their territory either slave or free was "perfect and complete."

Thus the brilliant battle was waged. But though it was clear that in the matter of simple logic Lincoln had won the day, it was by no means so certain that he would win at the poll. When the election ended his friends found that their fears were only too true. In spite of the deep impression Lincoln had made by his speeches, the largest number of votes lay with Douglas. Once more life had dealt out disappointment to Lincoln. He heard the news cheerfully, though his defeat was a keen blow, and when one of his friends asked him how he felt about being beaten by 'the Little Giant,' he said, with a flash of his whimsical humour: "I feel very much like the overgrown boy who stumped his toe, when he said he was hurt too bad to laugh, and was too big to cry."

Lincoln was beaten for the moment, but only for the moment. Before long he was to be a conqueror.

## CHAPTER XVIII: *John Brown*

**A**MONG the Northern settlers who flocked into Kansas in search of a new home was a man named John Brown. He was tall, and silent, of very strong character, deeply religious, and firmly opposed to slavery. Nineteen children had been born to him, and when he crossed into Kansas eleven were still alive. Five of these were young men, fine stalwart fellows, who could swing an axe with any one or fight with the strongest. Long brooding over the evils suffered by the slaves had made John Brown's heart hot with the conviction that he had been appointed by God to be their deliverer. His quick fancy told him of the misery hidden under the immovable black faces of the slaves, and in his tender sympathy he longed to become their champion. He saw himself as their saviour, proclaiming freedom for every man in the midst of a group of emancipated negroes who clasped his knees and poured out thanks; he saw himself blessing them and bidding them go on their way and be happy. Then he awoke to find it was all a dream.

The dream of helping his oppressed fellow-men did not fade hastily from John Brown's mind. He determined to turn it into reality; to break off the iron fetters and set the slaves free. But how was it to be done? Even the dreaming, unpractical Brown realized that public opinion would oppose the sudden setting free of the negroes, and though the band of reformers working for their liberation was daily

## *Abraham Lincoln*

growing larger, the majority of the people were against any such idea. Many difficult questions had to be considered before such an important change could be made. For instance, the slaves had been paid for by their masters; they represented so many golden sovereigns to their owners, and if all the slaves were at once set free many slave-owners would be utterly ruined. Then, again, if a slave was to be treated as an ordinary citizen he would be entitled to have a vote. Would it be fair, or wise, suddenly to give four million men, who had never voted before, the right to a share in the government of the country? Questions such as these could not be settled in a moment, and the wisest men in the country were the most perplexed about them.

To simple John Brown, however, these questions hardly occurred, or if they did he did not realize the difficulties behind them. He saw that the black men were many of them miserable, and he believed they were miserable largely because they were kept in bondage by white men. Therefore he declared that the only thing to be done was to force the white men to free the black men, and then every one would be happy. With this idea in view, he began to plan a revolt in favour of the negroes. "Give a negro a pike and you make him a man," he said, by which he meant that if weapons were given to the slaves they would of their own free will rise up against their owners and free themselves.

He taught his doctrine to his sons, who firmly believed in their father's wisdom, and, unknown to any except the small handful of conspirators, the seed of rebellion began to take root. Weapons were

## *John Brown*

secretly collected and hidden away; plans were discussed; knives were sharpened. "A few men in the right, knowing they are in the right," said John Brown, "can overturn a king," and with firm belief in his heart he pushed forward his plans. The violent death of two of his sons through being mixed up in one of the many skirmishes between the Northern settlers in Kansas and the 'border ruffians' further hardened his heart against oppression, and he redoubled his well-meant efforts for helping the slaves.

His entire belief in his mission, and his conviction that if the slaves were given a lead they would flock in their thousands round his standard, blinded his eyes to the perils and difficulties before him, and in the autumn of 1859 he made a bold plan to seize the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Harper's Ferry was a town of some 5000 inhabitants, with an important arsenal, well stocked with weapons and powder. Its capture, Brown argued, would strike terror into the hearts of the people in the town and cause a general panic in the country. During the commotion the slaves could break away from their masters and join the rebel standard at Harper's Ferry, where they would find enough pikes and guns to make them a terror to their enemies. To simple-minded John Brown nothing seemed easier than the working out of his plan, and in imagination he already saw the triumph of the negroes. With splendid but foolish boldness, he actually set out secretly on October 16th, 1859, with only eighteen men to help him, to seize the arsenal.

The arrival of the little group of conspirators was quite unexpected, and they had little difficulty in

## *Abraham Lincoln*

killing the sentry and gaining possession of the stores. So far all had been easy, but there was grave danger ahead. The Brownists were in possession of the arsenal, but how were they going to hold it? Five thousand citizens would not lightly allow eighteen men to tyrannize over them, and the rebels stiffened their backs to meet the foe. They had not long to wait. The townspeople heard the news of the capture of the arsenal with incredulity at first. But when the fact was confirmed they vigorously prepared to drive out these curious rebels, who imagined they could terrify a city. An armed force was hastily summoned from Washington, and after thirty-six hours of glorious mastery John Brown and his followers found themselves utterly defeated. Brown himself and five of his men were taken prisoners; a few escaped; the rest were killed in the struggle.

Although bitterly disappointed at the failure of his long-cherished scheme, John Brown was too full of courage and too certain of the righteousness of his cause to be cast down. He set very little value on his own life, and was quite ready to die if by that means he could help the cause he had at heart. He was hurried off to the law-courts, tried, and sentenced to be hanged. He heard his sentence with the same splendid courage which he had shown when he had set off with his tiny following to attack Harper's Ferry. "I can leave to God," he said, "the time and manner of my death, for I believe now that the sealing of my testimony before God and man will do far more to further the cause to which I have devoted myself than anything else I have done in my life."

In this fine spirit he went out to meet the fate which





JOHN BROWN GOING TO EXECUTION

Thomas Hovenden

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



## *John Brown*

was the happiest which could have befallen him. His plan for helping the slaves was so impracticable that the country could afford to smile at it. Not a single slave had run to join the rebel's standard ; the panic in Harper's Ferry had only lasted for a very few hours, and no one had been really frightened. But by dying publicly John Brown became for ever his own monument to the nation. All eyes were turned upon him, and he became, as it were, the embodiment of the negro race ; the living expression of their unspoken misery ; the martyr whose death preserves for ever the cause in which he sheds his blood. Men who had never given slavery a thought began to wonder if there was not something wrong about it, since a man was found willing to die in protest against it. " The old fellow may have been mad," they said, " but perhaps he was right after all — or at least partly right." And so the seed planted by John Brown in the rocky soil of Harper's arsenal began to take root and flourish. His body lay mouldering in the grave, but his soul went marching on, and the popular song, sung to-day as much as in any day, proves that Time has not yet wiped out the remembrance of his deed, rashly conceived but gallantly performed.

The sentence on John Brown drew excited comments from both North and South. In the North the Abolitionists upheld his action ; in the South he was violently denounced, and with him the entire Abolition party. " This is what they would all do, if they could," said the Southerners. " They would come among us stealthily and kill us " ; and so the gulf between North and South grew still wider. " He

## *Abraham Lincoln*

has abolished slavery," cried Wendell Phillips, one of the famous leaders of the anti-slavery party; but Lincoln, looking at the event with keener, less passionate scrutiny, observed quietly: "John Brown's effort was peculiar. It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among the slaves, in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance, saw plainly enough that it could not succeed. That affair, in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts, related in history, at the assassination of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon and John Brown's attempt at Harper's Ferry were, in their philosophy, precisely the same."

These remarks by Lincoln must not be taken to mean that he was not in sympathy with the abolition of slavery. He was deeply anxious to set the slaves free, but he did not believe rebellion was the proper way in which to procure their freedom. He put the Constitution first, declaring its preservation more important than anything—more important even than the freeing of the slaves. If possible, the slaves must be freed; but at all costs the Union must be kept unbroken. This was the chief doctrine of Lincoln's life.

## SECTION VI

### *Years of Supremacy*

1860-1864

(FROM FIFTY-ONE TO FIFTY-FIVE)

I hold that, in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. . . .

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present difficulties, is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people. . . .

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break, our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

*Extract from Lincoln's first inaugural address at  
Washington, March 4th, 1861*



## CHAPTER XIX: *At New York*

**J**OHN BROWN'S rebellion had been very short-lived, but it had left a deep mark on the nation. Political questions began to be discussed more generally than before, and hundreds of men who had so far cared very little about these things now took their stand either on one side or the other of the great slavery problem. Buchanan's term of office at the White House was drawing to a close. Who was to succeed him? Should a pro-slavery man step into his place, or was there any chance of a free-State candidate winning the election? And, if so, what changes might be expected in the country? "Changes for the better," said the believers in freedom. "For the worse," muttered the pro-slavery party. In addition to the men who knew exactly what kind of candidate they wanted to see in office, there were thousands of others who did not care very much either way. They took very little real interest in the affairs of their country, and were quite ready to vote at random. But even these careless voters gradually became aware that the election that was drawing near would be different from any other election they had known; that great issues were at stake; that the choice of President might make an entire change in the country; in fact, that every vote was of supreme importance.

Once awakened to the fact that the election really mattered, most of these former careless voters began to show a lively interest in public affairs. Every

## *Abraham Lincoln*

political party in the country was busy with preparations for the campaign, and although no candidates had as yet been chosen, the nation began to act in the manner of men who know that great things are at stake. The Republican party was particularly busy, and left no stone unturned in its efforts for success. Through the energy of some of its members a series of lectures was arranged to be delivered in New York, and to his profound pleasure Lincoln found himself honoured by a request that he would be one of the lecturers. It was a great triumph for 'Honest Abe' to be asked to speak before an audience which would contain the flower of New York society, and he was naturally gratified at the compliment. His firm persistence in the doctrine that at all costs the Union must be preserved, coupled with his steady defence of the slaves and his opposition to immediate abolition, made him an interesting figure. Men were curious to hear him. Here was a politician who really dared to think for himself; who was not afraid to have views of his own, or to express them in public, regardless of whether they fitted in with the views of his party or of whether they would best help his own interests. "You are like Byron, who woke up one morning and found himself famous," wrote an editor. "People want to know about you. You have sprung at once from the position of a capital fellow, and a leading lawyer in Illinois, to a national reputation."

Remarks of this kind were very refreshing to a man so well acquainted with disappointment as was Lincoln, but he was not carried away by the flattery. He had never fashioned his views to please anybody.



## *At New York*

They had grown slowly into conviction after long mental deliberation, and having been hardly come by he was not likely to let them slip easily from him. Fame and popularity might come knocking at his door, but he would not change one article of the furniture within to please them.

It was in this spirit of self-reliance that he stepped on to the platform of the Cooper Institute at New York on the 27th of February, 1860. His great, gaunt figure, his large, toil-hardened hands, his clumsy gestures, and his obvious air of awkward nervousness did not impress his audience very favourably at first. William Cullen Bryant, the famous poet, was in the chair; Horace Greely, the great editor, and David Dudley Field, the great lawyer, were among the listeners, and the long rows of seats in the large hall were filled with men and women who were accustomed to hold their own in witty and polished conversation. How could such a rough, uncouth-looking man as Lincoln hope to engage their interest? A few laughing comments on the wild man from the backwoods were softly exchanged, then the audience suddenly grew silent, for Lincoln was speaking.

He had taken for his subject the Constitution of the United States. It sounded a dry enough theme, and men were resigning themselves to yawn when they found themselves listening almost against their will. Lincoln was pleading on behalf of the laws embodied in the Constitution. He was taking them to pieces and analysing them with unerring skill and magnificent eloquence. His plain face lighted up with earnestness, his voice took on the unmistakable

## *Abraham Lincoln*

note of conviction, his whole body seemed to vibrate in an effort to express his personality. "This is no ordinary man," thought his listeners; then presently they forgot to think about him any more—forgot themselves, forgot everything in the interest of the flood of words which held them enthralled.

As for Lincoln, the fashionable audience had faded from his view; he had forgotten that this was New York, that he was speaking to one of the most brilliant audiences in the country. He had forgotten, too, that they were educated and he was not, that they were well-born and he was poor. He remembered only that he was speaking to them as a man to men, as he had spoken in the days when he had stood on a wooden box at Springfield and harangued any who would listen to him, and when an honest clap at the end had been his most coveted reward.

From an analysis of the Constitution he passed to the consideration of slavery. Was it right or wrong for one man to hold another in his power? "If slavery is right," he cried, "all words, acts, laws, constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right we cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality! If it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension—its enlargement. . . . Their thinking it right, and our thinking it wrong, is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. . . . Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belaboured, contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should be neither a

## *At New York*

living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of 'don't care' on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to disunionists. . . . Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."

Long before the end of the speech was reached Lincoln had conquered his hearers. He had captured them once and for all, and the great bursts of cheering showed how completely he had triumphed. As he looked over the great audience shouting itself hoarse in his honour a feeling of pride might well have warmed his heart. But self-satisfaction was never one of his qualities. He had not set out to please his hearers, but to speak to them out of the depth of conviction: to convert them to his own views, if they were opposed to him; to strengthen them in their beliefs if they were already on his side. The beaming eyes and excited faces that he saw on all sides were very pleasant, but they had not been his chief aim. His great idea had been to win fresh followers to his cause. Looking round the hall he could not fail to realize that he had succeeded in his work. That he had also made Abraham Lincoln himself approved of by this very critical audience was a very pleasant thought, but by no means of the highest importance. Like every simple-hearted man, he enjoyed sunning himself in public favour, but he did not court it. It was more agreeable to

## *Abraham Lincoln*

walk along the road in sunshine, but if showers came he was quite ready to plod on through the rain.

Meanwhile he had established a reputation in the capital city and a few enthusiastic spirits began to exclaim : “ Why not make him a candidate for the next Presidential election ? ” The idea was so new to most people that they were too startled to find an objection, and seeing their confusion his supporters seized their opportunity to repeat again with stronger emphasis : “ Why not ? ”

## CHAPTER XX: *Great Scenes in Chicago*

WHEN it was first suggested to Lincoln that he should let himself be named as a candidate for the President's office, he replied at once: "I must in candour say I do not think I am fitted for the Presidency."

There was another office which he coveted, and this he justly thought might come within his grasp. It was to be a Senator—an honour which would raise him above the level of the ordinary member of the House of Representatives and give him considerable power in helping in the management of the nation's affairs. In his earlier attempt to win this prize he had been beaten by his old rival Stephen A. Douglas, but this remembrance did not hinder Lincoln's belief that the second time he might succeed. Therefore, when his friends urged him to consider the idea of offering himself as a candidate for the President's chair, he at last gave way to their entreaties, thinking that by this means he would help forward his claims to Senatorship. The idea that he would ever carry the election to the White House probably never for a moment crossed his mind. Seward was also standing, and like Lincoln he represented the Republican party. Supposing the Republicans were to triumph and succeed in electing the man they most wished to become President, who could have a chance against Seward, who had long been marked out as a possible future President?

Nevertheless, once he had consented to enter the lists Lincoln determined to make the best fight he

## *Abraham Lincoln*

could. It was not in him to do things by halves, and he now set about doing everything in his power to impress himself upon the nation at large as a suitable person for the high office at Washington. Early in May the Republicans of Illinois nominated him as the candidate they intended to support, and amid deafening cheers Lincoln was carried shoulder-high to the platform. Scarcely was he on his feet again when the door burst open and in marched John Hanks, Lincoln's cousin, the man who had really been the means of persuading the Lincoln family to settle in Illinois. He carried on his shoulder two well-worn rails, of the kind used in making a fence, and from the end of the poles hung a flag on which was written :

ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
THE RAIL CANDIDATE  
FOR PRESIDENT IN 1860

TWO RAILS FROM A LOT OF 3000 MADE  
IN 1830 BY JOHN HANKS AND ABE LINCOLN

The sight of the two homely poles, part of the fence made by Lincoln in the old days at Decatur, and clear proof that he had been a working man like themselves, stirred the audience more deeply than any speech could have done. Here was a man who knew what it was to work ; to be hungry, to be tired ; who had been brought up in the humblest circumstances, but who had hewn out a public career simply by his own cleverness and hard work. What better candidate could be found ? He upheld the views of the Republican party in the great question of slavery ;

## *Great Scenes in Chicago*

he was immovable in his belief that the Union must be preserved; he was a splendid speaker, a brilliant debater, a man of conscience, a hard worker; moreover he was *one of themselves*. What more could any one want? And so the huge audience shouted itself hoarse in its delight at the thought that the candidate they had chosen was 'Honest Abe,' fit for anything, even for the White House itself.

Lincoln was very much moved by the great outburst of enthusiasm. He stood in silence waiting for the cheers to subside, and as he looked over the rows of excited, eager faces he realized that whether he might succeed or not in winning the Presidential election he had at least succeeded in winning the hearts of the men who knew him best.

So far Lincoln had only been chosen as the Republican candidate by the Republicans in Illinois. Other sections of the party in different districts would almost certainly choose other men. Then when all the Republican candidates had been nominated there would be a great national gathering of the Republican party, and voting for the various candidates would take place. The man who secured the greatest number of votes would then be nominated as the candidate chosen by the whole Republican party to stand for the Presidential election. Thus although Lincoln had been chosen as candidate by Illinois, it was more than likely that at the great National Convention he would be beaten by another man, and would therefore not be able to enter the last round of the fight for the President's office.

Among the men who were chosen as Republican candidates by the various States were William H.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

Seward, of New York, a man who had been more than once a Senator ; Senator Cameron, well known as an accomplished politician ; and Salmon P. Chase, a well-read, attractive leader, who, like Seward, had been a member of the Senate. In addition to these three men, who were all widely known and of great influence, there were others of lesser renown ; last of all there was Abraham Lincoln.

The National Convention which was to decide which of these men should represent the Republican party in the coming fight was held at Chicago in May 1860, not many days after the smaller convention at Illinois had adopted Abraham Lincoln as their representative. From the first it became evident that the real fight lay between Seward and Lincoln, and the supporters of both men began to make great efforts after success. A gigantic wigwam, large enough to hold 10,000 people, had been put up at Chicago, and into this great building poured the 'Lincoln boys,' prepared to roar and stamp till they were worn out on Lincoln's behalf. The 'Seward gang' meanwhile was parading the streets, hoping by this means to attract sympathizers to their ranks. When they streamed into the hall they found the 'Lincoln boys' were already established there, sending forth thunders of applause in Lincoln's favour. In vain the 'Seward gang' tried to drown the uproar.

By the time the voting was due to begin the vast building was filled to overflowing. According to the law of the land there were 465 votes to be cast. No man could be elected until he got more than half the total number of votes, so that he needed to have at least 233 to win. When the first ballot was taken



## *Great Scenes in Chicago*

the votes were scattered among a good many candidates, and when the numbers were announced it was found that Seward had  $173\frac{1}{2}$  votes and Lincoln 102. Neither candidate was as yet elected, but it was quite plain that one or the other of these two must win, since the other names were far below them. A second ballot was therefore called for. Most of the delegates who in the first ballot had cast their votes for Chase, Cameron, or one of the lesser-known names now saw that it was useless to vote for any one but Lincoln or Seward, and when the second round of voting took place there were 11 new votes for Seward and 79 for Lincoln. This meant that Seward had  $184\frac{1}{2}$  votes and Lincoln 181. Neither Lincoln nor Seward was yet elected, however, because they both had less than the required 233. A third ballot was therefore taken, and this time it was found that Lincoln had  $231\frac{1}{2}$  and Seward only 180. Lincoln now only needed a vote and a half to win. A sudden and profound silence fell upon the great gathering, till the hush was broken by a delegate from Ohio who jumped up and declared that Ohio would change four of her votes from Chase to Lincoln. A thunder of applause broke out. By these four votes Lincoln had now  $235\frac{1}{2}$  votes. He was nominated. Seward was beaten.

Lincoln's triumph was a bitter disappointment to Seward. In imagination he had so often seen himself ruling at White House that he could hardly realize that his chance of the prize had been snatched from him by this daring stranger, and the groans of the 'Seward gang' told how unexpected and unpleasant they found their defeat. Lincoln was now the national candidate of the Republican

## *Abraham Lincoln*

party. He was not yet President. He had to face another election first, and in this election he would have to fight against the candidates chosen by the various political bodies in the country, who would each have their own representative. The contest was thus by no means over. At the same time, whether he was defeated or successful in the next round, Lincoln had scored a great triumph in becoming the chosen candidate of the Republican party. He had become a national figure, and his name was on the lips of every one.

When the results of the nominations of the other political parties were made known it was found that the Democratic party had had a split, as the result of which two candidates were nominated; one of these was Stephen A. Douglas, the other John C. Breckenridge. A new party, calling itself the Constitutional Union Party, had nominated John Bell. There were thus four candidates in all for the last round in the election for the Presidency. These four were :

1st. Abraham Lincoln, the candidate of the Republican party. Their chief doctrine was that slavery was wrong, and they therefore proposed to limit it.

2nd. Stephen A. Douglas, nominated by the Douglas wing of the Democratic party. Their doctrine was an indifference toward slavery and a firm belief in government by 'popular sovereignty.'

3rd. John C. Breckenridge, nominated by the Buchanan wing of the Democratic party. Their chief doctrine was that slavery was morally right, and therefore ought to be extended.

4th. John Bell, nominated by the Constitutional Union Party, which ignored altogether the slavery

## *Great Scenes in Chicago*

question, and recognized no political principles except the upholding of the laws and constitution of the country.

One of these four men would be chosen to be President. The burning question now became which.

The Chicago convention had been held in May, but the election for the President was not due to take place till November. During the months that lay between, each candidate therefore busied himself with plans for the coming struggle. Day after day Lincoln sat in his little office in Springfield, quietly receiving the long stream of callers who came to wish him well in his campaign. Among the thousands who poured in upon him were many of the honest, simple folk he had known in his earlier days. He was still 'Honest Abe' to them, and he welcomed them all with the old heartiness and simplicity. The prospect of office could not rob Lincoln of his kindness, nor did it breed in him the affected bearing which so often accompanies a great change in a man's fortune. The old friends who came to see him, half wondering if he would be unaltered, went away thoroughly convinced that here was the same old friend they had known in the past, and the wishes for his success which they had brought with them were even deeper and warmer when they went away.

A great help to Lincoln in these days were the Wide-awake Clubs, the members of which, dressed in capes of red or white oilskin, and each carrying a flaming torch or coloured lantern, marched every night in their thousands through the northern towns, making the streets look like fairyland with the glare of their torches and the glitter of the gaudy lanterns. The

## *Abraham Lincoln*

steady tramp, tramp, tramp of their orderly tread echoed through the silent streets, until it seemed as if an army was passing on its way to victory. By means such as this the Lincoln party captured the fancy of the populace, and added hundreds of new voters to their ranks.

On November 6th the votes were taken. The electors chosen by various States met together to carry out the instructions of the States they represented. There were 303 voters. With great deliberation they cast their votes, upon which it was found that Lincoln had 180, Douglas 12, Breckenridge 72, Bell 39. Lincoln was therefore easily first. Even if there had been no split in the Democratic party, and the votes divided between Douglas and Breckenridge had all been given to Douglas, Lincoln would still have been ahead of him. The great event was over. The elections were ended. Abraham Lincoln, the rail-splitter, was President of the United States.

## CHAPTER XXI: *President of the United States*

**A**LTHOUGH it was November 1860 when Lincoln was chosen President of the United States of America, according to the laws of the country he would not enter into office till March the 4th, 1861. Four months had thus to pass before he would be in power, and in the meantime the former President, James Buchanan, would continue to direct the government of the country. It was a difficult position for both men. Buchanan was known to be a supporter of slavery; Lincoln was its confessed opponent. The views of the two men were therefore very different, and the nation knew that as soon as Lincoln came into office the entire policy of the country would be changed. Democrats would have to give way to Republicans, and the supporters of slavery would have to vacate their chairs in favour of free-State men. With a Republican President at its head, Congress would be sure to reflect Republican views, and, grimly certain that for the time being they were out of favour, the Democrats prepared to meet the coming change in their fortunes.

But these general difficulties faded away into insignificance in comparison with the gigantic trouble which was brewing between the North and the South. The Northern States had always held staunchly to the doctrine that there must be no break in the Union; that at all costs the States must stand by one another and remain true to the Constitution which bound them together. The South, on the other hand, did

## *Abraham Lincoln*

not regard this doctrine so favourably. They declared that citizens owed allegiance first of all to the State, and after that to the Union. This was only another way of saying that if any State disagreed with the policy of the Union, then that State could act as it pleased, and not obey the Union, in which case the citizens of that State would owe loyalty to the State, and not to the Union.

This doctrine, so agreeable to the South, was looked upon as heresy in the North. Lincoln's keen mind at once saw that if these ideas were given effect to the Union would be in the gravest danger. If each State were to behave in the way it liked best, and set up a form of self-government, what would become of the Union? It would be worthless, and instead of being one great nation America would be split up into groups of little kingdoms, each complete within itself, but without any power outside its own limited realm. If this were to happen America would be doomed. Lincoln realized this, and to prevent the catastrophe now became his greatest desire. As future President of the United States, he determined at all costs to keep them 'united,' and in the four quiet months which lay between his election and the beginning of his rule he day and night set himself to study the problem with which he knew he would before long have to grapple.

While these ideas were simmering in Lincoln's mind the Southern States began to take definite action. The election of Lincoln had been received with deep disgust and contempt. "What!" cried the slave-owning South, "be ruled by a Republican! Never!" and in this spirit they began to make plans for revolt.

## *President of the United States*

Six weeks later a great convention was held at Charleston, in South Carolina. Hundreds of excited citizens were present, and amid loud applause they framed a resolution declaring that South Carolina was a free and independent State, that she separated herself from the Union, and henceforth would manage her own affairs.

The news of this convention spread rapidly through the country. The North was aghast at the boldness of the South, and it looked eagerly to Washington to put down this unparalleled rebellion. At Washington James Buchanan sat in the White House. He was a man who did not care to embroil himself in difficulties, and he knew that before long another ruler would occupy his place. His only answer, therefore, was, "I have no power to interfere"—a reply which delighted the South and made the North boil with rage.

In Springfield Lincoln also heard the news of Buchanan's reply. It did not surprise him. He had not expected any activity from the White House. But before many weeks should pass he would be the man who would sit in the White House. "And then I shall interfere," he thought to himself grimly.

There were others besides Lincoln who thought the time for interference had arrived. Foremost among these was General Winfield Scott, an old and tried soldier, who scented danger in the air and chafed at the prolonged inaction in Washington. By and by word came that Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had all followed the example of South Carolina and seceded from the Union. They had joined themselves together in a

## *Abraham Lincoln*

new bond and now styled themselves the Confederate States of America. They drew up laws and proclaimed a new Government. Some one had to be at the head of affairs, so they chose Jefferson Davis and made him their President. The United States Government was thus brought face to face with a very difficult situation. The seven rebel States by law still belonged to the Union, but by their own proclamation they would have nothing more to do with the Government at Washington. They had thrown off the Union and become their own governors. The Northern citizens, startled and bewildered at these happenings, looked on in helpless dismay. In the White House Buchanan still murmured, "I have no power to interfere!" But like a thunder wave from Springfield rolled the words, "You shall not go out of the Union."

Lincoln's steady determination to combat the seven rebellious States did not meet with unbroken approval even in the North. A good many of the Northerners were quite willing to let the South separate from them. "If they want to go, why not?" they said. In the new movement they saw an easy way out of the troublesome slave question. The South could keep their slaves and manage their own affairs as they liked. The North could abolish slavery and also manage their affairs as they best liked. Both parties would thus be satisfied, and what could be simpler? Therefore the North was not wholly in favour of hindering the South in their new enterprise; some, indeed, even wished the undertaking well.

There was one man, however, who was getting increasingly anxious about affairs. General Winfield



## *President of the United States*

Scott was not slow to see that the nation was quickly approaching a crisis. To a friend he exclaimed earnestly: "I wish to God Mr Lincoln was in office! I do not know him, but I believe him a true, honest, and conservative man." Then he added anxiously: "Is he a *firm* man?" The friend replied that he had known Lincoln long and well and that he might be counted upon doing his whole duty in the sight of a furnace seven times heated. The old general gave a sigh of relief. "All is not lost," he said hopefully.

While the North was still inactive and undecided the Confederates were busily pushing forward their own interests. They attacked a steamer flying the United States flag, hoisted their own banner wherever possible, and generally prepared for war. These indignities roused one member of Buchanan's Government to prompt action. John A. Dix was Secretary of the Treasury, and hearing of the high-handed doings of the Confederates he wired hastily to the Northern military stations: "If any man attempts to haul down the American flag shoot him on the spot."

On the 11th of February, 1861, Lincoln prepared to leave Springfield. He had agreed to make a tour of several cities on his way to the capital, including Indianapolis, Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburg, Buffalo, Albany, New York, Steubenville, Trenton, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg. He had no desire to parade himself, for he was no lover of show, but he believed that by visiting these cities he would draw them closer to him and incline them to support the policy he meant to carry out. When he left Springfield a crowd of at least a thousand people came

## *Abraham Lincoln*

to bid him farewell. Before he started he made one of his simple little speeches, which are still famous, and bidding his friends good-bye he stepped into the train which was to carry him toward his high destiny.

In each of the cities he visited he had a great reception, till he reached Philadelphia, where he received news that there was a plot to murder him on his way through Baltimore. After quietly concluding his promised visit to Harrisburg he therefore made a slight change in his plans, and reached the city of Washington in safety about a week before he was to be made President. A week later a gorgeous ceremony signalized his entry into office, and Abraham Lincoln, dressed in new and unaccustomed finery, stood awkwardly before the audience, his hat in his hand, not daring to place it on the floor lest it should spoil its brave surface. Looking round the marble columns of the Capitol, he said humorously: "I don't see any nail here to hang this on"; whereupon, with his usual ready grace, Stephen A. Douglas sprang forward. "If I cannot be President, at least I can hold the President's hat," he cried.

In firm, solemn tones Lincoln entered upon his address, the chief note in which was that, whatever might happen, the Union must be kept unbroken. Very gravely he pointed out the dangers that would follow upon separation, and as the men before him listened to his words some of the President's own earnestness filled their hearts, and looking through his mind into the future they realized more fully than ever before that without the Union there could be no America. Their hearts leapt as they renewed their silent vow that the South should never be

## *President of the United States*

allowed to separate itself. But Lincoln was still speaking. "I am loath to close," he said. "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart or hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

On this note of bright hope Lincoln brought his speech to a close. The ceremony was over. He was now President in earnest.

## CHAPTER XXII: *Difficult Times*

GENERALLY speaking, Lincoln's election had been hailed with delight in the North, but he had many enemies even in Washington City and he found himself faced with terrible difficulties. The rebellious South, despising him as an uneducated man from nowhere, was determined to ridicule his authority, and lost no time in rising up in arms against him. "A glorious future is before us," cried its President, Jefferson Davis. "The grass will grow in the Northern cities where the pavements have been worn by the tread of commerce. We will carry war where food for the sword and torch await our armies in the densely peopled cities."

These threats of what the South intended to do threw many of the Northern citizens into a state of great terror. The South, seizing its advantage, flung out further hints of the desolation that would follow in its marching train. But there was one man who was absolutely unmoved by these menaces and who remained calm before the most lusty outbreaks. Abraham Lincoln did not underrate the seriousness of the danger hanging over the country; he realized perhaps more clearly than any one the horrible catastrophe that was about to take place, but he had weighed up the situation and his plans were ready. When the time came he would strike his blow; till then there was little to be done except to set everything in order for the great counter-stroke.

In his heart of hearts Lincoln still hoped that some

## *Difficult Times*

way out of the difficulty would be found without shedding blood. He clung to the idea that the South would presently realize the terrible crisis she was creating and, startled by the picture, would of her own accord lay down her arms. When this hope gradually faded before the unshaken determination of the Confederates, Lincoln, aware that war could not now be avoided, resolved that the opening blow should come from the South. The North should never be the first one to strike. If the South were to attack, then the North would be bound to make reply. Till then the North should do nothing to provoke a conflict.

With this determination firmly fixed in his mind, Lincoln set about choosing his ministers. According to the rules of the United States, the President had the power of naming them himself. As a check upon this authority, the veto of the President on any measure might be set aside by a vote of two-thirds of the members of Congress. This provision kept the President from becoming a despot, while the permission to choose his own ministers helped him to carry out the policy he wished to follow, provided such policy was not opposed by two-thirds of the members of Congress chosen to represent the nation.

The first man Lincoln placed in his Cabinet was William H. Seward, whom he made Secretary of State. Seward had been bitterly disappointed at not being made President himself, and in a letter to his wife he had spoken of himself as "a leader deposed by my own party in the hour of organization for decisive battle." Nevertheless he did not give up all hope of ruling. He did not know Lincoln well, and believed himself the superior man. He hoped

## Abraham Lincoln

that he would be able to mould the President to his will, and rule through him. He believed he himself was the man best fitted to guide the United States in this hour of danger, and he had already adopted an air of *ego et rex meus* when Lincoln quietly but once and for all showed him that the President was quite able to govern by himself and that he certainly intended to do so.

Baffled in his schemes for leading the President, Seward began to study Lincoln in earnest, with the result that he soon became so convinced of Lincoln's greatness that he willingly stepped into the second place and counted himself happy in serving a man of such clear genius. The close tie of affection thus gradually woven between these two great men lasted unbroken till Lincoln's death. With true fineness of character Seward acknowledged Lincoln as "the best among us all"; while Lincoln, who always warmed under appreciation, not only paid tribute to Seward's abilities, but gave him a very tender place in his regard.

Lincoln's plans for the administration of the government were interrupted directly after his inauguration by a rude shock. The South, determined to startle the North, was bending its strength upon Fort Sumter, where Major Robert Anderson, the Union commander in charge, had established himself at the end of 1860.

Hard upon Lincoln's first speech as President, delegates from South Carolina were sent to Washington for the purpose of parleying with the North, but Lincoln refused to treat with these 'insurgent agents,' and their mission failed utterly. Seeing this, the South began feverishly to erect batteries in the neighbourhood of Fort Sumter, with the

## *Difficult Times*

intention of forcing the North into action. Major Anderson was fully alive to the danger, and he realized that at least 20,000 men and a fleet of war vessels would be needed to defend his stronghold against attack. He wrote to Washington stating his opinion. Here was a dilemma for a President barely in office! Neither soldiers nor ships were to hand, and danger that might end in civil war was threatening. General Scott, well acquainted with warfare, thought that it would be wiser to abandon Fort Sumter, but Lincoln and his ministers were determined not to yield. Later on Anderson sent a message imploring food. The Government at Washington replied that relief should be sent, whatever opposition might be offered by the Confederates. Lincoln was still very anxious to avoid civil war if possible, and therefore, instead of gathering a large army of volunteers, he resolved not to send infantry reinforcements, but to prepare a fleet of vessels to help Fort Sumter by sea. These he ordered to be got ready by April 6th. But the equipment of vessels takes time, and through a series of accidents by April 12th the fleet had still not arrived at Fort Sumter. Meanwhile on April 12th the Confederates began to bombard the fortress. It was a declaration of war. North and South were now openly enemies. For a day and a half the attack went on, but the Union ships were still not in sight, and on the 14th Major Anderson had to surrender. The Union flag was hauled down and the Confederate banner put in its place. The Northern States were paralysed by the news that war had broken out and that they had been beaten by their opponents. Fort Sumter had fallen. What might not happen next?

## CHAPTER XXIII: *Civil War*

THE news of the fall of Fort Sumter pricked the North into sudden action. Lincoln ordered the enlistment of 65,000 regulars for three years' service. He then asked for 75,000 volunteers who would be willing to serve their country for three months. He got them in a few days. From every Northern State men poured in demanding a place in the army that was to put down the upstart South. Many of these volunteers joined the army without any idea of the greatness of the struggle that was now beginning. They thought the Southerners were mere pretentious rebels who could very soon be put in their place. But the South had been preparing for this moment for some years ; they had huge stores of guns and ammunition and they were not likely to be conquered easily. The gay jests of the North about running these cotton fellows to earth died away when they saw the equipment of their enemy, and they began to pull themselves together in earnest. This was not a game ; it was war.

In appointing a general to lead the Unionist army Lincoln turned instinctively to Robert E. Lee. General Winfield Scott was well over seventy, and though he was a well-trying, splendid soldier his age prevented him from taking supreme command. Lee, a colonel in the army, was still in middle life, and the office was offered to him. But there was a difficulty in the way. Lee belonged to Virginia, and though Virginia had not yet joined the Confederacy she was inclining that way. A few weeks later Virginia went over to the South, whereupon Lee gave up his



## *Civil War*

commission in the Northern army and offered his services to the South. He was promptly put in supreme command of the Confederate army, and war preparations were pressed forward. The number of the rebelling States gradually crept up to eleven. War now definitely broke out between the North, consisting of twenty-four States with a population of 21,611,422 whites and 342,212 slaves, and the South, consisting of 5,115,790 whites and 3,508,131 slaves. The plain fact that the North had so many more men than the South made it pretty certain that they would win in the end; but they were not likely to win easily, for the Southern officers were better trained and more ready for war. They were already equipped for battle, while the Northerners were still only gathering untrained volunteers, who came singing lustily:

We are coming, Father Abraham,  
Five hundred thousand strong.

Outside America public opinion was by no means altogether in favour of the North—England in particular was distinctly inclined to take the side of the South. With centuries of history behind her, England was apt to feel warmer toward the Southern ‘aristocracy’ than to the Northerners, whom they wrongfully judged to be little better than barbarians. Moreover, the trade of England was touched by the war. Thousands of bales of cotton were exported annually to Lancashire from the cotton-fields of America. When Lincoln announced a blockade of the South, and the cotton cargoes expected in England did not arrive, cotton manufacturers began to feel the pinch of the war across the Atlantic.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

Rich mill-owners grew testy and denounced the interfering North, and several speeches in the House of Commons showed a decided leaning toward the Confederates. A few of the nobility followed the lead of the Duke of Argyll, who was strongly in favour of preserving the Union and publicly declared: "Gentlemen, I think we ought to admit, in fairness to the Americans, that there are some things worth fighting for, and that national existence is one of them."

His words did not find a very warm response. Generally speaking, the upper and middle classes of England were far more inclined to support the South in their efforts to preserve the cotton trade than to help the North to preserve the Union or to liberate the slaves. They talked lightly of the idleness of the negro, of his happy home in the cotton plantations, his general contentment with his lot.

One body of people, however, did not echo these words. The working classes in the north of England, although thrown out of work through the stoppage of the mills, and thereby forced to suffer bitterly from cold and hunger, persistently took the part of the slave. The working men of Manchester, anxious to show their sympathy, sent an admiring address to the President, and Lincoln, deeply moved by this sign of friendship, replied warmly: "Through the action of our disloyal citizens the working men of Europe have been subjected to a severe trial for the purpose of forcing their sanction to that attempt. Under these circumstances I cannot but regard your decisive utterances upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism, which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country."

## *Civil War*

The first great battle of the Civil War was fought on July 21st at Bull Run, not far from the city of Washington. It was a terrible battle, and ended in favour of the Confederates. The Union army, frightened and put to rout, fled pell-mell into Washington, fearful of what might happen next even within the walls of the capital.

The Northern citizens had not yet learned to expect defeat, and this sudden disaster flung them into dismay. Sheer terror seized them, and if the Confederate army had pressed the city hard at the moment it might have fallen into their hands. But the crisis passed without this catastrophe, and the Union army, recovering from its shock, now began to settle down in earnest to the great task before it.

In August 1861 George B. McClellan was put in supreme command of the Union army. He took up his position on the Potomac, and every one hoped for great things from him. "The war will soon be over now," they said. "McClellan's army will not be long in finishing the work."

But McClellan was not the kind of man to deal with sudden emergencies. Though a good soldier, he was slow in taking action, and in a crisis he often lost the day through his hesitation. His report "All quiet on the Potomac" was received with thankfulness at first, but it gradually passed into a joke when month after month passed and still McClellan made no move.

"What is the message to-day?" people would ask each other. "All quiet on the Potomac" would be the reply, and with a contemptuous shrug the speakers would pass on their way.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

A year passed and the war which the North had supposed would be over in three months was still going on. To increase the numbers in the army, and to make the free negroes loyal, Lincoln declared that they might be permitted to enlist. The South set up a great outcry. "What! put black men to kill white men!" they said, but Lincoln was aware that negroes would be a great help in garrison duty and in the labours of the camp, and he therefore authorised the admission of 130,000 from among them.

At first these coloured soldiers were paid less than the white men, but in 1864 they were given equal pay. A great many of Lincoln's supporters were opposed to the employment of negroes in the army, but he paid no heed to their protests, nor to the agitations of the Abolitionists, who continued to demand an immediate proclamation setting free all slaves. "My paramount object," replied Lincoln firmly, "is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery!" This was the only answer that he would give to the many who called upon him on behalf of the slaves. In his own mind Lincoln had fully determined to free the slaves, but he had not yet decided when he would issue the edict. He decided that the time was not yet ripe, and till then he refused to be moved by the prayers of any man.

In the spring of 1862 McClellan made his long-expected move across the Potomac, only to find that the enemy camp at Bull Run had been evacuated. The next day he resigned his general command, and henceforward he commanded the forces on the Potomac only. John C. Frémont was put in command



PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND GENERAL GRANT INSPECTING A BODY OF PRISONERS

B. West Clineinst



## *Civil War*

of the Mountain department, and Henry Wager Halleck in command of the Mississippi.

Lincoln had placed great confidence in McClellan. He had shown great patience in dealing with him, and when one of his friends had protested against the careless way in which the General received the President, sometimes keeping him waiting at his house for an hour till he chose to attend to him, Lincoln replied good-humouredly: "Never mind, I will hold McClellan's horse if he will only bring us success." But when McClellan kept on delaying Lincoln began to think there must be a change. McClellan's mismanagement of the battle of Antietam further strengthened the President's belief in the necessity for a new general. He visited the camp himself and carefully went over the ground of the battle. Then he returned to Washington, determined to give McClellan but one more chance. This chance came in October, when Lincoln telegraphed to McClellan to follow up the enemy and force a battle upon him. A month later McClellan had still not carried out the President's instructions, whereupon Lincoln removed him from his command and put General Burnside in his place.

The terrible Civil War was slowly dragging on. Sometimes the North scored a victory, sometimes the South won a triumph, but neither side was strong enough completely to crush the other. One general on the Union side was making a name for himself. Ulysses S. Grant, while in command of the forces at West Tennessee, had won a great success at Vicksburg, for which he had been warmly thanked on behalf of the nation in a letter written by the President him-

## *Abraham Lincoln*

self. A day earlier General George C. Meade had defeated the Confederate general Robert Lee at Gettysburg, and the tide appeared to be at last turning in favour of the North. In March 1864 Grant was summoned to Washington and put in command of all the armies of the United States, in the place of Halleck, who was to remain at Washington to act as the President's Chief of Staff. Every one in the North hoped now that the war—more dreadful than most wars because it was fought between men belonging to the same nation—would soon be brought to a close.



## CHAPTER XXIV: *The End of Slavery*

THE battle of Antietam, near Sharpsburg, Maryland, which was won by the Union army under McClellan on September 17th, 1862, had a very important bearing upon the war. The Confederate army, under their splendid general, Lee, were intent upon invading the North. They had succeeded in crossing the Potomac, and had they won the day at Antietam they might actually have been able to carry out their plan of bringing war right into the heart of the North.

McClellan had nearly 40,000 more men than the enemy, but Lee was by far the better general. Nevertheless, when it came to fighting numbers told, with the result that victory went to McClellan. As usual he was slow in following up his triumph, and Lee was able to withdraw his troops in safety across the Potomac. Thus ended the first invasion of the North, which might have resulted in a far greater victory if McClellan had only followed swiftly after Lee.

The North, although thankful that McClellan had won, was disappointed that he had not done better. The South was also disappointed. They had been expecting to see the whole of Maryland rise up and help to eject the Northerners, but nothing of the kind had happened. Meanwhile McClellan decided to rest his troops and make fresh plans, and Lee, seizing his opportunity, led his army safely into Virginia.

Although greatly vexed that McClellan had not tackled Lee more thoroughly, Lincoln was grateful

## *Abraham Lincoln*

for any victory, and his gratitude now took practical form. For a long time he had determined to give the slaves their freedom, and he had only been waiting for the right moment to proclaim publicly his intention. He decided that the right moment had now come, and calling together his Cabinet he told them what he meant to do. Many of his ministers did not think it a good plan. They would have been willing to let slavery remain as it was until the war should be over. But Lincoln was not to be moved from his purpose. Therefore, on September 22nd, 1862, the proclamation was given to the nation.

By this proclamation, which was to come into force on the 1st of January, 1863, Lincoln declared the freedom of all slaves within States which should be at war with the Union on New Year's Day 1863. No doubt he hoped that in order to keep their slaves some at least of the rebelling States might make peace with the Union before New Year's Day. By making peace with the Union the States would be able to retain their slaves, in so far as the declaration only promised freedom to slaves who were in the States that were at war with the Union. This distinction clearly proved that though Lincoln was anxious to help the slaves, he was still more anxious to preserve the Union. But if he had hoped by the terms of his proclamation to hasten peace between the North and the South, he was soon disappointed. The South showed no sign of a desire for peace, but went on with the war as vigorously as ever. Meanwhile the 1st of January, 1863, drew near, and Lincoln issued a declaration which ran :

“ Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President

## *The End of Slavery*

of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing the said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of the States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, to wit [here followed a list of the States in rebellion]. And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

“And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labour faithfully for reasonable wages.”

The great document which thus became law did not please every one. Those men who were anxious to uphold the Union, but who did not care about the slaves, were angry because they said Lincoln was thinking more about the slaves than about preserving the Union; while, on the other hand, the Abolitionists

## *Abraham Lincoln*

did not think he had done enough for the slaves, and so both parties grumbled. Lincoln was very little moved by this discontent. He had already mapped out in his mind the course he meant to follow and did not intend to be turned aside by the criticisms of any political body. He did not consider that the proclamation he had issued would be his final word about the slave question. His aim was to work gradually toward a state of things which would make it possible for slavery to be for ever forbidden by law, but he did not think the time for this change had yet arrived. Two years later this moment dawned, when, on January 31st, 1865, Congress sat to consider a resolution passed by the Senate prohibiting slavery in the United States. The House was crowded with eager onlookers. Among the members not a seat was empty. Up to the very last the pro-slavery party hoped to defeat the measure. No one felt certain how the scales would turn, and amid breathless excitement the final vote was taken. After a pause the Speaker rose and announced the result. One hundred and nineteen had voted in favour of the Bill, fifty-six against it. The Bill was therefore carried, and the prohibition of slavery had become law. Cheer after cheer rang through the House; men waved their hats, women smiled and talked excitedly of what it would mean. A salute of a hundred guns shook the city, and the streets were soon filled with eager crowds, all talking about the news. The President was serenaded in his rooms. The whole city thrilled with excitement.

Amid these rejoicings the little group of the pro-slavery party stood silent and gloomy. Up to the

## *The End of Slavery*

end they had hoped not to be beaten, but there was no longer any room for doubt. Slavery had been abolished. Slave-dealers would have to look for a new trade. Three years had passed since the battle of Antietam had been fought; nevertheless there would always be a close link between the two events. Lincoln's first proclamation had been made as a thanksgiving for the victory at Antietam, and the final prohibition of slavery was only the natural outcome of the proclamation issued on New Year's Day 1863.

The battle of Antietam had been followed by the two great victories at Vicksburg and at Gettysburg. At Vicksburg the clever and resolute Union general Ulysses S. Grant had laid siege to this Confederate stronghold. Grant was not the man to be turned aside easily, and he observed with satisfaction that he had met his equal in Pemberton, the Confederate officer commanding Vicksburg, who declared: "When the last pound of beef, bacon, and flour, the last grain of corn, the last cow and hog and horse and dog shall have been consumed, and the last man shall have perished in the trenches, then, and only then, will I sell Vicksburg."

Meanwhile Grant did not budge from his position, and on July 4th the fortress fell. Its fall was joyfully hailed in the North, and Lincoln, who had disapproved of Grant's plan, wrote thanking him and publicly declaring, "You were right and I was wrong."

The capture of Vicksburg had followed hard upon the Northern triumph at Gettysburg, where, a day earlier, General George G. Meade had defeated Lee after three days' fierce fighting. Lee had made a

## *Abraham Lincoln*

second attempt to invade the North and had advanced as far as South Pennsylvania. Here, at Gettysburg, he met Meade. The battle, in which the Union army lost 18,000 dead and wounded and the Confederates 22,000 men, put an end to Lee's second attempt to push into the North, and he was again forced to withdraw across the Potomac. This event, coupled with the Union victory at Vicksburg, announced loudly that the day of the Confederates was over. But the courageous Lee resolutely refused to listen. Not yet would he yield.

A national burial-ground for soldiers was established on the battlefield at Gettysburg, and in a simple speech, which has become immortal, Lincoln announced its dedication.

"Fourscore and seven years ago," he said, "our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living or dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor remember long what we say here, but it can never forget what



THE ASSAULT ON THE BATTERIES AT VICKSBURG





## *The End of Slavery*

they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion ; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain ; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom ; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

At the conclusion of his speech Lincoln felt a slight stir of disappointment among the listeners. It was not what they had expected. They had looked for a longer, more elaborate address, and most of them went away saying it was a poor thing. “It is a flat failure,” said Lincoln. But Time has completely changed the verdict of the disappointed listeners. The little speech, so simple yet so nobly befitting the occasion, has been given a high place among the finest prose literature in the world, and as long as the English tongue is spoken it will never be forgotten.

## CHAPTER XXV: *Renominated*

WHEN General McClellan's commission as Commander-in-Chief was cancelled in November 1862, a certain number of people who thought he had been badly treated became his champions and would hear nothing against him. These men determined to nominate McClellan at the next Presidential election, and when the time drew near they busied themselves in doing all that they could to make him popular. As a result of their efforts the General was adopted as the candidate of the Democrats at the Democratic Convention which met at Chicago in August 1864. A few Republicans, who were dissatisfied with Lincoln because the war was not yet crushed, named John C. Frémont as their candidate, but the remainder of the Republican party prepared to vote solidly for Lincoln, and even in the beginning it was fairly certain which man would win the election.

Meanwhile there was a great deal of excitement. Men ran hither and thither talking eagerly of the chances McClellan had against 'Honest Abe,' and the only person who was absolutely unmoved by the clamour was Abraham Lincoln himself. When a friend laughingly told him that he seemed to have no personal resentment against his opponents he replied lightly: "Perhaps I have too little of it; but I never thought it paid. A man has no time to spend half his life in quarrels. If any man ceases to attack me, I never remember the past against him."

The cold November day on which the election was to take place at last dawned. The result surpassed

## *Renominated*

the greatest hopes of the Republicans. Out of the 233 votes to be cast by the delegates representing the different States, 212 were given to Lincoln, and only 21 to McClellan. Frémont had long since withdrawn from the contest, and thus Abraham Lincoln was once more chosen to be President of the United States.

The news that Lincoln had carried the election was a deep disappointment to McClellan, and to show that he separated himself entirely from the Government the General resigned his commission in the army and withdrew into private life. His office was given to Philip H. Sheridan, a brilliant soldier who had distinguished himself greatly in the war, and here the incident ended. If McClellan had imagined his resignation would cause dismay he must have found himself again mistaken. His departure caused only a ripple of comment, and even this very soon died away.

The re-election of Abraham Lincoln meant that the war would now be fought to a finish. Those people who wanted peace at once, and upon any terms, shut their lips tightly and prepared themselves for the worst; but the nation in general had entire confidence in Lincoln, and believed that he would not prolong the war a day longer than was necessary, and that at the same time he would not make peace until the North had so thoroughly conquered the South that there would never again be war between them.

The war, therefore, went on, and from his post in the White House Lincoln kept watch upon the smallest event. He was never too much occupied or too much aware of the dignity of his position to

## *Abraham Lincoln*

forget his soldiers, and he made himself dear to them by innumerable acts of kindness and by the care he showed for their comfort. He made a practice of addressing the regiments, and on one such occasion, when the soldiers were returning for a time to their homes, he said: "I happen, temporarily, to occupy this big white house. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. It is in order that each one of you may have, through the free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise, and intelligence—that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all desirable human aspirations—it is for this that the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright. . . . The nation is worth fighting for to secure such an inestimable jewel."

During the weeks that followed upon his re-election to the Presidency Lincoln was deeply interested in the plans which General Grant had made for pushing the war to a close. William T. Sherman, a capable and experienced general, was forcing his way south. Lincoln was extremely anxious that Richmond should fall. It was the capital of the Confederate States, and if it could be made to surrender to the Union armies then the war would very soon be over. On the 16th November Sherman started on his great march through Georgia and the Carolinas. He had 60,000 men in his army, and as they went on their way, singing, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave," thousands of freemen gathered in the rear like a dusky cloud and followed the soldiers in their march. "Let every man fly to arms!" shouted

## *Renominated*

Georgia, but the Northerners, undismayed and confident, still went on their way. "Yankees!" the Southerners called them contemptuously; but when the Yankees came swinging into sight the jests died away. These were not men to be laughed at; they were hardened soldiers, who would fight to the finish. Town after town surrendered to them. On December 22nd, 1864, Sherman wired to the President: "I beg to present to you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, also about 25,000 bales of cotton." In reply Lincoln wrote back: "Many, many thanks for your Christmas gift, the capture of Savannah. When you were about leaving Atlanta for the Atlantic coast, I was anxious, if not fearful; but feeling that you were the better judge, and remembering that 'nothing risked, nothing gained,' I did not interfere. Now, the undertaking being a success, the honour is all yours. . . . Please make my grateful acknowledgment to your whole army, officers and men."

Among the people in the Southern capital the news of Sherman's victory caused a great panic. At the outbreak of the war the Confederacy had issued a great many paper notes, which were used instead of money. People now began to ask themselves what would happen if Richmond were to fall. This paper money had been issued by the order of the Confederate States only, and therefore it was of no value except in Confederate States. A man with a ten-dollar Confederate note would not be able to find a Union man who would take his note and give him money in its place. Therefore, if Richmond were

## *Abraham Lincoln*

captured, and the North were again in full power, what then would be the value of the Confederate paper money? Fearful of what might happen, many people made haste to try to get rid of the paper money in their coffers, but they found no one willing to take it. And thus, when the war was over, and the South had yielded to the North, hundreds of wealthy families, who had impulsively given their gold to the Confederacy and taken paper money in exchange, found themselves ruined and in the deepest poverty. Although they had chests full of paper notes not one was of any value.

Richmond had not yet fallen, but the crisis was at hand. In a fever of dread every man who was seen in the streets was arrested and thrust into the Confederate army. Some of these men were so unfit for service that they died a few days after enlistment, and the fact that they were made soldiers at all shows the desperate condition to which the beaten but courageous South was reduced. For four years the army had made a gallant struggle against the much larger army of the North; they had fought with a bravery that seemed unconquerable. But the time was coming when they would be forced to yield. The armies of the North were getting steadily stronger, while every day saw the Confederate forces weakened. Even the plucky South herself knew by now which way the struggle would end, but she still held on grimly, determined not to surrender till the last possible moment.

As the situation grew worse, General Lee, who was in command of the Southern troops, began to make overtures to General Grant. The Union General

## *Renominated*

telegraphed the news to Lincoln, but though Lincoln was as tender-hearted as any man, he knew that the only way to crush the rebellion once and for all was to agree to nothing less than an entire surrender, and he therefore replied sternly that no overtures apart from the capitulation of Lee's army could be considered, and that Grant must hold no conferences with the enemy except on these terms.

Although Lincoln replied to Grant respecting General Lee's advances in such abrupt tones, in his heart he was ready to meet the rebels half way, and in February 1865 he suggested to his Cabinet that he should issue a message declaring that the United States would be willing to pay four hundred million dollars to the Southern States to compensate them for the slaves set free, on condition that the rebellion ended at once and that the States declared their loyalty to the Union. His proposal staggered the Cabinet. "What, pay the slave-owners!" they cried, and the public, getting an inkling of what was likely to happen, burst into a loud uproar of indignation against the scheme. Lincoln, most generous among men, realized that the rebelling States would soon be forced to come back into the Union on terms dictated to them by the North, and, knowing this, he was very anxious to wipe away the bitter feeling between the two sections of the country. He believed in the Union not only as a political bond, but as an expression of the goodwill binding North and South together in a bond of patriotism. By recompensing the slave-owners for the loss of their slaves, who represented so much gold and silver to them, Lincoln had hoped to restore the friendliness which

## *Abraham Lincoln*

he held was necessary to the happiness of the nation, but he found himself so entirely unsupported that he realized that the proposal could never be carried out. "You are all against me," he said sadly, and he laid the paper gently aside.



## SECTION VII

### *Triumph and Death*

1864-1865

(FROM FIFTY-FIVE TO FIFTY-SIX)

I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age, which I could have had in no other way, and though I now sink out of view, and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone.

*Extract from letter written by Lincoln  
in November 1858*



## CHAPTER XXVI: *The Fall of Richmond*

ON the 4th of March, 1865, Lincoln became President for the second time. According to the general custom he made an opening address, and, as before, his speech showed very plainly that he was as firmly determined as ever not to slacken in the war till the South should be completely conquered. This speech, short in itself, is one of the few public addresses which can never be forgotten. "On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago," said Lincoln, "all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came. . . . The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!'

"If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offences

## *Abraham Lincoln*

came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God would ascribe to Him ?

“ Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue till the wealth piled by the bondman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, ‘ The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’

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

Lincoln’s second term of office at the White House thus opened under the shadow of war, but the sky was growing lighter, and there were many signs that the South was weakening. Lincoln’s election had sounded the death-knell of the Southern cause. If he had been defeated at the poll, and a President ready to make peace at any price had taken his place, the Confederates might have been able to make terms which would have still left them a good deal of power. But with Lincoln back in office Southern hopes sank low. His return proved that the North was still ready to fight. Lincoln himself was resolved to conquer utterly, and it was well known he had a will of iron.



THE SURRENDER: GENERAL GRANT AND GENERAL LEE  
AT APPOMATTOX

B. West Clinedinst



## *The Fall of Richmond*

In desperate anxiety the South gathered itself together to meet the storm with what strength still remained.

Any lingering hopes of success were soon broken. At Five Forks, on April 1st, 1865, General Sheridan routed the Southerners so badly that if General Lee had not been doggedly determined to fight to the last moment the war would have ended then and there. As it was, Sheridan kept on harassing the enemy, and on April 5th he wired to the President: "If the thing is pressed I think Lee will surrender." A brief, stern message flashed back: "Let the thing be pressed." Lee's doom was thus sealed. But Lee was a brave man, and in spite of the hints of his officers that nothing could be gained by holding out, he encouraged his men to resist with all the strength they possessed. On the 7th of April his colleagues came to him and urged him to yield. Quickly he rapped out his answer: "We have got too many brave men to think of laying down our arms."

In spite of Lee's stubborn courage the day of the South was over. Nothing could transform his troops into an army large enough to overthrow the enemy, and thus, on April 9th, when he found himself completely surrounded by Union soldiers, he sadly agreed to surrender with his 28,000 men. The meeting between General Grant and General Lee took place in the village of Appomattox. Grant was so gratified at capturing the leader of the South that he granted the conquered army very generous terms. He released both men and officers on parole, and though he retained the arms and artillery of the corps he allowed the officers to keep their side arms, horses, and private baggage. "This done," he said, "all officers and men will be

## *Abraham Lincoln*

allowed to return to their homes; not to be disturbed, by United States authority, so long as they observe this parole and the laws in force where they may reside."

While Lee's army had been tasting the bitterness of surrender, disaster had been visiting the city of Richmond. On Sunday morning, the 2nd of April, when the inhabitants were many of them quietly in church, a messenger dashed post-haste into the city with the news that it must be evacuated by nightfall. In a moment the tranquil streets were flooded with surging crowds of excited people. Richmond be evacuated! The capital city fall! Then the war must be well-nigh over, and the ferocious North had won! So the inhabitants moaned, as they ran about wringing their hands and turning over their possessions in search of such treasures as they could carry with them in their flight.

As the day wore on great crowds of citizens left the city in carriages, on horseback, or on foot, till the commotion in the streets slowly died down into a quiet lull. In the early hours of April 3rd the enemy entered the city, to find it deserted by its inhabitants and shrouded in the desolation which marks a place hastily abandoned. The Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, had for a long time obstinately declined to leave the capital. He refused to believe in defeat or to acknowledge that his power was overthrown. With the surrender of Richmond his authority had fallen to the ground, broken into fragments which could never again be pieced together. After enjoying the pleasures of office for so long he could not at first realize that his glory had vanished. Even the blunt assurances of his generals that the



## *The Fall of Richmond*

condition was hopeless did not at first convince him of the completeness of his downfall. Then suddenly he saw everything—saw the Confederacy ended, himself a defeated leader—and in a wild panic he took to flight. A few weeks later, on May 10th, 1865, he was captured by a band of Union soldiers. He was brought to trial on a charge of having a share in a plot to murder Lincoln, but the evidence was not very trustworthy, and after an imprisonment of about two years, during which he was tried on a charge of treason, he was acquitted and sent home. No heavy penalties were imposed upon him, but he was forbidden to hold any public office whatsoever. Although, in view of the active part he had taken in the rebellion, it is difficult to see any hardship in the sentence passed upon him, Jefferson Davis continued to hate violently the Government of the country to which he belonged, and although he lived for a good many years after his release from prison, not dying, indeed, till 1889, his fierce detestation of the North and all that it stood for never grew less.

While these great events were happening in the country the hand of Fate slowly raised a warning finger at Lincoln. His enemies were still many, and they hated him thoroughly. There were whispers that his life was not safe, and his friends urged him to take the precaution of being guarded. Lincoln warmly opposed their suggestion. All his life he had allowed friends and strangers to come and see him almost unquestioned. He loved freedom and friendliness, and he could not endure the idea of being perpetually watched. He declared he could never be safe anywhere unless it were in an iron box. "To die

## *Abraham Lincoln*

by the hand of a murderer," he said, "is to die only once; to go continually in fear would be to die over and over." He therefore quietly but firmly brushed aside all suggestions for protecting him from a sudden foe, and showed such supreme freedom from uneasiness that the day after the fall of Richmond he visited the vanquished city and walked slowly through its streets quite unaccompanied, except by his son 'Tad.'

But if Lincoln persisted in living his life in exactly the same ordinary way, in his mind lurked a suspicion that a great crisis was not far from him. This belief was deepened by a dream which visited him on the night of April 13th. He had had the same dream several times before, and on each occasion it had come before some great event. It made so deep an impression upon him that on the morning of the 14th of April he mentioned it to the members of his Cabinet. News from Sherman announcing the surrender of the great Confederate general Joseph E. Johnston was hourly expected by the Cabinet, but it had not yet arrived. Lincoln assured them it would come presently, giving his dream as a reason for his belief. On all other occasions this dream had come before a victory, and he was certain that Sherman either had already beaten Johnston or would do so very soon. One of his ministers bluntly scoffed at his theory, and though most of the others listened politely to his explanation, they did not put any real belief in an omen, even when it came from the vigorous brain of their President. Little did they think that this was the last time 'Honest Abe' would address them, or that even as he spoke of a coming crisis an assassin was preparing to strike his blow.

## CHAPTER XXVII: *Assassinated*

**T**HE fall of Richmond and the surrender of General Lee practically brought the war to an end. Nevertheless, in several parts of the country skirmishes were still going on, and Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, had not yet been captured. Lincoln busied himself in considering the terms of peace. No occupation could have given him greater pleasure, and he had long been looking forward to this moment. On one point he was quite determined: there should be no arrogant rejoicing over a fallen foe. Although he had been a fighter from his boyhood, he had never gloated over a defeated opponent. His mind was too generous to be happy in another's fall, and now he was particularly anxious that the North should be restrained from dancing upon the prostrate South. North and South were both part of one nation, and he judged rightly that it would be unseemly for either party to be gleeful at the other's expense. He believed that a new friendship between the two was not impossible, provided the right moment was seized. On that fateful morning when he told his Cabinet about his dream he was at pains to make clear his views on this point. "No one," he said firmly, "need expect that I will take any part in hanging or killing these men, even the worst of them. Enough lives have been sacrificed. We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union." The extinguishing of resentment was easy enough for Lincoln, with his naturally

## Abraham Lincoln

generous mind, but there were plenty of Northerners who would have been heartily glad to see severe penalties visited upon the South, and who would have enjoyed pressing their heel upon the neck of the foe. Lincoln might well have found it hard to keep these revengeful spirits in check had not the assassin's hand suddenly changed the current of thought and fixed all eyes upon the White House.

At the very moment when Lincoln was declaring to his ministers that resentment must be smothered and that enough lives had been sacrificed, John Wilkes Booth was planning to take away the life of Lincoln himself. It was the 14th of April, and Good Friday. Many of the citizens were at church, keeping the Christian festival; a spirit of quiet joy lay upon the city; the war was over and the day of peace was dawning; homes that had been racked with anxiety for four long years prepared to welcome back their heroes from the fight; and those homes from which some had gone, never to return, comforted themselves with the proud thought that but for the dead this day of happiness would never have dawned. At Fort Sumter, marked in the memory of every one as the spot where the Confederates gained their first triumph, the same Union flag which had been sadly hauled down by Anderson was now raised and put back in its old place, proudly announcing to the world that the Union had been preserved.

In America it is not the custom to close the theatres and places of amusement on Good Friday, and Lincoln, enjoying an unusual sense of leisure, decided to go to the play, *Our American Cousin*, which was to be acted at Ford's Theatre that evening. He spent a

## *Assassinated*

happy afternoon driving with his wife, and in the evening they went together to the theatre, taking with them a young friend, Miss Harris, and her lover, Major Rathbone.

In the meantime dark preparations had been set on foot. John Wilkes Booth had for some time been determined to kill Lincoln, and he now saw a golden opportunity. The son of an actor, and himself a well-known figure on the stage, he knew every inch of Ford's Theatre. He therefore hastily summoned together his comrades and explained his murderous scheme. These accomplices had been in the habit of meeting at the house of Mary Surratt, a widow whose son was one of the conspirators, and it was there that they now made their hasty plans. Not only Lincoln, but his trusted ministers W. H. Seward, Secretary of State, and Andrew Johnson, the Vice-President, were also to fall before the assassins. Lewis Powell, a disbanded rebel soldier from Florida, was to kill Seward, and George Atzerodt, a former spy, was to kill the Vice-President. Booth was as desperate as he was clever, and he was determined that his own part in the plan should not fail. Whoever else escaped, Lincoln should perish. With this murderous intention firmly fixed in his mind, he visited the theatre early in the day and took various precautions for successfully carrying out his scheme.

When the curtain rose on the play Lincoln was not present, but every one knew that he was expected before long. A large Union flag draped the front of the box set aside for him, and eager eyes turned in its direction, expecting every moment to see the well-known, sad, gaunt face of the President above it. At

## Abraham Lincoln

last came a rustle, and the players paused ; the band struck up " Hail to the Chief," and the whole audience rose and cheered as Lincoln, accompanied by his wife, Miss Harris, and Major Rathbone, entered the box. The cheers died away ; the players took up the broken thread, and attention was once more centred upon the stage. The evening grew late. It was nearly ten o'clock. John Wilkes Booth, after hastily swallowing a glass of brandy, passed onward to the theatre to carry out his cowardly attack.

On his way to Lincoln's box an attendant asked Booth his business ; he showed a card authorizing his admission and the attendant let him pass. The next minute he was within the box, and in a moment he had fired at the back of Lincoln's neck. Major Rathbone sprang at the murderer, but Booth dug his knife into him, and, leaping from the box, he sprang on to the stage, shouting "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" The audience, held silent for a moment with astonishment and horror, broke out into loud uproar. " He has killed the President!" shouted Major Rathbone, and in the commotion Booth escaped across the stage, down the passages which he knew so well, and out by a side door, where he jumped on to a horse held in readiness for him. For the time being he was safe, but in his mad leap to the stage his spur had caught in the flag which hung in front of the box, and in the fall he had broken his leg. Even the most desperate murderer can hardly hope to escape with a broken leg, and though for the time being Booth was safe, the day of his capture was not far off.

While the audience at Ford's was horror-struck at

## *Assassinated*

Lincoln's fate, Lewis Powell had been carrying out his share in the scheme of murder. The Secretary of State, W. H. Seward, lay ill in bed, attended by two persons. Powell forced his way upstairs, on the plea that he was a messenger from the doctor. A servant tried to bar his way, whereupon Powell drew out his knife and stabbed him. He then rushed into the bedroom and stabbed the almost unconscious Seward, wounded the two attendants in the room and another who rushed to their assistance, and leaving five injured persons behind him he fled from the house and out into the night. Blood stained the rich carpets on the stairs and in the bedroom where Powell had attacked his victims, but happily, though the wounds were serious, the five who were hurt all recovered in the end. It was not so, however, with Lincoln, who was even now breathing out his last in a house to which he had been hastily carried from the theatre.

The throngs of people who had come light-heartedly to see the play went away talking in whispers. The President was very ill ; some said he was dying. At seven in the morning the news every one feared became known. Lincoln was dead. America must seek a new President. " Now he belongs to the ages," said Stanton solemnly, and the words became prophetic. Up till now Lincoln's greatness had been hidden from many people. They had thought him uncouth, ugly, uneducated, ill-bred, but with his death came a sudden realization there was no other man fit to stand in his place. His conduct had at all times been so marked by nobility that it was not till he was removed from life that his full worth became

## Abraham Lincoln

apparent. Now that he was no longer among men they realized how he had towered above them, how in his presence little meannesses had died, how jealousies had been forgotten, and rivalries willingly set aside. If his friends were silent because their grief made them dumb, those who had jested at him made haste to chant his praises, and *Punch*, a journal that had persistently criticized him severely, now made amends in these verses :

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

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

Had Lincoln been alive how his heart would have warmed to the praise ! Yet there was nothing in his death to lament. He had fallen at the climax of his life's work. He had seen the war brought to a close and the slaves set free. Though murder had several times threatened him, the blow had not fallen till his task was finished. The tool did not drop from his hand till the figure of peace had been chiselled. His very death did a great deal toward healing the bitterness of the nation, happening as it did at the moment when the North was inclined to exult over the South, and as a conqueror to flaunt victory in the face of the defeated. No other event could have done so much toward checking these irritations as the sudden end of the President beneath the blow of a



## *Assassinated*

murderer. Discord hushed its voice in the presence of an almost universal sorrow, and his death set the seal upon the cause of national peace. For such a prize we may be certain that he would willingly have chosen death, even had the form been more terrible than it was.

## CHAPTER XXVIII: *Peace*

**I**T was decided to bury Lincoln at Springfield, the town which had been his home when he was first struggling into notice; where he had made some of his earliest speeches; where he had been married; where his children had been born; where he had received the telegram which told him that the Chicago Convention had nominated him as Republican candidate for the Presidency; and from where he had set out on his triumphal journey to the White House. Springfield had been the centre of his life, and it was fitting that it should be his burial-place.

Every town on the railway to Springfield begged that the body of the President might be allowed to rest there for a time on its passage through, and it was thus the 3rd of May before the final spot was reached. Vast crowds of people, silent and tear-dimmed, watched the procession go by, realizing as they had never done till now that their leader had left them and was for ever out of human reach. But above this saddening thought arose a triumphant note. Lincoln's life had not ended till his work had been finished; nothing was incomplete; his task was well done. Nothing was here for sadness. A noble life had ended, but could never be forgotten. Its remembrance was a nation's precious legacy.

But what of the miserable people who had been the cause of Lincoln's death? Booth, the chief culprit, had been captured in a barn on April 26th, and in the struggle he had been fatally shot. The others were in prison waiting their trial. As they lay there their thoughts must have been bitter and gloomy. The

## *Peace*

deed had not brought from the South the loud outcry of praise which they had expected; and there was scant hope that they would be pardoned. Beyond satisfying personal revenge they had gained very little except capture, imprisonment, and the gnawing thought of a violent death. Their fears on the last point were not ill-founded, and on July 7th Mrs Surratt, Lewis Powell, David Herold, and George Atzerodt were all hanged. If the spirit of Lincoln could have played the part of judge in their trial they would no doubt have been granted their lives, for he was the last man to blame a fellow-man, and even toward a criminal he was full of mercy. But the murder of the President—the man who for the time being plays the part of king—could not be lightly passed over, and nothing less than the execution of the chief persons in the plot would have satisfied the enraged North and all believers in strict justice.

Before the month of May was over the last remnants of the rebelling army laid down their arms and peace settled upon the nation. The Northern army had consisted of not less than a million men, but after a great review at Washington the majority of the soldiers were disbanded and returned home to take up the work which they had given up for the duties of a soldier. Among them were not a few battered figures, alive indeed, but cruelly maimed for the battle of life. Some who had gone out with gay bravery were no longer in the ranks. They lay buried in quiet places, but their memory was embalmed in the nation, and in spirit they still marched with the troops. Strings of roses, paper flowers, ribbons and banners hailed the approach of the great

## *Abraham Lincoln*

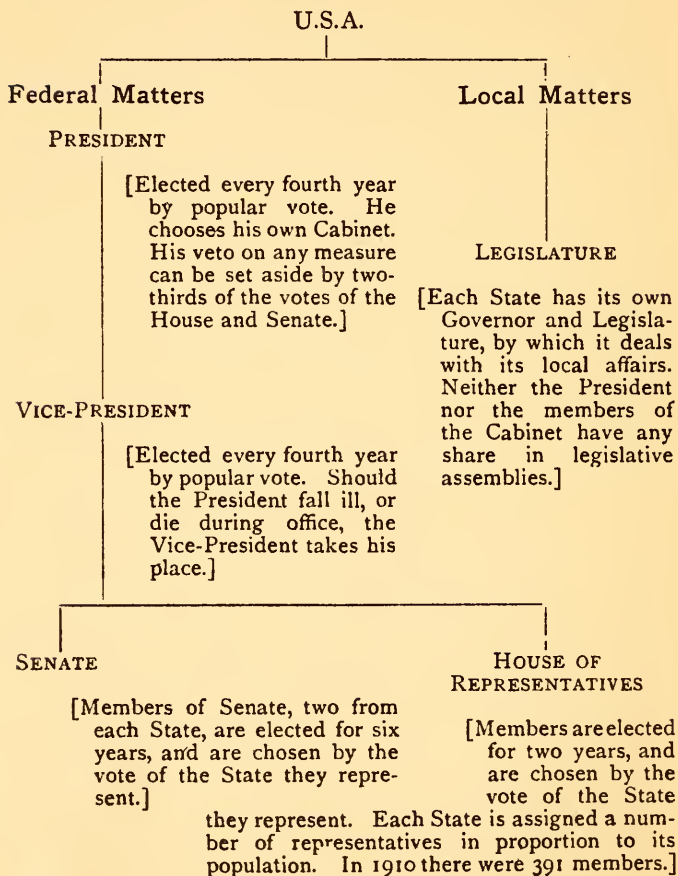
army on its progress of triumph. Gay voices called a welcome, men shouted 'Hurrah,' and through their tears women smiled. It was a sight that would have delighted Lincoln—the sight of a victorious army about to lay down its weapons; the signal of peace; the triumph of liberty. His tall, gaunt form, carrying a lined and careworn face, with the sad, deep-set eyes that seemed for ever to be looking upon something afar, was not to be found towering among the crowd. The keenest eye could not see him, the quickest ear could not hear his voice; but in spirit he was there, and the radiance of his personality, which Time can never destroy, thrilled through the crowd, and with sudden insight they realized how much Lincoln had done. By his genius he had guided the State safely through the terrible calamity of civil war; he had dealt with the slave problem wisely, and he had given the slaves freedom when the time was ripe; he had brought peace out of bitterness, unity out of strife; above all, he had preserved the Union and made America, more securely than ever, a nation.

## LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES UP TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1789.	GEORGE WASHINGTON . . . . .	1st President
1797.	JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	2nd President
1801.	THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	3rd President
1809.	JAMES MADISON . . . . .	4th President
1817.	JAMES MONROE . . . . .	5th President
1825.	JOHN QUINCY ADAMS . . . . .	6th President
1829.	GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON . . . . .	7th President
1837.	MARTIN VAN BUREN . . . . .	8th President
1841.	GENERAL W. H. HARRISON . . . . .	9th President
1841.	JOHN TYLER . . . . .	10th President
1845.	JAMES KNOX POLK . . . . .	11th President
1849.	GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR . . . . .	12th President
1850.	MILLARD FILLMORE . . . . .	13th President
1853.	GENERAL FRANKLIN PIERCE . . . . .	14th President
1857.	JAMES BUCHANAN . . . . .	15th President
1861.	ABRAHAM LINCOLN . . . . .	16th President

The President of the United States holds office for four years. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, General Jackson, and Abraham Lincoln were all re-elected to a second term of office. General Harrison died a month after election, and was succeeded by the Vice-President, which also happened in the case of General Taylor, who died and was succeeded by Millard Fillmore.

# METHOD OF GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA









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