



WM MARK YOUNG

# OUR LINCOLN AND HIS SON TAD

by Georgene Faulkner  
Illustrated by William Mark Young

"Oh, Papa-Day, Papa-Day, they are going to kill my friend Jack; don't let them do it!" shrieked small Tad Lincoln, as he came bursting into a cabinet meeting.

It was not the first time that the small boy had broken in upon important affairs of state, and the men in the President's cabinet were out of patience with him; but not so the sympathetic father. Abraham Lincoln always had time to listen to his boys.

The President put down some state papers and, gathering the excited little lad into his big arms, he became at once the loving father.

"What is it, Tad? Who is to be killed?" he asked.

"Why our turkey!" gasped the indignant boy. "Cook says that it is by your order, as the turkey was sent to you for your Christmas dinner."

"The cook is right, Tad; that turkey was sent to me some time ago for a Christmas present."

"Oh, but he must not be killed," sobbed Tad. "I have played with him all this time and he is my friend. I named him Jack and he is a good turkey. We must not kill him and eat him. Please, please, save his life."

"There, there, Tad," said the President soothingly. "You must not take it so hard. Why, of course we will save your friend." And with a chuckle of amusement the President wrote on a card an order to the cook: "Spare the life of this good turkey for Tad"; and patting Tad upon the head, he said, "Now run along, Tad. Here is the pardon for your friend Jack."

Then turning to the members of his cabinet, he said solemnly, "You see, gentlemen, Tad also believes in pardons."

Many times these statesmen had criticized their President for writing pardons for the soldiers. He was always anxious to see that they received justice, for he loved them with a father's love, and he pardoned their mistakes when possible as readily as he overlooked the faults in his own sons.

The soldiers all felt this fatherly sympathy and they soon nicknamed their President "Father Abraham." With his old shawl wound about his neck he would go out at night and visit with his soldiers in camp, finding out their needs. He was a constant visitor at the hospitals, and there he talked to the boys of the South as well as their brothers from the North. He loved them all, and suffered with them, and when they brought him news of a battle, he would groan in horror, "Oh, how long, how long must this last? We are all one family and we must be reunited. The Union must be preserved."

During this dark time of conflict and struggle, the President had to endure a father's grief, for his son, Willie Lincoln, was called to his heavenly home. Willie was only two years older than Tad, and the two little boys had been constant companions and devoted pals; so when this sad separation came, the broken-hearted father, in his loving sympathy for his lonely little son, could not deny Tad anything.

Tad Lincoln was his father's one bright ray of light, and if it were true, as the statesmen often said, "the President

spoils that boy," at least Tad, with his joyous disposition, brought to his father a little relief from worry and relaxation from the cares of state. When Tad's tutors complained that the boy raced about out-of-doors and would not study as he should, the indulgent father smiled and said, "Let him run; he has time enough to learn his letters and get poky. Bob was just such a little rascal and now he is a decent boy."

The President always spoke with great pride of his eldest son, Robert Lincoln, and he rejoiced that Bob could go to college and have all the advantages in education of which, as a boy in the backwoods, he himself had been deprived. But small Thomas Lincoln, or Tad, was the joy of the White House, and the worried President was never too busy to be interested in the tales Tad brought in of his pets, sometimes stopping a cabinet meeting to tell his father the important news that the cat had kittens.

Tad was very fond of animals and loved to ride about on his pony and romp with his dog. And he had a team of goats, which he hitched to his wagon and drove about everywhere.

One day, to the horror of the steward of the White House, Tad harnessed his goats tandem, and driving them up the steps, he drove them through the long corridors of the east wing of the White House. When the indignant steward reported this misdeed to the President, the President roared with laughter and replied, "Well, are they all outside again? Is Tad safe? How about the goats?"

One time, when Tad went away on a visit with his mother, his father sent him a telegram about his pets: "Tell Tad the goats and his father are well—especially the goats."

With all of his mischievous pranks, Tad

Lincoln had a very kind heart and was always anxious to help others, especially those who were in need. One day he saw a poor old woman standing on a corner trying to sell her gingerbread cakes. He rushed home and, opening his bank, took out all of his pennies and bought her entire stock of gingerbread. Then with some planks he made a rude counter under the porte-cochere<sup>1</sup> of the White House, and every visitor and office-seeker that morning was obliged to buy a gingerbread cake until Tad's stock was gone. Then the young merchant took all of his money and treated his boy friends until he was quite bankrupt.

Tad was always most generous and made friends with everybody. One time he made friends with some hungry little boys and brought them all into the White House kitchen to be fed; but Peter, the cook, objecting, Tad rushed like a whirlwind into his father's office, interrupting an important cabinet meeting, shouting indignantly, "Papa-Day, isn't the kitchen ours and can't I feed some friends? Peter says no and Mamma is out."

"How many do you want to feed, Tad?" inquired the patient President.

"There are seven of us and two are sons of soldiers and we're all awful hungry."

The President looked soberly at his impatient cabinet and said dryly, "This is a case for your diplomacy, Mr. Seward."

Mr. Seward answered the angry little lad calmly and with deliberation, "Thomas, you must remember that this house belongs to the nation, and the kitchen is loaned for your use. It is very expensive to run a government during this period of war, but we do not wish to have any of our citizens starve; so with

<sup>1</sup> In this case, a porch at the door of a building for sheltering persons entering and leaving carriages. Pronounced "port ko-SHARE."

your consent, Mr. President, I recommend that an order be issued upon the Commissary Department of the President's residence for seven hungry boys."

An official order was then written out and signed "The Commissary Department of the Presidential residence to issue rations to Lieutenant Tad Lincoln and his associates, two of whom are sons of soldiers in the Army of the Potomac." And armed with this order, Tad rushed away to treat his friends.

Tad was always sure that his father was his sympathetic friend, and the boy, in this close, loving companionship with his "Papa-Day," seemed to understand the feeling of the President in his sympathy for the soldiers and his sorrow for the South.

When at last the terrible war was over and some one spoke in a sarcastic manner, suggesting that they "hang the rebel leaders," Tad, who stood beside his father, flushed and said, "No, we must hang on to them."

Mr. Lincoln lifted the boy in his arms and, kissing him tenderly, he said, "Tad understands, and he is right, gentlemen; we will hang on to them."

Just when the country was rejoicing that the cruel war was over, the terrible tragedy occurred which took away the father of the nation when he was most needed to "bind up the

nation's wounds."

On that sad night in April a small boy tumbled into the arms of Thomas Pendel, the faithful doorkeeper of the White House, sobbing out in his grief, "Oh, Tom Pen, Tom Pen, they have killed my Papa-Day; they have killed my Papa-Day!"

And the heartbroken cry of that boy Tad was echoed throughout the nation, for everyone cried out in horror at the wicked deed and all felt the sense of a personal loss. The people knew that they

had lost not only a wise and just ruler but a sympathetic friend and a loving father as well—"Father Abraham," who was always ready to serve others; "Father Abraham," with his heart full of compassion, always willing to forgive.

"If my Papa-Day could have lived," sobbed Tad, "he would have forgiven the man who shot him, for he always forgave everybody."

And so on his birthday, February twelfth, we like to tell stories about Abraham Lincoln; we like to look at his picture, and as we study his earnest face we can see how sym-

pathetic and kindly was his great soul shining through his sad eyes; and we know that his words of wisdom will always live in our hearts: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right."

Reprinted from *Child Life* February 1922, © Rand McNally & Company

## THE DIFFERENCE

STELLA HUMPHREY NIDA

Two statues stand in our school hall  
Good men we all hold dear.  
George Washington is great and grand—  
I look on him with fear.

For if I ever did see George,  
I'd stand and hold my breath;  
I'd most forget to clap and cheer,  
He'd just scare me to death.

But Abraham's a regular sport;  
His face so kind and queer  
Just seems to say, "Come here, old kid,  
Until I tweak your ear."

And like as not I'd grin at Abe  
And quite forget to shout;  
I'd dare him to a game of tag,  
He's such a good old scout.



ABRAHAM · LINCOLN

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE  
WITH CHARITY FOR ALL, WITH  
FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT AS GOD  
GIVES US TO SEE THE RIGHT.



# GEORGE WASHINGTON

OBSERVE GOOD FAITH AND  
JUSTICE TOWARD ALL NA-  
TIONS: CULTIVATE PEACE  
AND HARMONY WITH ALL.

Copyright of Child Life is the property of Children's Better Health Institute and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.