TRUE STORIES OF GREAT AMERICANS

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

DANIEL E. WHEELER

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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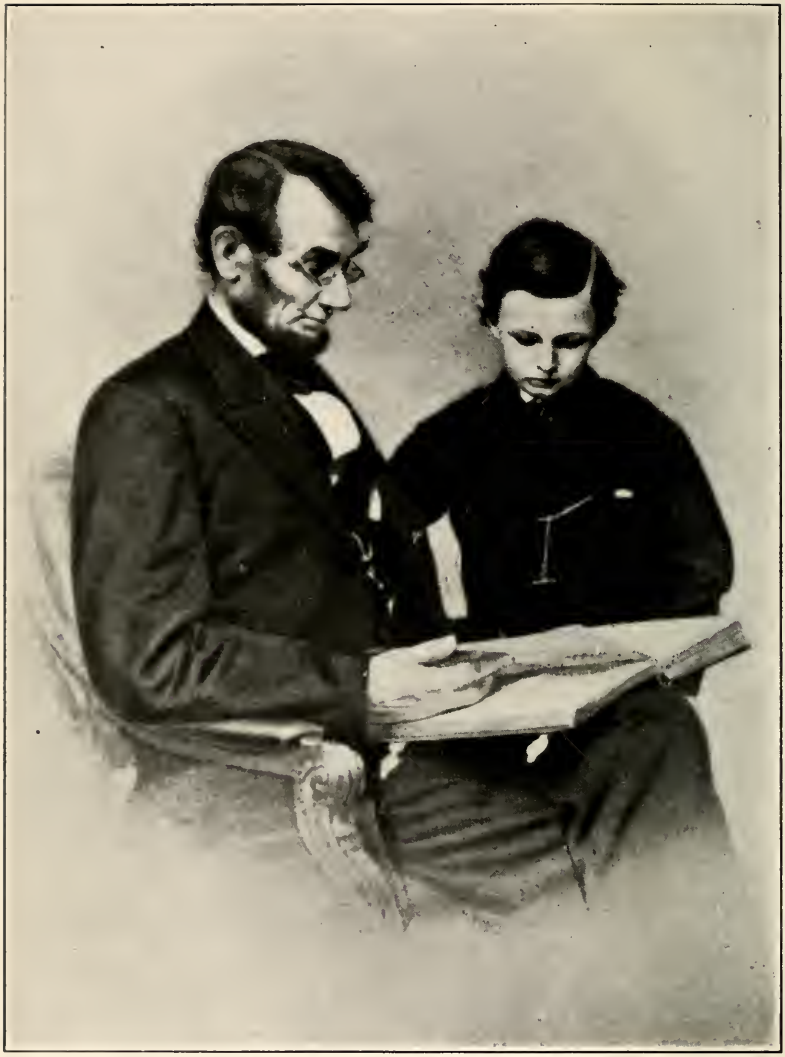

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LINCOLN AND HIS SON TAD.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY

DANIEL E. WHEELER

"From prairie cabin up to Capitol,
One fair ideal led our chieftain on.
Forevermore he burned to do his deed
With the fine stroke and gesture of a king.
He built the rail pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow,
The conscience of him testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man."

— EDWIN MARKHAM.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

CHAPTER XXIII

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER I

A Boy of the Backwoods

Of all poor boys who ever became great men, Abraham Lincoln is at once the most familiar and inspiring figure in American history. The year 1809 that gave him to the world saw a number of famous men born, including Darwin, Gladstone, Tennyson, Mendelssohn, Poe, and Oliver Wendell Holmes; but none of them was so lowly born, so handicapped by poverty and hardship, as was our sixteenth president.

Lincoln's life begins like many favorite fairy tales: A little boy and his sister living in a deep wood, in a tiny house hardly big enough for the father and mother and their two children; the father chopping down trees to make room for a farm; the mother spinning and sewing the skins of animals into clothes, all day long trying to make ends meet that never met.

February 12, 1809, was the date of Abraham Lincoln's birth, and, happily enough, he came as the best birthday present his two-year-old sister Sarah could have had — a playmate in the lonely forest clearing. Midwinter cold and lack of common comforts could not overshadow the joy of this hardy pioneer family at the advent of a son. And the few women neighbors traveled miles in the frost to hold the new baby and bring gifts of honey and dried fruits to the mother. Doubtless, while they chattered, Thomas Lincoln mused on the help his boy would some day be to him, while Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the happy mother, dreamed of the great deeds her son would do when he grew to manhood. And her dreams were to come true.

Baby Abraham came of a long line of ancestors who wandered over the face of the earth in search of fortune. His first ancestor in this country, Samuel Lincoln, a weaver, left home in Norfolk, England, in 1637, to try his luck among the Pilgrims of Massachusetts. Mordecai, the fourth son of the weaver, was a blacksmith, grew rich and content at it, living and dying in Scituate. Two of his sons, however, named Mordecai and Abraham, felt the call to roam, and forsook Massachusetts for Pennsylvania, where they settled among the Quakers. Next, John, a son of this second Mor-

decai, answered the summons to wander, and fared forth to Virginia, where he thrived. In turn, his son, Abraham, responded to the lure of the wilderness trails, sold out his acres, and led his family westward over the way blazed by Daniel Boone into the primeval heart of Kentucky.

This Abraham Lincoln was the grandfather of our President. It was about 1782 that he, with his wife and five children, went into Kentucky, settling in a stockade somewhere in the region of Louisville. Grandfather Abraham secured claims to some seventeen hundred acres of land and began clearing it. One fatal day in 1788, while working with his three sons in these fields, a redskin stole upon them and shot the father.

Mordecai, a lad of fourteen, sped to the homestead after a gun; Josiah, the second son, ran to the fort near by to summon aid; the youngest, Thomas, then a boy of ten, was left behind at the mercy of the Indian, who was preparing either to kill or carry off the horrified child. But Mordecai fired at the foe, killing him.

To the bereft family Kentucky was indeed a "dark and bloody ground." None of the boys was old enough to assume the burden of supporting the family, so the Lincolns scattered. Mordecai, as the eldest son, inherited all his father's land. His

brothers and sisters shifted as they might. Little Thomas suffered most because of his father's untimely death. Child though he was, he had to earn his own living in that wild, unsettled country. He became what was known as "a wandering laboring-boy," hiring himself to any farmer that would have him. Of course he had no chance of education, and he grew to manhood without knowing how to write his name. But he was physically strong and had a cheerful disposition that made him friends. His sound sense and quiet manner were noted, and he had the reputation of being a good spinner of a yarn.

By the time Thomas Lincoln was twenty-five, he had learned the trade of carpenter and joiner, and had managed to secure a bit of land on Nolin Creek, then in Hardin, but afterwards La Rue County, Kentucky. This foothold was about fourteen miles from Elizabethtown, where he was living, and where he worked for a distant cousin named Joseph Hanks, who owned a carpenter shop. What was more attractive, Joseph Hanks had a lovely, gray-eyed sister called Nancy. She was a tall, slim girl, dark and delicate-looking. Usually, she was sweet-tempered and lively, but at times she had moods of melancholy that gave to her face a sad expression which people were quick to observe.

Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks fell in love, and on June 12, 1806, when he was twenty-eight and she twenty-three, they were married. The event was one for boisterous merrymaking. Guests were invited from every quarter, there was plenty to eat and drink, including the roasting of a whole sheep, and the company joked and danced till daylight.

For about a year thereafter Thomas and Nancy Lincoln lived in Elizabethtown, where their daughter, Sarah, was born on the 10th of February, 1807. Following this event Thomas Lincoln decided to remove to his place on Nolin Creek. As a carpenter, things had been discouragingly slow with him, and so he thought it a wise plan to combine farming with his poor trade. Though he possessed a fine set of tools, and was skillful in their use, there was little call upon his services.

Out to the woods the family went and set up housekeeping in the humble log cabin that was to become famous the world over as the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. It was only a one-room house, but it was quite as habitable and comfortable as the majority of homes in the region. The Lincolns were as well off as the general run of pioneers.

The log cabin had one window, a door, and a wide outside chimney made of poles and clay, in which a

great fire might roar. There was no glass for the window (glass was a luxury then) but greased paper served instead. Contrary to accepted belief, the Lincolns had a feather-bed and home-woven coverlets; there were pewter spoons and dishes, iron pots, horn-handled knives and forks, a loom and spinning-wheel. Primitive as these things may appear, yet they provided some conveniences and comforts that relieved the many hardships of the wilds. And you may be sure that Nancy Lincoln made it as cozy as possible, for she was held to be an ideal housewife.

Until Abraham was four years old they remained on Nolin Creek, life adding its burdens to the man and wife, the two children happy and content in their woodland home. During long winter evenings the father told them stories, in particular recounting his own hairbreadth escape from the Indians in his boyhood. Sometimes Mrs. Lincoln took a moment from her housework to read aloud from the Bible.

The Nolin Creek land was not very good for farming, Thomas Lincoln concluded, so in the autumn of 1813 the family moved to a new locality, Knob Creek, about fifteen miles to the northeast. Here the children began going to school. It was little more than a beginning, however, Sally and

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE.
The cabin on Nolin Creek, Kentucky.

Abe having the benefit of only a few weeks' instruction in these "A B C schools." Teachers were few in the wilderness, and came and went as chance prompted. From all accounts, the teacher had a scanty store of knowledge at his disposal, and his equipment seems to have been principally "readin', writin', and cipherin' to the Rule of Three," to use the description given us by Lincoln.

Under two of these wandering teachers, Zachariah Riney and Caleb Hazel, the boy and girl learned their alphabet and a few simple words. The chief articles of instruction in the log-cabin schoolroom were a Webster's Speller and a switch. Abe was familiar with both.

The class sat around on rude benches and three-legged stools in a bare room, without blackboard or slates. Abe proved a quick pupil, ahead of his classmates most of the time. His love of learning was a strange thing to his companions. They preferred games and pranks. He liked fun, too, and joined them in their frolics, but he also had a serious side to his character that puzzled them. Even at this age — he was about seven — he gathered spice bushes to break up and burn at night so that he might study his lessons by their flare!

Nancy Lincoln encouraged her son in every way she could, hearing him spell, helping him to read,

and explaining the mysteries of addition. The mother of Lincoln was herself fond of books. Besides assisting her little boy in his lessons, Nancy taught her husband how to write his name and how to read his way slowly through the Bible. Unlike his boy, Thomas was a dull scholar, and in reality he did not set much store on learning, for he believed that in the wilderness the ax was more useful than the pen.

Carrying out his practical ideas, the father put little Abe to work doing the easier tasks of the field just as soon as he was strong enough to pull weeds and carry tools. Abe helped his mother, too, carrying wood and water. Often he "gritted" corn for her to make into "dodgers." Gritting corn consisted of rubbing the ears over a hole-punched piece of tin in the same way that you would grate horse-radish. Afterwards, the scraped corn was molded into cakes and baked. They were called "dodgers."

Dodgers and potatoes were staple foods, the potatoes being sometimes peeled and eaten raw like apples; and in the bitter cold weather potatoes hot from the ashes were given the children on their way to school, or when an errand took them a distance, to serve them as hand warmers! Wheat bread was a rarity. An enthusiastic hunter,

Thomas Lincoln often supplied the family with game. Fish abounded. Poor as they were, we may conclude that the Lincolns had sufficient food most of the time. At any rate, Abraham Lincoln when he had grown to manhood enjoyed the memories of his boyhood, the poverty and hardships leaving no bitterness in his heart.

There are two recollections of the period worth recording. One comes from a playmate of Abe's who bore the name of Gollaher. It appears the boys had been hunting partridges near Knob Creek. In "cooning" across a fallen tree-trunk Abe tumbled into the water and would have drowned had not Gollaher, with presence of mind, held out a sycamore branch and pulled his floundering companion ashore.

The other recollection is Lincoln's own. Once, some one asked him if he remembered anything in connection with the War of 1812. Lincoln recalled that he was about five years old when, returning from a fishing trip one day, he met a soldier on the road. Into his mind flashed one of the precepts of his mother — to be kind to soldiers because they fought and were willing to die for their country. Acting on this counsel, the little fisherman gave his lone fish — he had caught but one — to the soldier.

Dissatisfied with the return that the Knob Creek land offered him, and his title to it being doubtful, Thomas Lincoln, in the autumn of 1816, felt again the impulse to move on and try to better his lot. Indiana, recently admitted as a State, attracted his fresh hopes. Many reputable people were settling there. From strangers and kin he heard glowing reports of the country. Plenty of rich land could be had almost for the asking. Furthermore, no slaves were to be allowed there. Thomas Lincoln liked that item among the attractions. He decided to see for himself what Indiana was like. Disposing of his claim to the Knob Creek property for a small amount of ready money and four hundred gallons of corn whisky, he built himself a flatboat, or raft, and set out to find his latest Eden. By way of explanation for the quantity of whisky, we must point out that it was readily used those days as money in barter.

When he had swung into the stream, his family turned their attention to preparations for leaving their Kentucky home forever. Sorrowful though the mother might have been at the uprooting, we may be sure that the children looked forward eagerly to the change. Indiana meant a new world to them, and the journey there was a glorious prospect.

CHAPTER II

"Pretty Pinching Times"

Down the Rolling Fork to the Salt River, thence to the Ohio, Thomas Lincoln floated on his rude boat, with his gallons of whisky and kit of tools. In these days it would be an odd sight to see such a drifting cargo, but in those times it was common enough to see all manner of strange craft on the rivers. Roads were few and bad, and so the flowing waters were the chief highways. It was no unusual sight to see a whole family living on a raft-like contrivance, performing various household duties, even to feeding the chickens and pigs as these creatures wandered about the floating home. And these water families tied up wherever they pleased, to visit or trade.

Misfortune overtook Thomas Lincoln at one point of his journey, for his boat capsized and his cargo went to the bottom. By dint of ingenuity he recovered his property, and shortly afterwards reached what he thought a promising bit of Indiana shore called Thompson's Ferry. Afoot, and keen

on the lookout, he struck into the woods, and after threading their mazes for some fifteen miles he hit on a site that pleased him, near a water course named Little Pigeon Creek. It was really a dense wilderness, but in his eyes was most desirable. Staking his claim in the accustomed fashion by marking the trees and heaping up piles of brushwood at the boundaries, he turned his face homeward. He had to walk all the way, a distance of about a hundred miles.

When he arrived at Knob Creek two horses were borrowed, the few belongings packed, and off they went, Nancy Lincoln alone stealing a wistful, backward glance at the forsaken home.

It was late autumn, the trees were tattered but brilliant, and the air was snappy. For several days they traveled like gypsies, camping for the night and building fires, a thrilling experience for the boy and girl, and their joys ended all too soon. The last ten or fifteen miles of their way lay through a trackless forest, so a path had to be hewed to the location of the new home.

Too late in the season to begin building a regular cabin, Thomas Lincoln contented himself with a makeshift shelter known as a "half-faced camp." Ground had to be cleared also for planting. Winter was at hand. Realizing the urgent necessity for

making most of the time remaining, the elder Lincoln put an ax in Abe's hands and bade him fall to upon the underbrush. Of this time and place Abraham Lincoln wrote in after years that it was "a region with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods . . . the clearing away of the surplus wood was the great task ahead. Abraham, though very young, was large of his age, and had an ax put into his hands at once; and from that time till within his twenty-third year he was almost constantly handling that most useful instrument."

Their half-faced camp, in which they purposed spending the winter, was built of saplings and had a roof and three walls, the fourth side being left open to serve as fireplace and chimney. Odd as this may seem, it was the sort of shelter often built in those times when a temporary home was needed. One might manage to keep comfortable in it, especially if hidden in the heart of thick woods where friendly trees acted as a wind shield. The Lincolns had warm clothing for day use and at night wrapped themselves in bearskins and other heavy coverings. And the fire was never out.

Everybody kept busy. The father had his hands full providing meat for the larder. Off at daybreak he went, his gun over his shoulder. Abe and Sally helped their mother in her endless round of

daily duties. Once, at least, Abe appeared in the rôle of hunter when, one morning, he fired his father's gun at a flock of wild turkeys through a chink in the wall, killing one of the birds. But the boy did not enjoy hunting or trapping.

Though there was no school for the children that winter, we may be sure that Abe often plied his patient mother with questions about words and the world in general. From his baby days Abe was noted as a questioner, the "whys and wherefores" of a thing urging him to put his elders through a course of cross-examination which was sometimes trying, especially to his father.

At last winter was at an end, but then their tasks were greater than ever. Plowing and planting that virgin soil was a big job, and to increase the difficulty, it proved to be stony ground. However, their troubles were overcome, and Thomas Lincoln set to work on a substantial log cabin that was to be their permanent home. By the autumn it was fairly ready for them, though the door and windows were unfinished. There was a loft planned for the children to which they would climb at bedtime, not up a ladder but by means of pegs driven into the wall. The one room "downstairs" had poles set in the wall and fastened to a stake to serve as a bedstead. Their floor was mother earth,

but they pounded the dirt hard and smooth and covered it with rugs made of skins.

Altogether, they considered the house quite fine. Without waiting for finishing touches the family moved in; and no sooner were they out of the half-faced camp than some of Nancy Lincoln's relatives came to live in it. The newcomers were a Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow and a nephew, Dennis Hanks. All three were distant cousins on the Hanks side, and Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow had been kind to Nancy in her orphaned girlhood. Dennis Hanks was a jolly, good-hearted lad, some ten years older than Abe, but the difference in ages was no barrier to their becoming chums. It is to Dennis Hanks that we owe many of the picturesque details of Lincoln's youth, told in later years.

Another winter, spring, and summer passed, and that spot of wilderness had been tamed into giving them corn and wheat, and supplied fodder enough for a cow and a few hogs. But, strange to say, no time was found in which to finish the Lincoln cabin; it was still floorless and doorless, and the windows were merely apertures.

However, just as their outlook appeared to be growing brighter, utter darkness fell. In October of that second year on Pigeon Creek a dreadful and mysterious plague broke out, called the "milk-

sick," and was supposed to come from drinking the milk of diseased cows. Persons suffering from the ailment seldom recovered. First of our little colony to fall ill were Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow, and their deaths followed apace. The nearest doctor was thirty miles or more away, and even had he attended them their recovery would have been doubtful. Medical knowledge was not far advanced a hundred years ago.

Dennis came to live at the log cabin. Now happened the worst. Nancy Lincoln became victim of the malady. For a week she suffered from the terrible fever that marked the disease, and on October 5, 1818, succumbed. Before she died she called her two children to her and enjoined them to care for their father, to do always what was right and true, and to love God. Abe was in his tenth year and Sally in her twelfth when this heart-breaking scene was enacted in their lives. Long as he lived Abraham Lincoln retained a vivid impression of that dark day, and he never failed to obey those solemn words. He was fond of saying that all he was, or ever hoped to be, he owed to his angel mother.

That bitter, lonely winter poor Sally did her best at keeping house, but she often sat by the hearth crying for the mother whose place she in vain

tried to fill. Abe and Dennis noticed her spells of grief and they sought to cheer her, bringing her playmates from the deep woods. Once they brought her a baby raccoon, then they gave her a comical turtle, and they tried to get her a pretty fawn to comfort her, but failed to catch it. Referring to these dark days Abe said that they were "pretty pinching times."

Silently Abe sorrowed over the loss of his mother. The sensitive boy missed the offices of religion at the grave and he made up his mind to have prayers said there. Back in Kentucky he knew of a friendly clergyman, the Reverend David Elkin, who had often visited their home on Knob Creek. A few months after his mother's death, Abe got word to this minister, and through snow the good man journeyed to repeat the divine words the boy craved to hear.

From far and near neighbors gathered to listen and pray under the wide sycamore that sheltered the humble mound over Nancy Hanks Lincoln. And the service done, Abe felt that the memory of his gentle mother, "who gave us Lincoln, and never knew," had been sanctified at last.

CHAPTER III

A Welcome Stepmother

Desolate was that winter of 1818–19, and the succeeding summer hardly better. Listlessly Thomas Lincoln went about his work. Already the children looked unkempt. Sally could cook and wash after a fashion, but she was not able to make clothes. Another winter was fairly upon them when, one day in late November, the father bade the family good-by and told them he was going to Elizabethtown; it was his object to ask an old sweetheart of his, now a widow with three children, to marry him. Losing no time, he called on the lady, Mrs. Sarah Bush Johnston, and laid the case before her.

"I have no wife and you no husband," he said. "I came a-purpose to marry you. I knowed you from a gal and you knowed me from a boy. I've no time to lose; and if you're willin' let it be done straight off!"

Abrupt but earnest was his plea. The widow hesitated, made a trifling objection, and then ac-

cepted. On December 2, 1819, they were married, and at once preparations were made to journey out to Little Pigeon Creek. The bride had a lot of fine furniture to take along, including chairs, tables, bedsteads, and a wonderful walnut bureau, the like of which her new husband thought it a sin to own. A generous relative of Thomas Lincoln's placed at their service his big wagon and a double team of horses. The furniture loaded, they climbed aboard and set out.

One can readily picture the astonishment of Abe and Sally as the cavalcade drove up to the cabin, and the happiness which seized them on learning that the tall, sweet-faced woman was their new mother. And to crown the joy, they were to have also another brother and two sisters! Fancy what this meant in their lonely lives!

Mrs. Lincoln bustled about and soon the whole place was transformed. Abe and Sally were introduced to a scrubbing of soap and water and were given clean, warm clothes to wear. Their beds of corn husks and leaves in the loft were exchanged for those of feathers. Nor was Thomas Lincoln permitted to let the house go unfinished any longer! A puncheon log floor was laid; a suitable door was cut and hung; and window frames made and set.

Transformation complete! Lincoln's second mother was altogether a remarkable woman. Not only did she keep her home in spotless order and inspire its inmates to industry and cheer, but she maintained peace and love in her mixed family.

From the first Abe attracted her, and the awkward, long-legged lad responded to her affection. Though she herself possessed scanty knowledge, she appreciated the true value of education. In her Abe had a stanch ally in his efforts to improve his mind. As she once said: "I induced my husband to permit Abe to read and study at home as well as at school. At first he was not easily reconciled to it, but finally he seemed willing to encourage him to a certain extent. Abe was a dutiful son to me always, and we took particular care when he was reading not to disturb him." But in truth Abe's father was sorely vexed because the boy preferred books to an ax or saw; for Thomas Lincoln wanted him to be a carpenter, and tried to teach him the trade, but Abe only applied himself half-heartedly.

Mrs. Lincoln nevertheless sent Abe and the other children to school under a certain Azel Dorsey, a man with a progressive mind. The teacher talked politics, and found in Abe an eager listener. Dorsey was proud of this intelligent pupil. A class-

mate said of Abe at this period: "He was always at school early, and attended to his studies. He was always at the head of his class, and passed us rapidly in his studies. He lost no time at home, and when he was not at work was at his books."

Figuring on the fire shovel, a broad wooden implement, was one of the persevering student's ways of learning. He used a piece of charcoal for pencil, and afterwards scraped off the sums with a knife. Down beside the fire, on the hearth, he would fling himself to obtain the light he needed.

But delights of learning were to be obtained only "by littles." Whenever Thomas Lincoln decided he wanted him, the boy would be taken from school. Abe, however, stole hours from sleep to review what he had learned. All over the place were traces of his scholarship — examples and sentences on the walls, on the floor, even on the fences and trees!

Of all companions his stepmother understood him best. Seeing him sprawled by the fire she would encourage him to read aloud the book in hand. Books were few, but Abe found pleasure in re-reading them until he knew them by heart; he also developed a talent for mimicking public speakers, especially the clergymen he heard. Mounted on the stump of a tree for pulpit, he would

orate and berate in the most approved manner then current.

Several years elapsed before Abe again attended school. When about fourteen he secured a few months' instruction under Andrew Crawford, a man of superior culture, who, among other things, gave lessons in good manners. He taught his pupils how to enter a room like ladies and gentlemen, and how to leave it, and initiated them into other forms of politeness. These social graces must have shown Abe Lincoln an ungainly figure. He looked all arms and legs. One of the girls attending the Crawford school has left us the following unflattering portrait: —

"His skin was shriveled and yellow. His shoes, when he had any, were low. He wore buckskin breeches, linsey-woolsey shirt, and a cap made of the skin of a squirrel or coon. His breeches were baggy and lacked by several inches the tops of his shoes, thereby exposing his shin bone, sharp, blue, and narrow."

Those who laughed at his scarecrow appearance, however, were forced to respect his scholarship. His mind, if not his body, was better clothed than theirs. None of his fellows could stand up long against him in a spelling match, and in the writing of compositions he had no peers. "Cruelty to

Animals" was one of his subjects, and in it he took to task those who wantonly hurt dumb brutes. Consideration for animals was a novel idea to his companions — they had never heard of such regard for mere dogs and horses!

We have this souvenir of those school-days, discovered in one of his sum-books: —

> "Abraham Lincoln is my name
> And with my pen I wrote the same,
> I wrote in both haste and speed
> And left it here for fools to read."

Like his other terms in school, that at Crawford's was short and sweet. His time belonged to his father, and Abe was often hired out to busy neighbors at a wage of twenty-five cents a day. His last glimpse of school came in his seventeenth year. Attendance there required a walk of nine miles a day. Swaney was the name of his last teacher. What he learned from him is largely left to our imaginations, but the Friday "recitations" must have found in Abe an eager participant.

Altogether, his schooling, from his seventh to his seventeenth year, did not amount to a full year. But in that interval he got hold of, and managed to read, a half dozen excellent books, absorbing them with an intensity peculiar to himself. Aside from

the Bible, which he knew thoroughly, he read "Æsop's Fables," "Robinson Crusoe," "Pilgrim's Progress," a "History of the United States," and Parson Weems's "Life of Washington." This "life" was a favorite volume, and Lincoln always spoke highly of it.

How Abe came to own this Weems book is interesting. It belonged to one Josiah Crawford (not the polite schoolmaster), a man who had acquired a reputation for hardness and meanness. Abe borrowed it. One night he left the volume in a roof-chink and it was damaged by rain. The boy was crestfallen and apologetic. He offered Josiah Crawford any equivalent in his power to offset the injury. Seeing his chance and seizing it, the crafty farmer declared the book to be worth seventy-five cents, and said that Abe might own it outright by working three days at pulling fodder. It was back-breaking toil, but Abe accepted the conditions and went to work cheerfully. Afterwards the boy got even with the taskmaster by ridiculing the big, blue nose of Crawford in various verses.

Taking corn to the mill for grinding was one of the delights of Abe's boyhood. While waiting their turn at the mill, the men and lads gathered there would hold athletic meets and long-winded

debates. Abe held his own at either diversion. He was surprisingly strong for one of his "spindle shanks" and narrow chest, and his "stunts" were the talk of the circle. Once, at the mill, Abe nearly lost his life. A horse kicked him insensible. The group thought him dead. But he recovered, and his first words completed the sentence of command which he had been giving the horse when kicked.

During these days it was his love of knowledge that tormented him more than anything else; he was so desirous to know things and his means of satisfying his craving were so inadequate. His own words vividly express this hungering and striving for knowledge: —

"I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I do not think I ever got angry at anything else in my life; but that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since. I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, although I tried to, when I got on such a hunt for an idea, until I had caught it;

and when I thought I had got it, I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over; until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me; for I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north, and bounded it south, and bounded it east, and bounded it west."

Unwittingly, the boy was cultivating the *power to think* by a method which even the profoundest student could scarcely improve.

CHAPTER IV

New Experiences

At eighteen years of age Abe Lincoln had attained that height which marked him among men — six feet, four inches tall. His stepmother used to say she was afraid lest he mark up her ceiling which, at that time, had secured the refining touch of whitewash. This was one of her regular jokes. The remark gave Abe an idea for a prank. Waiting until Mrs. Lincoln was absent, he got hold of some youngsters, had them "muddy" their feet, and then, turning them upside-down, made them walk over the snowy ceiling. Upon her return, Mrs. Lincoln, viewing the highly original decoration, did not know whether to laugh or cry. But she saw the funny side first. Then the chief joker assured her that the ceiling needed a new coat of whitewash anyhow, so he obtained a fresh lot of lime and did the job.

Abe's love of a joke or a laugh became a byword. That, and his perpetual reading of his few books, caused many of the natives to put him down as

a good-natured, lazy fellow. Even when at work in the field he carried a book, which he would pore over industriously at odd times. But if there were companion-workers in the field he would like as not mount a stump and deliver a speech that would set them all laughing.

One employer grew justly annoyed at his antics and called him to account. Abe smiled, and replied that his father had taught him to work, true enough, but had failed to teach him to love it! Nevertheless, he performed every jot of his task, doing as much as any "hand," for his strength was equal to that of three men, and he always made up for lost time. Many stories are told of his enormous physical power; how he lifted two heavy logs that three men were in doubt about handling, and how he once carried a chicken coop weighing nearly six hundred pounds. Dennis Hanks' tribute was: —

"And how he would chop! His ax would flash and bite into a sugar tree or sycamore, and down it would come. If you heard him felling trees, you would think there were three men at work, they came down so fast." Abe gloried in his reputation for strength, and in that primitive community it won him more respect and honor than all the learning that he could cram into his head.

The social life of these rude forefathers was far from polished. Weddings, log-rollings, and house-raisings afforded the people their fullest opportunities for "a good time."

One of the leading attractions in the life of the simple settlers was church, and whenever a preacher came into their midst it was sign for rejoicing. They thought nothing of walking eight or ten miles to attend service which, in the summer time, was usually held outdoors. A church meeting meant a gathering of the neighbors far and near. Often the congregation remained for several days, visiting and hobnobbing. Refreshments would be served before the sermon, the preacher receiving special dainties.

During these half dozen years of life on Pigeon Creek, the adjacent town of Gentryville, a mile and a half east of the Lincoln farm, had developed. It was now a village of about a dozen houses, and was named after its founder and leading citizen, James Gentry. Like every place of the kind, it had a general store, where anything from eggs to nails might be bought or exchanged. A man by the name of Jones kept this store, and one winter he asked Abe to help him. Eagerly the offer was accepted. Here, Abe knew, he would see the Louisville newspaper regularly, and have a chance to discuss questions of the day with customers.

Soon Abe was the principal attraction of the store. His droll stories drew a crowd of amused listeners, while his more serious arguments gained him an attentive audience. Politics was the all-absorbing theme, and slavery a fruitful topic. Men were beginning to talk of negro slavery as a crime. A few abolition societies had been formed, and there were newspapers devoted to the cause of freeing slaves in the United States. Slavery was a question that would fall readily to the tongue of young Abraham Lincoln, for it is said, on excellent authority, that his parents were opposed to the practice.

About this time the tall and awkward youth engaged in a venture that gave him a chance to see a little more of the world. At a wage of thirty-seven cents a day, he hired himself to one James Taylor, who ran a ferry across the Ohio River, at Anderson's Creek. Abe himself was the motor power of the boat. It proved one of the toughest jobs he had yet undertaken. But Abe was not to be balked of all pleasure and improvement. Working on the ferry, he became acquainted with a kindly lawyer, Judge Pitcher, who owned a fair-sized library. Making known his love of reading, Abe obtained permission to borrow books. Over these he would pore until midnight warned

him that in a few hours more he would be due at the ferry. Once he told Judge Pitcher that he wanted to study law but could not afford it as the need for him at home was too urgent.

Experiences on the river front gave Abe an idea that he might do well if he had a boat of his own, and marketed farm products in outlying parts. He observed a number of men prospering thus. Kindled by the prospect, he built and launched his craft, but as a merchant Abe evidently failed. There is one episode, however, connected with this experiment which is worth repeating, and in his own words it sounds best.

"I was about eighteen years of age," he said, . . . "we had succeeded in raising, chiefly by my labor, sufficient produce, as I thought, to justify me in taking it down the river to sell. After much persuasion I had got the consent of my mother to go, and had constructed a flatboat large enough to take a few barrels of things we had gathered to New Orleans. A steamer was going down the river. We have, you know, no wharves on the western streams, and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings they were to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping and taking them on board. I was contemplating my new boat, and wondering whether I could make it stronger

or improve it in any part, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages, and looking at the different boats, singled out mine and asked, 'Who owns this?' I answered modestly, 'I do.' 'Will you,' said one of them, 'take us and our trunks out to the steamer?' 'Certainly,' said I. I was very glad to have the chance of earning something, and supposed that each of them would give me a couple of bits.[1] The trunks were put in my boat, the passengers seated themselves on them, and I sculled them out to the steamer. They got on board and I lifted the trunks and put them on the deck. The steamer was about to put on steam again, when I called out, 'You have forgotten to pay me.' Each of them took from his pocket a silver half dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money. You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day; that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time."

[1] A "bit" was twelve and a half cents.

CHAPTER V

When Abe was Twenty-one

Dissatisfied with farm life, accepting anything that would take him from it, Abe's lot fretted him during these days when the boy was merging into the man. The river was a lure from which he found it difficult to escape. Flowing along, it seemed to urge him to follow. Once he thought of seeking a job aboard a steamboat.

Ambition's wings were sprouting. He wrote compositions that were praised. One, on "Temperance," aroused the fervor of a Baptist minister to an extent that resulted in the printing of it in a newspaper. Another effort entitled "National Politics" won the enthusiastic admiration of a lawyer, who declared that "the world couldn't beat it!"

Commendation from such authorities made the backwoods boy feel that his wings were strong enough for a longer flight than any he had yet attempted.

Already Abe had read every book he could lay hands on within a radius of fifty miles. Whole passages he could repeat from memory. And it was his habit to copy favorite bits of prose and verse in a notebook that he made by sewing some sheets of paper together. With pains he copied extracts, using a turkey-buzzard feather for pen, and ink manufactured out of brier-roots or walnut shells.

Among other books borrowed, Abe read one called "The Statutes of Indiana," a bulky volume, and one that ordinarily would repel a boy nineteen. It was meat and drink to Abe! In it he found the constitution and laws of Indiana, the Constitution of the United States, and the Declaration of Independence. Through this volume he enlarged his knowledge of his country's history, and learned something of the complexities of law.

More and more his mind turned to the law, and whenever the chance came he walked to Boonville, fifteen miles away, to attend court. This became a delightful diversion. Having listened one day to a thrilling speech at a murder trial, he excitedly rose to congratulate the orator; but the eloquent gentleman of the bar snubbed his uncouth admirer.

Poor Abe was chagrined at this churlish treatment. Time, however, brought him full redress, for some thirty years later the aristocratic lawyer

and his admirer met in Washington when their relative positions were far different. Lincoln with a smile mentioned their encounter that day in Boonville, but the Kentucky gentleman had forgotten, or wished to forget, the incident.

At length, after much secret chafing at his bonds, an opportunity presented itself for Abe to see more of the world. James Gentry, of Gentryville, knowing the quality of the youth, asked him to take a load of produce down to New Orleans and dispose of it. Abe jumped at the suggestion. Arrangements were completed forthwith. He and Allan Gentry, a son of the promoter, assumed joint responsibility for the voyage. Abe was to receive eight dollars a month and board. In March, 1828, the two boys launched upon their thousand-mile trip down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, at a sleepy pace of from four to six miles an hour. Swung on to the bosom of the Mississippi, the lads began the barter of cotton, tobacco, and sugar for their potatoes, bacon, and jeans.

By the end of a week they had floated into a land of summer. Strange and interesting sights were on all sides. Gangs of slaves were seen at work on plantations. Then came the big city. That was a wonderful moment! New Orleans was at the height of its glory, a metropolis of the first

rank, the center of commerce and society. Its wharves were crowded with ships from foreign lands. A mixture of languages must have filled the ears of the backwoods boys — French, Spanish, Dutch.

One exciting adventure befell them. Their flatboat had been tied up for overnight at a plantation a few miles below Baton Rouge. The boys were asleep in their bunks when stealthy footsteps awoke them. A gang of thieving negroes had boarded the boat to rob it. Grasping a club, Abe instantly attacked the marauders with a violence that pitched several overboard, and their astonished companions were put to flight. Gentry joined the fray, and the two boys pursued the thieves, beating them until they were exhausted.

As souvenir of the occasion, Lincoln bore a small scar for the remainder of his life, but it did not leave him with any prejudice against the negro race. Lincoln never bore a grudge. Dennis Hanks said, "When God made Abe Lincoln He left the meanness out for other folks to divide up among 'em."

Aside from the midnight fracas, the trip was successful in every respect. In June they were back home, having sold cargo and boat, and feeling quite men of the world.

It may have been difficult to resume the ordinary duties of life again, but so far as we know Abe fulfilled them to the letter. A year went by, uneventful save for the untimely death of Lincoln's sister, Sarah Lincoln, which was Abe's second great sorrow. In the autumn of 1829 the dreaded "milk-sick" again broke out in the Lincoln settlement. Dennis Hanks, then a married man with a growing family, was despondent at the loss of cattle. He considered a move to a more healthful neighborhood urgent.

Fourteen years on the Pigeon Creek property had not given them many comforts. The land was poor. Why remain? Near by, Illinois was booming, and rich land might be had at a dollar-and-a-quarter an acre. The stream of emigration had set in that direction. John Hanks, a cousin of the Lincolns, had sent them word that he would select for them a desirable piece of land.

Fate was in it. Glad to go, Thomas Lincoln sold his land and stock. Household belongings were loaded into wagons drawn by oxen, and off the caravan lumbered in March, 1830. Abe acted as driver. He had just reached his majority and was his own master at last; but he had decided to see his father settled in the new land of promise before tackling the world on his own account.

Abe had a private scheme, however, to "try out" during the journey from Indiana to Illinois. He had invested some thirty dollars in "notions," buying them of Jones in Gentryville, and this stock he peddled whenever they passed through a populated section. Knives and forks, needles and pins, buttons too, he sold. Subsequently he wrote to Jones that he doubled his money.

Two weeks they were on the road and covered about one hundred and fifty miles. Spring thaw had set in, and their going was through endless reaches of deep mud. Streams they had to ford were coated with thin ice. Thickets beset their progress. Abe had his hands full. Mired in mud or stuck in a hole at the bottom of a stream, he had to use all his ingenuity to overcome obstacles. He also was their self-appointed jester and kept up the flagging spirits of the party. They probably never fully appreciated what he did for them on that long, dreary trek through the wilds, solving their difficulties and keeping up their spirits.

One episode of the journey reveals Abe's tender heart. Crossing an ice-filled brook, a little dog of theirs was accidentally left behind. All save Abe were in favor of leaving the animal to its fate, as it would be a waste of time to recross the stream for an insignificant creature like that. But while

they discussed the question, Abe had taken off his shoes and stockings and had waded into the freezing water in defiance of consequences. The little dog was rescued, and Abe declared that the animal's joy more than repaid him for his effort and risk.

After many adventures, pleasant and unpleasant, the outfit arrived at the homestead of Cousin John Hanks, in Macon County, five miles northwest of Decatur. Five miles farther west John had selected a site for them, on the banks of the Sangamon River. It proved a charming location.

Right willingly they set to work building a house under the supervision of Thomas Lincoln. Trees were felled, logs hewed, and the structure went up quickly. Abe and John Hanks hitched the oxen to plows and broke up fifteen acres of ground for planting; then they wielded axes and split walnut rails enough to fence in the fields — rails that were destined to become more famous than any ever made before or since.

The region was very thinly settled and there were more square miles than people. Decatur and Springfield, both near, were merely straggling villages. Chicago was not dreamed of.

To his father's holdings Abe devoted much of his time and labor during the spring and summer of 1830, but if a good outside job offered itself he

gladly accepted it. One of these odd jobs was to split rails in payment for sufficient material to make him a suit of butternut-dyed jeans, for each yard of goods Abe agreeing to split four hundred rails!

Illinois people soon showed a liking for Abe. His talk won friends everywhere. It is related that he once put a passing orator to shame in a speech on the navigation possibilities of the Sangamon River. And it is said that the beaten orator congratulated Abe on his ability.

The first winter in the new home was disheartening. Autumn brought them fever and ague, and Christmas ushered in a snowstorm of unexampled severity. Three days it continued in blinding sweep. Then followed a freeze-up that lasted two weeks. Men and animals perished in great numbers. That period of suffering and death is known to history as "the winter of the deep snow." For generations men talked about it and dated events by it.

To the Lincolns, though they came through the ordeal, the Sangamon locality was no longer charming. Plans to move again were in the air. Meanwhile, Abe had his own immediate plans. In the autumn of 1830 he had met a man named Denton Offutt, who announced his intention to send a

From the Collection of Americana of Frederick H. Meserve, New York.

THE ILLINOIS CABIN OF THE LINCOLNS.

flatboat of produce down to New Orleans in the spring. Offutt engaged Abe, John Hanks, and John Johnston (Abe's stepbrother) to make the trip. Each man was to receive fifty cents a day and a bonus of twenty dollars at the end of the job, provided it was a success. The three agreed to meet Offutt in Springfield in March, 1831.

When the time came, the country was flooded from the melting snows, but the three young fellows bought a canoe and paddled to within five miles of Springfield, walking the rest of the way. They found their employer in a tavern, the picture of woe. Offutt told them, in explanation, that he had been unable to hire or buy a flatboat. The project was quashed. But why not build a flatboat themselves? the three inquired of Offutt.

This they did. Mightily pleased, Offutt agreed to pay them each twelve dollars a month until the boat was ready. In a month it was completed. It was a clumsy craft with plank-and-canvas sails, and was to be the cause of much merriment on the river.

Early in April the cargo — hogs, pork in barrels, and corn — was put aboard, and the venture was fairly under way. At New Salem, a tiny hamlet along the Sangamon, the boat stuck on a dam, and the whole population turned out to see the fun. The villagers stood on the bank and offered jocular

suggestions. They took particular interest in the actions of a long, lanky chap who, with his trousers "rolled up about five feet," was directing operations. It was Abe, of course, devising a scheme to move the flatboat and save the cargo. Now, the craft was caught in such fashion that the bow was high in the air while the stern was sunk under water. Abe rigged up tackle to hoist out the live stock and produce; then, when the boat was lightened, he bored a hole in the bow and managed to tilt the vessel so that the water it held ran out.

Never before had the natives seen a boat saved by boring a hole in it!

Without further mishap New Orleans was reached and the cargo sold at profit. On this second visit to the Crescent City, Abe witnessed the sale of slaves in the slave market. The sight sickened him. Afterwards he told John Hanks, "the iron entered his soul then, and he swore to hit it [slavery] hard, if he ever got the chance."

By way of steamboat they returned as far as St. Louis, walking thence across the prairies to the latest home of the family in Coles County, whither Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks had removed while the boys were absent.

Abe stayed at home about a month; then in July he gathered together his scant possessions,

bade the family good-by, and set out for New Salem, the scene of the boat-boring experiment. Denton Offutt had been deeply impressed by the talents of Abraham Lincoln and had offered him a job as clerk in his store in New Salem. True, the store was as yet merely a project — one of Offutt's glowing dreams — but Abe held faith in his prospective employer.

Home ties were at last broken, his detested farm chores were over, and Abe was ready to face the world. What lay before him? If judged from past achievement, he was going forth with many qualities to insure success. His stepmother summed him up feelingly when she said in her simple fashion: —

"Abe was a good boy, and I can say what scarcely one woman — a mother — can say in a thousand: Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused, in fact or appearance, to do anything I requested him. . . . He was a dutiful son to me always. I think he loved me truly. . . . I must say that Abe was the best boy I ever saw, or expect to see."

CHAPTER VI

At Work in New Salem

A frontier settlement with never more than fifteen log houses and about one hundred inhabitants — such was New Salem, the starting place of Lincoln's career. It was founded in 1829 by James Rutledge and John Cameron, who set up a mill on the Sangamon River. The hamlet eked out an existence of a dozen years, then quietly died. When Abe arrived that July day, New Salem boasted a gristmill, a sawmill, two stores and a tavern. Why Denton Offutt chose this town in which to open still another store will ever remain a mystery.

Upon his arrival Abe discovered that he was ahead of the stock his employer was to ship there, so the friendly young fellow filled in his time getting acquainted. Election Day falling before the Offutt goods appeared, the clerk of the polls, Mentor Graham, offered the entertaining stranger a job as his assistant.

"Can you write?" asked Graham.

"Yes, I can make a few rabbit tracks," replied Abe.

Engaged, the newcomer proved himself both a clear-handed scribe and a most diverting companion. His humorous anecdotes seemed inexhaustible. Abe made a decided hit with the natives. Mentor Graham, who was also the village schoolmaster, noted the intelligence of his assistant.

Offutt's stock of merchandise arrived in ox carts, and in a little log house on top of the hill overhanging the river the store was made ready for the public. But trade was anything but brisk. To offset this drawback, the irrepressible Offutt added a mill to his burden, engaged another helper, a chap named William Greene, and awaited a change in his fortunes.

Talk, however, continued to be the principal transaction. Men gathered in the new store to discuss crops, politics, and the future greatness of New Salem with the popular clerk, Abe Linkhorn (the name was often pronounced "Linkhern" and "Linkhorn"), who was always willing to enter an argument. Offutt himself was bursting with opinions and importance, and one of his chief topics of conversation was his clever clerk. Offutt declared that Abe Lincoln was the strongest, smartest young fellow in the whole country; that

he could outrun, outjump and "wrassle" anybody. Furthermore, Offutt said he was willing to match his clerk against all comers, either in brains or in brawn. This wholesale bragging brought its reward.

A few miles off there was a settlement known as Clary's Grove, its population composed of rough and rowdy fellows whose principal mission in life was to terrorize the law-abiding citizens. Periodically, these gangsters would descend upon New Salem and "clean it out." Liquor and brawling were the delight of their lives, and invariably a stranger in town had to undergo a hazing at their hands, one of their favorite tricks being that of putting a victim in a barrel and rolling it downhill. But these frontier bullies were not without some saving grace, we believe, for we are told they worked hard at times and often lent their rude aid to the unfortunate or unprotected.

Before the members of this ring it was Offutt's foolish pleasure to boast of Abe's extraordinary powers. In honor bound, the Clary Grove Boys felt it their duty to test these claims. Shortly there came a challenge to a wrestling match, the Clary crowd swearing their leader, Jack Armstrong, the better man of the two. Armstrong was held to be a "powerful twister."

Naturally, Abe disliked all this bluster of which he was made the center, and objected to the "wooling and pulling" which was being thrust upon him. Circumstances, however, forced him to accept the challenge, and the community turned out to enjoy the tussle.

The "wrasslers" met in a clearing near the Offutt store. Laying hold of each other, it was soon evident that the pride of Clary's Grove had a worthy opponent in the tall, thin grocery clerk whose long arms were like flails. Armstrong, fearing for his reputation, tried a foul tactic, which so maddened Lincoln that he took the bully by the throat and shook him like a rag. Thereupon the Clary Grove Boys rushed to their champion's rescue. It looked bad for Abe in that rough and tumble fight, but his pluck against such odds won out for him. Doubtless ashamed of himself and full of admiration for his antagonist, Armstrong controlled the mob and offered to shake hands with Lincoln. With a friendly grip, Armstrong said that Abe was "the best fellow who ever broke into the camp."

Thus was Lincoln initiated as a worthy citizen. The Clary Grove Boys accepted him as one of them and supported him through thick and thin. They made him their umpire in cockfights and horse

races, and in their personal disputes his word was final. With Jack Armstrong Abe became most friendly, visiting the family as a privileged intimate, and, years later, he was the powerful lawyer that saved Jack's son from the gallows!

Other braggarts besides the Clary Grove gang were made to realize the unsuspected steel in the angular frame of Abe Lincoln. While tending store it became his painful duty more than once to administer a lesson to some lout who thought he could say and do as he pleased on the Offutt premises. On one occasion a loiterer used profane language in the presence of women customers. Quietly, Abe asked the offender to stop, but no heed was given the request except to add personal abuse to the affront.

"Well," sighed Lincoln, "if you must be whipped, I suppose I might as well whip you as any other man!"

Acting on his words, he flung the undesirable citizen outdoors and, throwing him to earth, rubbed smart-weed into his face until the culprit howled for mercy. It was characteristic, too, that following the punishment, Abe should minister to the man's hurts.

New Salem was not slow to appreciate this sense of decency and fairness in the store clerk. For

his square dealing he began to be known among the people as "Honest Abe." Two of his deeds of honesty have been frequently related. On one occasion he walked miles to restore six and a quarter cents to a customer that he had unwittingly overcharged. Again, he carried to a woman a few ounces of tea that he had failed to include in her package because of a misplaced weight in the scales.

Tasks at the store and the mill were not enough to keep him busy, and so Lincoln looked around for means of improving his time. To master his mother tongue was one of his ambitions, and learning from Mentor Graham, who had become a helpful friend, that there was a copy of "Kirkham's Grammar" to be had for the asking, Abe straightway walked far to borrow it from the owner. The book absorbed him. Greene, his fellow-employee, was often requested to hold the grammar and hear him recite his lesson. If any difficulty arose, Abe would consult Schoolmaster Graham for explanation. Such diligent application brought him speedy success. Abe said that he was astonished to find English grammar so simple. Turning to Greene, he exclaimed, —

"Well, if that's what they call a science, I think I'll go another!"

Offutt's store did not succeed. Eight months had passed without encouragement. Things looked on the verge of bankruptcy. Feeling the shadow of the sheriff upon them, Abe made up his mind to get from under. He would put his popularity to the test by becoming a candidate for the General Assembly of the State! In March, 1832, therefore, he announced himself as such, and had handbills printed setting forth his political principles. This circular showed Abe to be an ardent Whig, under the banner of the great Henry Clay, and in glowing language the handbill advocated all kinds of internal improvements, such as new roads and canals, particularly urging the clearance of the Sangamon so that it might be open to trading vessels.

He could have chosen no better topic than the Sangamon to win public support, for the whole country was agitated over the prospect of bringing ships of commerce to the river towns. It spelled prosperity.

Weeks before Abe's handbills had been scattered about, there had come word that a certain Captain Bogue had pledged himself to charter the steamship *Talisman* for the express purpose of bringing her down the Sangamon, to prove the river navigable. When the weather permitted,

the *Talisman* made the memorable trip from Cincinnati to New Salem. At Beardstown a number of men, including Lincoln, met the vessel, long poles in their hands to hold back the branches of trees obstructing passage, while the *Talisman* puffed proudly to the end of her journey. The steamship was tied up for a week, during which time speeches were made, parades took place, and loud huzzas rang to heaven. A new and glorious era was anticipated. Village poets wrote odes to the event.

Alas, the sequel was not according to promise. The return voyage of the *Talisman* was not a triumph. On account of the rapid fall of the river, the steamship had to crawl along at the rate of four miles a day. Reaching the fateful Rutledge dam, the vessel stuck and hung there all night. By dint of mighty effort they freed themselves in the morning. Neither Captain Bogue nor any other man was ever tempted to repeat the stunt on the Sangamon.

Abe Lincoln, however, profited by the steamship trial. On the return trip to Beardstown he was engaged as pilot, and received forty dollars for his services. Also, he had the satisfaction of trying to prove the Sangamon River navigable in practice as well as theory.

These milldam experiences of Abe's were to bear singular fruit in the years to come, when he tried to invent and patent a vessel equipped with a clumsy contrivance designed to float it over shoal places. His whittled model of the ship may be seen in Washington to-day — a prize curio!

CHAPTER VII

Lincoln as a Soldier

Election was held in August, and Abe had intended to do his speech-making throughout the county of Sangamon in the months he would be idle, now that the Offutt establishment had failed. But Governor Reynolds of Illinois issued a call for volunteers to help fight old Black Hawk, the chief of the Sac Indians, who was again defying the authorities of the United States. Black Hawk had caused much terror and bloodshed in his day, and only a year before had "touched the goose quill" to a treaty of peace with the government. He had promised to keep to territory west of the Mississippi. On April 6, 1832, however, he crossed that river with some five hundred braves and marched up the valley of the Rock River to the ancient abiding place of his tribe. Ostensibly, he only wanted "to plant corn" in the land where the Sacs had sown their crops from ancient days; but the settlers of northwestern Illinois were panic-stricken.

A courier rode into New Salem bearing the appeal of the governor, which stated that those who wished to enlist against the Indians must be at Beardstown not later than the 22d day of April. Among the first to offer themselves as soldiers was Abe Lincoln, who saw in the opportunity a chance for experience. In due time the New Salem contingent set off for Beardstown, forty miles away. Before arriving there, the men of Sangamon determined to choose their captain. Though Lincoln was a candidate for the honor, he was surprised to have the majority of the men rally around him and elect him their leader. Nothing, he declared in after years, had ever given him so much satisfaction.

Under their new captain the company entered Beardstown and was made part of the Fourth Illinois Regiment which, on the 27th of April, moved on to Yellow Banks, thence to the mouth of the Rock River, and thence to the town of Dixon — altogether a hike of some ninety miles. At Dixon they pitched camp on May 12, all of them tired, hungry, and disgruntled. No Indians had been seen to enliven the long tramp, a real engagement seemed as far off as ever, and, in short, there was no fun in it.

Captain Lincoln's men, however, had managed to find amusement. During hours of leisure they

indulged their fondness for athletics — running, jumping, and wrestling. Lincoln himself had a tussle with a recruit named Thompson, and was thrown twice, much to the indignation of his loyal followers, who claimed that Thompson had employed unfair means to gain the victory. But Lincoln said such accusations were false, that he had been thrown fairly. This settled the disputes, and, if anything, increased the admiration of the men for their captain, though upon one occasion their lawless behavior resulted in their captain being compelled to wear a wooden sword for two days; he was punished for their sins.

Like other soldiers in the ranks, Lincoln's men, when passing through an abandoned settlement, foraged. At times the commissary department failed to appease their appetites. Chicken houses were sometimes raided when the owners had left all behind in their hurry to flee from redskins. A side of bacon dangling from a ceiling was sweet reward for their hardship. There is a legend that once the famished crew were forced to satisfy their stomachs on a gallon of soup made from one lonely dove, a chance shot!

One of the most amusing incidents of their march Lincoln was fond of relating. It was a joke on him. His company was swinging along, twenty

abreast, when they one day encountered a fence that had only a narrow opening for passage. Immediately the captain realized his quandary — he did not know the proper military order that would bring his company *endwise*, so it might march in unbroken line through the gate. Captain Lincoln thought rapidly, then sang out, —

"Halt! This company will break ranks for two minutes and form again on the other side of the gate!"

We have but one serious, almost tragic, episode to record of Lincoln's captaincy. Into the camp wandered an old Indian, and although he bore a letter from General Cass proving him a neutral, the men of the company were all for killing him. Fortunately, Captain Lincoln was close at hand to reason with the angry, thoughtless fellows. Even then, some of them persisted in their dastardly design. In overpowering rage, Lincoln swore that if they carried out their purpose it would be after they had killed him. His men had never before seen their genial leader angry, and they knew, furthermore, that he meant every word he said. Sullenly they gave way to his authority.

Many of the first volunteers were heartily sick of the fruitless chase after Black Hawk, and, by the end of May, were mustered out. Among them

were a number of Lincoln's company which, in consequence, was disbanded. Lincoln reënlisted as a private under Captain Elijah Iles, in the "Independent Spy Battalion," a unique body of men privileged to "draw rations as often as they pleased." It is of historic interest to note that Lieutenant Robert Anderson mustered in Lincoln on this occasion; almost thirty years later Anderson was to be in command of Fort Sumter when fired upon, awaiting the word of Lincoln which should decide the fate of the nation.

For about six weeks Captain Iles and his battalion were variously engaged in hunting down the wily enemy, but all they found were trails and traces of the Indians and frightened women and children. The middle of June saw the Independent Spy Battalion back in Dixon and mustered out. Again, on June 20, Lincoln was mustered in, this time as member of a company under Captain Jacob M. Early.

Black Hawk was now at his worst. Early's company, with a brigade, was sent northwest in pursuit of the ravaging redmen. On this expedition Lincoln came nearest to real conflict, his company arriving at a place immediately after the massacre of a handful of settlers. An actual fray he did not experience, but he saw hard service.

Rejoining the main army after their scouting, Lincoln with his companions-at-arms had arduous reconnoitering to perform, through swamps and thick forests, in what was then known as Michigan Territory. Exhausted, out of provisions, the men of Early's command were disbanded on July 10, three weeks before the Battle of Bad Axe, which ended the sorry "war" with almost complete annihilation of the foolish Sacs.

Out of the ranks, Lincoln found himself in the town of Whitewater, Michigan Territory, more than two hundred miles from home. The horse that he had acquired as a member of the Spy Battalion was stolen the night before the start was made for New Salem. From Whitewater to Peoria was a long trek, but he and another unlucky messmate began the journey afoot. Now and then they were given a lift. At Peoria, Abe and his friend bought a canoe, paddled to a town called Havana, and thence walked home.

Lincoln arrived at New Salem about ten days before election, in August. He plunged into the political campaign with zest. Little as was the time left him, he made the most of it, and from box-top and wagon-end delivered speeches to the men of Sangamon County, declaring himself a stanch Whig. This required courage in the face

of the fact that the region was thoroughly Democratic.

At a village named Pappsville there started a free-for-all fight in the midst of a speech. From his platform Lincoln noted that one of his supporters was being badly pommeled, so he promptly jumped down into the fracas. One who witnessed Abe's headway in the mêlée vowed that he threw an enemy fully ten, and perhaps fifteen, feet away. Having displayed his muscle to the chagrin of his foe, Abe again mounted the speaker's stand and wound up his address in the following picturesque fashion: —

"Fellow-citizens: I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by my many friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same."

August 6 was Election Day. Lincoln was defeated for office — the only time in his career he suffered defeat on a direct vote of the people. There was consolation, however, in knowing that out of eight unsuccessful candidates, five received

fewer votes than himself. As for his own precinct, he made a clean sweep, all but seven out of two hundred and eighty-four votes being cast for him; and this was no mean triumph for a comparative stranger in a Democratic community.

Political defeat left him pretty well stranded. What would he do for a living? Some one suggested that he become a blacksmith, and he seriously debated the idea with himself. But his mind turned instinctively to occupation in a store, and there were no less than four of them in New Salem; but, alas, they needed customers more than clerks.

Extraordinary as it may seem, in the face of his problems and his poverty, Lincoln resolved to buy a store as the way out of his troubles!

CHAPTER VIII

Storekeeper and Surveyor

Two brothers by the name of Herndon kept one of the "general stores" in New Salem. One sold out his interest to a fellow-townsman, William Berry, and the other brother followed his example, making over his share of the business to Abe Lincoln. Not a cent of real money was needed in the deal, a promissory note being all that was required. And in the same manner the new firm of Lincoln & Berry acquired the stock and good will of two other New Salem storekeepers. Business methods were extremely free and easy in those days.

Even the feat of combining the three stores into one did not bring prosperity to the young merchants. Trade was dull. Lincoln, as might be expected, gave himself up to the joys of reading and study. Stray customers would find him, book in hand, stretched out beneath a tree, moving his body around with the shifting of the shade; sometimes his long legs were up the trunk of the tree.

Or, he would be discovered sprawled on the store counter, absorbed in a volume. Less intellectual and ambitious, Berry, the senior partner, devoted his time to drinking their wet goods, always an important item of the grocer's stock in the pioneer period. The best thing that the store brought Lincoln came in an old barrel, and he related the incident as follows: —

"One day a man who was migrating to the West drove up in front of my store with a wagon which contained his family and household plunder. He asked me if I would buy an old barrel for which he had no room in his wagon, and which he said contained nothing of special value. I did not want it, but to oblige him I bought it, and paid him, I think, half a dollar for it. Without further examination I put it away in the store, and forgot all about it. Some time after, in overhauling things, I came upon the barrel, and emptying it upon the floor to see what it contained, I found at the bottom of the rubbish a complete edition of Blackstone's 'Commentaries.' I began to read those famous works, and I had plenty of time; for during the long summer days, when the farmers were busy with their crops, my customers were few and far between. The more I read the more intensely interested I became. Never in my

whole life was my mind so thoroughly absorbed. I read until I devoured them."

These law classics were literally his constant companions, and even in company he had one of them ready for a few minutes' communion in case the talk grew tiresome. At odd intervals Abe would leave the store to work for some one needing help. It is told that upon one of these occasions the farmer who had employed him found Abe sitting on top of a woodpile with his nose buried in a book.

"What's that you're readin'?" asked the astounded man.

"I'm not reading," Abe replied, "I'm studying."

"Studyin' what?" persisted the farmer, still more amazed.

"Law, sir," came the cool rejoinder.

The farmer expressed his astonishment in strong language, and it may be inferred that he soon sought a less studious helper!

It was in these days, too, that Lincoln first came to know aught of the bard Shakespeare, and the Scotch poet, Burns. A town "character," Jack Kelso, was given to declaiming passages from these authors, as he performed sundry jobs or fished in the Sangamon. Abe grew fond of listening to Kelso, and frequented his society.

On May 7, 1833, Abe Lincoln was appointed postmaster of New Salem, an office too insignificant for any Democratic jealousy. Abe entered upon his duties with zest, for among his privileges was that of opening and reading all newspapers passing through the mail. To him, this alone was sufficient payment. Letters were few, the postal rates being beyond the ordinary purse, and the delivery of mail being slow and uncertain. It has been said that Lincoln kept the New Salem post office in his hat; he used to carry letters about in that fashion, at any rate, and meeting an acquaintance would often doff his hat and hand over mail. Indeed, keeping things in his hat became, in time, a habit peculiar to Abe, and later on in life he stowed memoranda in this unusual receptacle, to the despair of his associates.

In connection with his office of postmaster, a story is related that illustrates the almost fanatic honesty of his nature. Years after he had given up the office, an agent of the Federal government called on him for an accounting of some seventeen dollars that had never been turned in. At this request, Abe rose from his chair, went over to a little trunk, and poking around in it at last lifted out what looked like an old blue sock. It contained the government money to a penny. With

a whimsical smile he handed it over, and said to the puzzled official, —

"I never use any man's money but my own."

He had kept the money untouched through years of scrimping and penury.

During the summer of 1833 the Lincoln-Berry establishment slumped more and more, and Abe let it be known that he was willing to take any sort of work within his ability. Now, at last, Dame Fortune seemed to smile by sending an opportunity his way, in which he might assist the county surveyor, John Calhoun, who was fairly swamped by orders and petitions to lay out towns, map roads, and plot farms.

Everybody was speculating in land. A boom was in full swing. Calhoun needed a helper the worst way. Hearing of the talents of Lincoln, he decided that the merchant-postmaster was just the sort of man he wanted, provided he could master the requisite knowledge for surveying. Through a friend, Pollard Simmons, he sent word to Lincoln. It was late autumn. Simmons found Abe in the woods splitting rails, one of his most familiar tasks. The glad prospect was laid before Abe, but he had some suspicion of the offer inasmuch as Calhoun was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, while Lincoln himself was just as ardent a

Whig. Not until he was convinced that all was aboveboard — that he would not have to change his political faith — did Abe agree to entertain the proposition.

That he knew nothing at all of surveying failed to daunt him. Calhoun told him the principal things he ought to study and lent him a book that would give him the necessary rudiments of the science. Day and night Abe applied himself, and in moments of perplexity sought his old friend, Schoolmaster Graham, to unravel a knotty problem. So intense and unremitting was his concentration that friends began to comment upon his haggard appearance. His health was failing, they thought. However, in six weeks he had mastered the subject sufficiently to report for work, to the astonishment of Calhoun. He was sent to the northwest section of the county, extant records showing him to have been busy there in January, 1834. Tradition has it that at first, being too poor to buy a surveyor's chain, he used a long, straightened grapevine with which to measure distances. Whether with grapevine or regular chain, Lincoln's surveys were famed for their accuracy. His salary was three dollars a day.

Even with this success he could not get very much ahead financially, the store acting as a

millstone around his neck. Left to the mercy of Berry, the grocery-tavern went from bad to worse. Early in 1834 two brothers, Alexander and William Trent, offered to take over the store. A dicker was made. As was usual, the Trents gave promissory notes. But even by so shadowy a contract, Lincoln and Berry were vastly relieved.

Their relief was short-lived. When the business continued to lag and creditors grew impatient, the Trent brothers promptly disappeared, jumped the county, leaving Lincoln and Berry to face the music! To make matters worse, Berry reached the end of his dissipations by suddenly dying. On Abe fell the full weight of debt, and he shouldered the burden without even a whimper. It was a common practice in those days to "clear out" before such a fate overtook you. Denton Offutt had done so, the Trents did likewise. But Abe's code of honor was different from theirs, and he assumed all responsibilities.

"That debt," he subsequently confessed, "was the greatest obstacle I have ever met in my life; I had no way of speculating, and could not earn money except by labor, and to earn by labor eleven hundred dollars, besides my living, seemed the work of a lifetime. There was, however, but one way. I went to the creditors, and told them that

if they would let me alone, I would give them all I could earn over my living, as fast as I could earn it."

Clearing himself proved a difficult and slow process, and for fifteen years he was paying what he quaintly called "the national debt." And there was only one instance of an impatient creditor. This was a man who sued him, and Lincoln's horse, saddle, and bridle, together with his surveying instruments, were seized and sold. Always rich in friends, one of them now came forward, bought the surveyor's trappings, and returned them to him. Pleasant to record, some thirty years later, when President, Lincoln remembered this kindness of his benefactor, then in hard straits, by appointing him an Indian agent, thereby saving him from the poorhouse.

Through all his cares and struggles, Abe made and kept friends. He was magnetic, sympathetic, and alert to help any one in distress. As postmaster, he shared the joys and woes of the various families he served. As a surveyor, traveling to distant points, he brought news and cheer to lonely lives. If a widow needed a strong arm to chop wood, or a little help with her harvest, it was Abe Lincoln who offered himself. If a browbeaten fellow needed a champion, Lincoln stood ready. If

the inn at which he stopped was overcrowded, Abe gave up his bed and went to sleep on the counter of his store, his pillow a web of calico. Indeed, he was known to rock a cradle for a harassed housewife while she prepared supper.

CHAPTER IX

A Heavy Blow

After his store had "winked out," to use his own expression, Abe felt freer to pursue his surveying, his post-office duties, and his reading of Blackstone. Most important, though, was his determination to run for the legislature in the forthcoming election of August, 1834. Spring and summer were spent in canvassing. The usual speeches were demanded as a matter of course, but the campaign was more of a hand-shaking ceremony than anything else. Supporters were often gained by physical exhibition. Men admired a candidate with muscle and nerve. So it became Lincoln's task to lift weights, wrestle and throw some husky backwoodsman, or to show the farmers how much grain he could cut at a stroke. Once, to please a crowd, he lifted, by means of a harness fitted to his body, a box of stones weighing a thousand pounds or more.

Suffice it to say, Lincoln was elected to the legislature. The four successful candidates were:

Dawson (1390 votes); Lincoln (1376 votes); Carpenter (1170 votes); and Stuart (1164 votes). The last mentioned was Major John T. Stuart, a brilliant, rising young lawyer of Springfield, with whom Lincoln had become friendly during the days in the Spy Battalion, when both hunted the elusive Black Hawk. Major Stuart had encouraged Lincoln to enter the race for the legislature, and, furthermore, urged him to apply all his energies to the study of law, and lent him books to that end. Several New Salemites have left us their recollections of the tall student plodding back and forth between their town and Springfield, a distance of twenty miles, the books he had borrowed from Major Stuart open in his hands, his lips muttering passages he wished to retain.

Soon the ungainly plodder was able to accommodate the natives when they desired deeds, contracts, or other legal papers drawn. Now and then he was called upon to act as a kind of amateur advocate for some litigant before the village squire, a certain Mr. Bowling Green, a man who highly esteemed the young law aspirant.

On December 1, 1834, the session of the legislature was called, and Lincoln was due at the capital of the state, a town called Vandalia. Despite his surveying jobs and the post office pittance,

Abe discovered to his dismay that he had no money to clothe himself suitably. Another debt was contracted. He borrowed two hundred dollars from Coleman Smoot, an admiring friend, which sum was duly paid back. Vandalia was about seventy-five miles southeast of New Salem, and clad in fine raiment and new dignity, Lincoln set out to assume a rôle in government. Part of the way he rode, most of it he walked.

The capital had a population of eight hundred souls, a far larger center than Lincoln had ever lived in. There was a brick courthouse, three taverns, a land office, and two newspapers. Among the inhabitants were lawyers, physicians, and a number of eminent Illinois politicians. The courthouse had square pillars and a belfry. Its furnishings were plain wooden desks and benches. The men who met there to make laws were for the most part plain in dress and speech. Jean suits, one of which Lincoln wore, were in the majority. Three dollars a day was the salary paid the representatives.

During this first winter of legislative life, little was done by Lincoln save to get acquainted with his associates. Among them was one destined to play a big part in the career of Abraham Lincoln; this was Stephen A. Douglas, a youth four years

the junior of Lincoln, who had left his native state of Vermont to seek his fortune in the growing West. When Lincoln met him, Douglas was a Democratic candidate for the office of State Attorney for the first judicial district of Illinois. He was short and slim, which led Lincoln to declare that Douglas was "the least man" he ever saw.

This Ninth Assembly undertook vast projects; it chartered a new State Bank, revived another, and voted to authorize a loan of half a million dollars to complete the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which had been begun. The state was booming, everybody said, therefore her credit was good enough to warrant such expense. Eastern capital was counted on. With his fellow-legislators, Lincoln favored these extravagant measures, and Illinois entered a period of financial juggling that was almost to ruin it.

In the early spring of 1835 our New Salem statesman returned home to resume his surveying, his study of law, and the post-office duties. But uppermost in his mind was quite another matter. He had fallen in love with sweet Ann Rutledge, a New Salem belle, and intended asking her to be his wife. Between his surveying commissions and his prospects in politics and law, Lincoln felt that he was in a position to ask the girl of his heart to share his lot.

The Rutledges were of the South Carolina family and had a proud ancestry. James Rutledge, the father of Ann, was a founder of New Salem; also, he kept the tavern at which Lincoln for a time lived. There Ann and Abe had been thrown much in each other's company, and evidently the young man interested the girl in the study of English, for on the flyleaf of Kirkham's Grammar, in Lincoln's handwriting, is inscribed, "Ann M. Rutledge is now studying grammar."

But when Lincoln became acquainted with Ann she was engaged to another, one calling himself John McNeill, from New York. He was a successful merchant and owned a farm in the region. He had wanted to marry Ann when she was only seventeen, but her parents persuaded the young people to wait. At this stage of affairs McNeill grew restless. In confidence he told Ann that he was going back east for his mother and father and would return. Then he told her a great secret — he had been living under an assumed name, for he was really John McNamar. When he had left New Salem, Ann brooded over his revelations, and when his letters became less frequent and finally stopped altogether, she doubted her absent lover. Learning the circumstances, her mother and father and friends denounced McNamar.

Lincoln's heart went out to Ann in her grief. Being held free of any vow to the runaway McNamar, Abe told the girl of his own love, but she was silent, still thinking that the absent lover might be loyal. At length she yielded so far as to promise a decision when Abe should come back from Vandalia.

McNamar had been away a whole year now. Upon his return to New Salem from the capital Abe sought Ann and renewed his suit. She consented to become his wife in the following spring. Meanwhile, she would attend an academy to make herself fit to be the wife of a lawmaker, and Lincoln would fit himself for admission to the Illinois bar.

Whether from secret grief and worry over the vanished McNamar or because of her delicate constitution, Ann faded day by day like a plucked flower, and died on August 25, 1835. Her death had a terrible effect on the mind of Lincoln. That singular streak of melancholy in his nature threatened to upset his reason. He avoided his friends for the most part and preferred the companionship of the river and woods. Finally, the good old squire, Bowling Green, fearing that his favorite would go crazy, induced Abe to leave the tragic scene and spend a few weeks at his home

outside of New Salem. Here Abe regained his wonted composure, though many of his friends declared that the death of Ann Rutledge left an indelible stamp of sadness on his face and in his heart. And according to tradition, it was from this event that sprang Lincoln's extraordinary fondness for melancholy poetry, especially the verses, "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud!" to which his preference has given enduring fame.

CHAPTER X

Lincoln as Legislator

Back to Vandalia Lincoln went in December to attend an extra session of the legislature which was called to consider increase of members. Growth of population in Illinois was held to warrant the addition of fifty members. After this question and the all-absorbing one of internal improvements, the rise of the convention system was bitterly argued. Hitherto, a candidate had simply to announce himself for whatever office he fancied and conduct his campaign independently. Now, however, the Democrats were introducing the party "machine"; that is, the organization choosing its candidates and uniting upon them. The Whigs denounced the convention system as a Yankee "contraption" directed against the liberties of the people. But eventually the Whigs came to accept the new order.

Following the old method, Lincoln, in June, 1836, announced himself as a candidate for the Tenth Assembly, his "platform" being presented in a

letter to the *Sangamon Journal.* Part of his declaration was as follows: —

"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 right 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."

Personal abuse and unusual excitement flavored the campaign of 1836. Sangamon County had been allotted nine members — seven representatives and two senators — in the reapportionment of the General Assembly of the previous December; and the fever of the political race appeared to increase in proportion. One of Lincoln's first acts in his canvass was to refute a newspaper attack, made by a rival who insinuated that if the truth were known about Lincoln, no decent citizen would vote for him. Abe wrote a public letter to his slanderer, imploring him to reveal the blasting truth. The letter never was answered.

Not always were attacks made under cover. Face to face on the platform, candidates frequently belabored each other with words and even blows. One day Lincoln had made an effective speech to an

enthusiastic crowd. In the audience, however, was a man named George Forquer who, having a reputation for sarcastic eloquence, took it upon himself to put the "smart" young fellow in his proper place. Forquer, it may be said, was a renegade Whig, and had gone over to the opposite camp because it gave him the lucrative position of Register of the Land Office. Incidentally, Forquer had put on his house the only lightning rod in the county. After this gentleman had taken the platform and done Lincoln to a turn, as he thought, Abe again faced the audience and made Forquer a laughingstock, crowning his reply with these words: —

"The gentleman commenced his speech by saying that this young man [Lincoln] would have to be taken down, and he was sorry the task devolved upon him. I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and trade of a politician; but live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, change my politics and, simultaneously with the change, receive an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then have to erect a lightning rod over my house to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God!"

It won the crowd, and Lincoln was borne out of the courthouse upon the shoulders of delighted

friends. That happy allusion to the lightning rod went from mouth to mouth. The dullest settler could appreciate its point.

Election was in August, and the nine men chosen to represent Sangamon County in the legislature became famous in the history of Illinois. Lincoln, of course, was one of them. Each of the men was six feet or more in height, their combined stature being fifty-five feet. Hence, they were promptly nicknamed "The Long Nine."

Lincoln journeyed to Springfield in early September and sought admission to the bar, and in October he made his first appearance in court. But there were more calls for the surveyor than the lawyer. The wave of internal improvements brought him plenty of commissions. Many were his chances to speculate in land, as every one else appeared to be doing, but he gave no heed to the lure of get-rich-quick voices. Lincoln was unlike another surveyor who had grown rich on "inside information," and to whom he remarked, "I am told, sir, you are *monarch of all you survey!*"

The Tenth Assembly claimed his time in December, 1836. It was a gathering of notable men, many of them destined to fill distinguished rôles in the future government of the country. At that time, however, all were concerned with the

immediate prospects of Illinois. Railroads, canals, and river improvements were voted for with lavish hand. Twelve million dollars were appropriated to meet expenses, and a commission was appointed to sell bonds of the state, to finance these gigantic schemes. All over the United States the same madness prevailed. Reaction was to follow in a terrible panic.

Sharing in the general enthusiasm for spending money before it was in hand, Lincoln regularly voted in favor of all "improvements." But his particular task was to secure the removal of the capital to Springfield. Vandalia was considered too far away from the real center of growing population. Many towns desired to be chosen the new capital, and jealously fought for the honor, but the "Long Nine of Sangamon" counted on Lincoln to have Springfield awarded the prize. Their faith was not misplaced. Lincoln won out, though it brought down a storm of criticism and censure upon him and the Long Nine. To this abuse Lincoln replied, using all his powers of ridicule, and his opponents were glad to retire.

Altogether, Lincoln's most significant act in the Tenth Assembly was in connection with slavery. Abolition agitation at this time was alarming the South. Slavery was not forbidden by the Consti-

tution of the United States, the Southerners claimed, and many Northerners agreed with them, that the black race should remain chattels. On the other hand, there were thousands in the North who contended that the "peculiar institution," as slavery was politely termed, should be wiped out. Riots and public violence occurred in many places because of this difference of opinion.

The Tenth Assembly, at Vandalia, felt called upon to pass resolutions, on March 3, 1837, to the effect: "That we highly disapprove of the formation of Abolition societies, and of the doctrines promulgated by them. . . . That the right of property in slaves is sacred to the slave-holding States by the Federal Constitution, and that they cannot be deprived of that right without their consent."

Lincoln declined to support these sentiments without modification, and so he drew up a set of resolutions of his own, protesting against the Assembly's willing acceptance of the "peculiar institution." There was only one other man among the legislators who would sign the document. He was Dan Stone, one of the Long Nine. The vital difference between the original resolution and the protest penned by Lincoln lay in the phrase, "They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy."

Courage of a high order was required for a young representative to express such bold conviction, to be willing to go on public record as against the majority; but Lincoln's conscience would not permit him to dodge or evade an issue. He had said to John Hanks that he would hit slavery if he ever got the chance, and here was his first blow.

His stand in this matter did not injure him in the estimate of his associates. On the contrary, at the series of festive political suppers which were the order of the day, Lincoln was fêted and toasted as much as anybody. Two of the toasts were, "Abraham Lincoln, one of Nature's noblemen"; and "Abraham Lincoln; he has fulfilled the expectations of his friends and disappointed the hopes of his enemies."

When that session of the Assembly was over, Lincoln returned to New Salem for the last time, for he had decided to move to the new capital, Springfield, and launch upon his law career in earnest. Major Stuart had offered him partnership, and another friend invited him to take a place at his table and eat with the family just as long as he wanted to. Lincoln, as may be imagined, was still as poor as a church mouse, still burdened with debt, and casting his lot with Major Stuart meant giving up his three dollars a day as surveyor. Well, he would risk it.

His advent in Springfield illustrates his poverty with a smile and a tear. He rode into the town on a borrowed horse, his worldly goods a pair of saddle-bags and his whole wardrobe therein. Stopping in the general store kept by Joshua Speed, he inquired the price of a single bed, together with mattress, sheets, etc. The merchant figured the full cost at seventeen dollars. Cheap enough, Lincoln affirmed, but not so cheap that he could afford it. He took Speed into his confidence, and asked him if he would credit him until Christmas. "If I fail in this," he said sadly, referring to his hopes of the law, "I don't know that I can ever pay you."

Joshua Speed looked at the speaker and thought that he had never seen a more melancholy face. His heart was touched, and the stranger appealed to him in an irresistible way.

"You seem to be so much pained at contracting so small a debt," ventured the kindly storekeeper, "I think I can suggest a plan by which you can avoid the debt, and at the same time attain your end. I have a large room with a double bed upstairs, which you are very welcome to share with me."

"Where is your room?" asked Abe, brightening.

"Upstairs," said Speed, pointing out the stairway.

Grasping his saddlebags, Lincoln mounted the stairs, and threw his possessions on the floor. He came down to Speed beaming with pleasure.

"Well, Speed," he exclaimed, "I am moved!"

From that day dated the closest friendship that Abraham Lincoln ever made with a man, for Joshua Speed, generous and hospitable, won a place in the heart of Abraham Lincoln that makes his name beloved to this day by all of us.

CHAPTER XI

An Interrupted Courtship

"There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here," wrote Lincoln to Mary Owens in 1837, after he had been settled a short time in Springfield. Miss Owens was another Kentucky belle in whom he had become interested. Though he never could forget Ann Rutledge, he was attracted to the fair sex. If his love affair with Ann was a tragedy, then his acquaintance with Mary Owens might be termed a comedy. Mary was well off and used to the good things of the world, and Abe feared that his poverty would never do for her to share. But after many odd letters, in which he warned her against sharing his lot, he proposed marriage. Gently, firmly, she refused him. Being lukewarm, to her he was "deficient in those little links which make up the chain of a woman's happiness." He was mortified at her refusal, despite his half-hearted wooing.

Law duties and "Long Nine" interests, however, kept him from brooding over his foolish courtship.

Major Stuart, his partner, was too taken up with politics to pay much attention to law practice, therefore Lincoln had every opportunity to try his powers. There were not many cases, and those that did come along amounted to little. When they promised fat fees, Lincoln would refuse to take full due, contenting himself with a minimum return for his services. He became widely known for this unheard-of characteristic among the legal fraternity, and the nickname "Honest Abe" acquired new significance.

One of his early cases created a sensation. A widow claimed that a prominent politician, General James Adams, was endeavoring to cheat her out of a parcel of land by means of a forged document. Lincoln brought the case to court, proved the general to be a rascal, and won for the widow. The *Sangamon Journal* and the *Springfield Republican* were full of the notorious suit. General Adams made a fierce bluster of denial in and out of court, but he was found guilty. Lincoln as victor was given flattering publicity.

Out of politics he could not keep, and in 1838 again offered himself as a candidate for the Assembly. The Whigs counted on him, while his Democratic rivals began to fear his unfailing logic and humor, his powerful sincerity. Also, his clever

handling of opposing speakers was disconcerting, as the following story illustrates.

Colonel Dick Taylor, an influential Democrat, was "stumping it," as they sometimes described the canvassing for votes, and he and Lincoln met one afternoon in debate. It was then the fashion among Democratic orators to tell audiences how simple and humble they were in comparison to the Whigs. They prided themselves on being "plain folks." But look at the Whigs! these eloquent sons of simplicity would exclaim. Look at their airs and elegance!

Unfortunately for him, Colonel Taylor was fond of arraying himself in princely clothes, wearing ruffled shirts, velvet waistcoats, and conspicuous jewelry. On the platform, however, the colonel was careful to wear a long, all-concealing coat over his gaudy apparel.

Meeting Lincoln that memorable day, Taylor launched the usual tirade at the foppery and snobbery of the Whigs. His present opponent certainly did not look the part in his shabby jeans, but the colonel went on unabashed. Lincoln listened quietly. When it came his turn to reply, he stepped quickly beside the Democratic apostle of ruggedness and deftly flung open his enveloping coat; there stood the colonel, a living, glittering

contradiction to everything he had said! Lincoln need not have uttered a word, for the lesson was obvious, but "Honest Abe" permitted himself a few trenchant remarks.

Next to his hatred of shams was Lincoln's love of a square deal, as has been already noted. In this campaign he indulged in a spectacular act to assist a valued friend of his, Mr. E. D. Baker. The Springfield courtroom was for the time being located under the offices of Stuart & Lincoln. Heated arguments were in progress there one night when the crowd, angered by something he had said, began roughly pulling Baker from the platform. Upstairs, Lincoln had overheard everything. At this crisis he opened a trapdoor in the floor and suddenly shot through it into the midst of the riotous throng. Lining himself up with Baker, the visitor from the ceiling said, —

"Hold on, gentlemen! This is a land of free speech."

With a few sensible words backed up by a fighting attitude Lincoln quieted the crowd, and Baker resumed his argument.

Stephen A. Douglas was in the middle of the limelight about this time. His rise had been extraordinarily rapid, and now he was nominated for Congress on the Democratic ticket. Major John

T. Stuart, Lincoln's law partner, was his Whig opponent. Five months of whirlwind campaigning through the northern half of Illinois returned Stuart to Congress, by a bare majority of fourteen votes. Of course, Douglas was sorely disappointed, but in secret cherished the hope of one day going to Washington.

This election of 1838 returned Lincoln to the legislature where, whatever his work, he did nothing of particular importance. The state had just passed through the blackness of panic and hard times, and her former generous representatives were mourning the folly of their sanguine, unbalanced "appropriations."

Lincoln's reputation as a public speaker was growing. As early as 1837 he had been invited to address the "Young Men's Lyceum" of Springfield, and had chosen our political institutions for his subject. In December, 1839, there was a series of public discussions in Springfield which grew out of an argument between Douglas and Lincoln. There were eight evenings of debate, four Democrats and four Whigs pitted against one another, each having an evening to speak, alternately. Lincoln came last on the list, but he was acclaimed the best. There was a demand for printed copies of his address, in which he remorselessly picked to

pieces the statements made by Douglas in defense of the Van Buren administration. It might be said to be the opening bout of the war of words that the two men were to wage, off and on, for a period of twenty years.

The election of 1840 was for president, and as one of the presidential electors, Lincoln threw himself earnestly into the campaign which, perhaps, was the most hilarious in our history. Harrison was the Whig candidate, and being a true son of the common people, an Indian fighter of fame, his followers adopted a humble symbol — the log cabin. Monster celebrations were held throughout Illinois, and in June one occurred in Springfield at which were gathered about twenty thousand people. One of the log cabins drawn there on a float took thirty yoke of oxen to pull it! Lincoln made a speech to the throng, standing in a wagon, and his usual fund of yarns and sound sense won much laughter and applause.

Welcome as was Lincoln in political gatherings, he proved no less welcome in the social circles of Springfield. Uncouth he might appear, but he was ever entertaining and diverting, especially to the men. With the ladies he was never so easy, felt awkward and bashful, yet he was a favorite. Miss Mary Todd, a proud and brilliant girl from

Kentucky, showed marked preference for the society of the homely railsplitter. She appeared to possess prophetic power in seeing the young man's future, and gave it as her opinion that he would achieve great heights. Many of the finest fellows in town paid court to the clever and beautiful Kentucky girl, among them Stephen A. Douglas, but none of them could hope to rival Lincoln in her interest and affection. The sequence was that some time in 1840 the two became engaged, and the wedding day was set for the first of the following January.

But before that date Lincoln had come to the harrowing conclusion that Mary Todd and he were unfitted to each other. She loved the gay social round and plenty of attention. He cared little or nothing for the fritterings of "society," and was often thoughtless of his fiancée's preferences and tastes. Misunderstandings and quarrels were the outcome. Lincoln grew miserable, and his dreaded melancholy moods marked him for all to see. Unable to stand the mental torture longer, he decided that the best thing for them both would be separation. Their engagement was broken. That did not mend matters. If anything, Lincoln was more morose than ever. Despair seized him. He thought his mind was weakening. Gossip was agog

with this nine-days' wonder. Writing to his friend Stuart, he said,

"I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth."

That was the way he felt in January, after the break with Mary Todd, but the situation was to brighten. His friend Joshua Speed, then removed to Louisville, invited Lincoln to visit him in the summer, an invitation he accepted. Lincoln could unbosom himself to Speed, and found in him the understanding and sympathy he craved; the unhappy lover returned to Springfield in a more cheerful frame of mind.

A few months later interested friends brought the parted sweethearts together, and their renewed intercourse was lightened by a humorous prank they indulged at the expense of a hot-headed Irishman, James Shields, then the Democratic auditor of the state. Shields was a notorious dandy, seeking the admiration of the ladies, preening himself like a fat pigeon before them. Miss Todd and a chum of hers thought it would be a lark to take him down a peg.

Now taxes had been forbidden to be paid in state bank notes, to the anger and disgust of the Whigs,

and on this Democratic obliquity the gallant auditor was attacked in a Springfield paper by the two girls and Lincoln, who signed their effusions "Aunt Rebecca." Written in racy dialect, "Aunt Rebecca" complained of her useless bank notes, and held the state auditor up to ridicule. Finally, after berating him soundly, the imaginary old scold proposed that Shields should marry her.

The auditor was furious at being made the butt of the county. Enraged, he demanded of the editor of the paper that he reveal the identity of the waspish correspondent. Lincoln came forward and took the blame, saying nothing of the girls, who had really started the teapot tempest. Shields thereupon wrote Lincoln a letter hotly demanding instant apology, and threatening dire consequences should he not humble himself sufficiently. Lincoln coolly reminded his fire-eating antagonist that he assumed too much. At this, Shields challenged him to a duel!

Choice of weapons was given Lincoln as the challenged party. He chose *cavalry broadswords of the largest size*, and also insisted upon absurd conditions to govern the encounter. Auditor Shields was a little, pudgy man, and one can fancy what chance he would have against the six-foot-four Lincoln brandishing a big broadsword. An eyewitness of

the "duel" recalled that Abe solemnly drew his sword from its scabbard, felt its edge carefully, then suddenly lopped off a tree twig from an incredible height. That is about as far as the farcical fight went, for peace-making friends arrived in haste to settle matters without further flourish of saber.

Whether this "Aunt Rebecca" affair and the Lincoln-Shields duel brought it about or not would be hard to say, but they doubtless played a good part in bringing about a fresh betrothal. Quietly, without previous preparation or announcement, Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln were married on November 4, 1842, at the home of the bride's uncle. Soon after, Lincoln and his wife went to live at the Globe Tavern, securing board at four dollars a week, and there they continued to reside until Lincoln purchased a house in 1844.

CHAPTER XII

Congressional Experiences

With his marriage Lincoln was spurred to greater endeavor. For eight years he had served in the Illinois legislature continuously, and it was about time to seek higher office. His friends, knowing his desire, offered to back him for governor of the state. This honor he declined. Instead, he let it be known that he would like to be sent to Washington as congressman. Political wheels were set in motion in 1842 to that end, but the Sangamon Whigs decided to make Edward D. Baker their candidate. Swallowing his own disappointment, Lincoln loyally supported his friend. However, when the convention assembled in May, 1843, John J. Hardin proved to be the favorite of the state's candidates for Congress. Baker, seeing how matters lay, rose and declined the candidacy, making a stirring speech to the convention. Hardin was thereupon elected, but not before Lincoln had come forward with an extraordinary resolution which recommended Baker for the next term in Congress.

Unheard of as was this proceeding, the resolution was carried.

In the campaign of 1844 Lincoln was a presidential elector and espoused the election of Henry Clay with enthusiasm. The wonderfully gifted orator of Kentucky had been Abe's idol from childhood, one might say, and so he pitched headlong into the political battle for him, speaking in Indiana as well as Illinois. He revisited the old scenes of Gentryville and delivered an address to former neighbors and friends. All the familiar spots and kindly faces aroused deep emotion in his breast, and he afterwards tried to express his feelings in a poem.

It is of historic moment to know that in this 1844 campaign Lincoln had to deal with the ever smoldering fires of slavery. The question of the annexation of Texas was at issue before the country. Clay and the Whigs opposed the move, arguing that it would be unfair to Mexico and would tend to bring on war with that nation. Furthermore, they said, it would surely increase territory for slavery, a condition that the North especially feared and fought. But the South wanted Texas and exerted every effort to have it annexed. And the South had its way.

Both Hardin and Baker having had a term in Congress, Lincoln felt it only his due in 1846, and

accordingly became a candidate. His rival on the Democratic ticket was Peter Cartwright, an old Methodist preacher of renown, whose son Lincoln was to save from the gallows. Lincoln was elected by a surprising majority, and in November, 1847, he took his seat in the National Congress.

Many celebrated men were in Washington at that time, and Lincoln was most eager to see and meet them. Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun were thundering in the halls of state. John Quincy Adams was there, the patriarch of the statesmen. Among others were James Buchanan, Thomas H. Benton, Andrew Johnson, Alexander H. Stephens, and Jefferson Davis. Also, Douglas was in Washington, having just achieved his ambition of becoming Democratic senator from Illinois.

During his first weeks in Congress that winter Lincoln did little save take in everything that was said and done. He lived quietly at a small boarding house. But, as usual, he soon was remarked for his quaint mannerisms and witty yarns. Oddly enough, he appeared to enjoy thoroughly the social side of Washington life, attending balls, breakfasts, and banquets. Bowling was one of his favorite pastimes. There are many recollections of him at this period, but perhaps more characteristic than any is that in which Lincoln is described as carry-

ing books from the library in a large bandanna handkerchief, the bundle slung over his shoulder at the end of a stick.

The United States was at war with Mexico at that time, and the Whigs were violently opposed to it. President Polk wished that party to sanction and second his declaration of hostility, to declare it just and right. On December 22 Lincoln made his first notable speech in Congress, censuring the course of the Administration in beginning the war, holding it both unnecessary and unconstitutional. His address came to be known as the "Spot Resolutions," inasmuch as most of his remarks consisted of searching comments and questions regarding the exact spot where hostilities had begun, the whole war hinging on that point. In January, Lincoln delivered a telling defense of these "Spot Resolutions" in the face of overwhelming criticism. His inflexible attitude against the policy of Polk brought down upon his head the wrath of "war patriots." Even his home state frowned at his stand. Nevertheless, Lincoln was undaunted and unafraid, for he was convinced that his opposition to the Mexican War was based on moral right.

Zachary Taylor won national admiration and laudation for his military prowess in Mexico, and

on this wave of popularity he was nominated for president in the summer of 1848. "Old Rough and Ready," as Taylor was called, had no more ardent or eloquent supporter than Abe Lincoln who, in July, on the floor of Congress, made an ambitious speech praising the hoary warrior and ridiculing his Democratic rival, General Cass. The wit of Lincoln's remarks convulsed Congress, while his keen arguments struck home surely and forcibly. During the delivery of this speech it is told of him that he marched up and down the aisle of the House, making extraordinary gestures and striking still more extraordinary attitudes.

Many invitations were extended to him to address New England audiences, and after Congress adjourned he went on a lecture tour. Massachusetts led in the demand to hear him. Expecting entertainment, the people were surprised to receive enlightenment. For the first time Lincoln found himself in territory largely given over to anti-slavery folk, and he was impressed at the earnestness and fervor of their belief. When confronted with public inquiry as to his own convictions, Lincoln was always careful to steer a moderate course, declaring himself an enemy to the *extension* of slavery, but also declaring that he saw no way under the Constitution to abolish the institution

peacefully. Altogether, the campaign in these Northern states was a succession of triumphs for Lincoln. Leaving New England, he went to Albany, visited Niagara Falls, which fairly awed him, then sped homeward to Illinois, where he continued to make speeches for General Taylor, who was elected to the presidency in November.

One of the most important results of the Mexican War would be the acquisition of new territory for the United States, and the all-absorbing question before the nation was, Will slavery be permitted in it? The anti-slavery element of the North sought to forbid the spread of the evil through a bill known as the Wilmot Proviso. The South, of course, fought this restraining measure. Lincoln said he voted for the Wilmot Proviso at least forty times during his congressional term!

In the last half of his term Lincoln tried in still another fashion to deal a blow to slavery by having it abolished in the national capital. In the Lincoln-Stone protest of 1837 he had declared it his belief that the people of Washington had the right to forbid slavery in their city, if they chose to exercise the right through lawful proceedings. To stimulate the people into decisive action, Lincoln drew up a bill and presented it to Congress, January 16, 1849, urging the abolishment of slavery in the nation's

capital, "with the consent of the voters of the District and with compensation to owners."

What had impelled him more than anything else to take this bold step was a filthy slave-market within view of the Capitol windows. Lincoln described it as "a sort of negro livery stable, where droves of negroes were collected, temporarily kept, and finally taken to Southern markets, precisely like droves of horses."

This, perhaps his most noteworthy act while in Congress, caused quite a stir, but the feeling on the subject of slavery ran too high for any such interference as Lincoln suggested, mild and just as it was, so the bill died without ever being put before the House.

In March, 1849, his term expired. Frankly, he longed for further public service, and tried his best to secure the position of Commissioner of the General Land Office, giving eleven strong reasons why he should be appointed. Another applicant secured the place, much to Lincoln's chagrin. By way of consolation President Taylor offered him the governorship of Oregon Territory. But Mrs. Lincoln did not favor this and refused even to think of going so far out of the world.

Convinced that his political career was over, and sighing at the prospect, Lincoln determined

From the Collection of Americana of Frederick H. Meserve, New York.

THE LINCOLN HOME IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

to devote all his energies to law. He refused an advantageous proposition to become partner of a well-known Chicago lawyer, saying that his health would not withstand the grind of a big city practice, and returned to Springfield.

Reaching home, he set himself the task of acquiring more general education, for Washington society had shown him many shortcomings in his culture and fund of knowledge. Mathematics, astronomy, poetry, and other subjects were tackled in turn, and in his efforts at acquiring knowledge Lincoln went so far as to master the first six books of Euclid — an accomplishment that any one might envy.

Describing his life at this time, a writer who knew him has said: —

"He lived simply, comfortably, and respectably, with neither expensive tastes nor habits. His wants were few and simple. He occupied a small, unostentatious house in Springfield, and was in the habit of entertaining, in a very simple way, his friends and his brethren of the bar. . . . Mrs. Lincoln often entertained small numbers of friends at dinner and somewhat larger numbers at evening parties. In his modest and simple home everything was orderly and refined, and there was always, on the part of both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln,

a cordial and hearty Western welcome which put every guest at ease. Yet it was the humor, anecdote, and unrivaled conversation of the host which formed the chief attraction and made a dinner at Lincoln's cottage an event to be remembered."

CHAPTER XIII

Riding the Circuit

Up to now Lincoln had been pursuing his profession on and off for about thirteen years. Three partners had shared labors with him. Major Stuart had been succeeded by General Stephen T. Logan, who, in turn, was succeeded by William Herndon, the latter some nine years younger than Lincoln. During his four years' partnership with Stuart, Lincoln had gained but little headway. Less than two years with Logan, he learned a great deal, though Logan did not succeed in making him a technical lawyer; however, he did teach Lincoln many points in legal procedure.

Logan and Lincoln were each too independent and decided in character to get along well together. Aside from this, Lincoln was getting only a small share of the firm's profits; hence they separated. There is a good story of how Lincoln later on took advantage of his former partner in a suit when they were on opposing sides. Logan was dignified and methodical, but he had one failing — he was ex-

tremely careless in details of dress. For that matter, so was Lincoln, but that did not deter him on this memorable occasion from good-naturedly lampooning his old friend, who had just gravely addressed the court.

"Gentlemen," said Lincoln, addressing the jury, "you must be careful and not permit yourselves to be overborne by the eloquence of the counsel for the defense. Judge Logan, I know, is an effective lawyer. I have met him too often to doubt that; but shrewd and careful though he may be, still, he *is* sometimes wrong. Since this trial began I have discovered that, with all his caution and fastidiousness, he hasn't knowledge enough to put his shirt on right!"

Sure enough, Logan had on his shirt with its bosom to the back. Discomfited, he grew red as fire, while the court burst into laughter.

Most of the practice in those days was carried on in traveling about the country, the judges and lawyers going from county to county and holding court in various places. The seasons for this movable court of justice were spring and autumn. Illinois was divided into what was called judicial circuits. The particular territory which Lincoln covered was known as the "Eighth Judicial Circuit," and it embraced an area of about one hundred and fifty square miles. Railroads there were

none until 1854, and horses and rigs were used by the legal travelers. Lincoln acquired a horse and buggy described as "ramshackle." The remainder of his trappings were an old carpet bag and an ancient umbrella without a handle and tied up with string.

As the learned cavalcade went along the road it generally was noisy with mirth and singing. Innumerable stories were "swapped." Sometimes one of the fraternity performed upon the jew's-harp. Because he had such long legs, Lincoln was appointed advance agent to try the depth of streams to be crossed. Willingly he waded into the water for his friends, and they also noted other kindnesses of his. For instance, he once picked up two birdlings that had fallen from the nest and at great pains put them back. Questioned as to this quixotic act, Lincoln confessed that he could not have slept unless he had known the poor little things were safe with their mother. At another time he went even further in his charity and rescued a pig fallen into a boggy hole.

Reaching a county seat, it was customary for the legal company to put up at the town tavern and sleep two in a bed, three or four beds in a room! Quarters were close. All ate at the same table, sometimes lawyers, jurors, witnesses and prisoners

ranged around the one board. It was a strange order of things.

Judge David Davis, who presided over the Eighth Judicial Circuit, became an enthusiastic admirer of Lincoln. He enjoyed listening to the droll stories that Abe told endlessly, and he remarked the shrewdness and common sense of the gaunt entertainer. Judge Davis could not bear to miss anything Lincoln said, and showed singular irritation when he did. Not alone with the Judge was Lincoln so popular, but with the whole community in each stopping-place. As "Old Abe" or "Honest Old Abe," he was hailed far and near.

There was little variety in the cases tried on the circuit; land litigation, damages sought for injuries to cattle, and trials for assault made up the calendar. Lincoln's set policy was to avoid suit as much as possible, and he constantly advised clients to adjust matters outside of court. An amusing case of his points a moral. In vengeful anger a man came to Lincoln, demanding him to institute suit against a debtor for two dollars and a half. The debtor had nothing, not a cent to give. Lincoln tried to persuade the plaintiff to drop the matter, but his client persisted. Thereupon, the counsel said he would charge ten dollars as a retainer. His obstinate client paid. Secretly, Lincoln gave half

the money to the poor defendant, who then paid over the two dollars and a half for which he was sued, to the intense satisfaction of the plaintiff! This illustrates one of Lincoln's notes for a lecture on law which he jotted down in 1850: —

"Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the 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."

Lincoln saw very little of his Springfield office during the six months or more out of every year that he rode the circuit. He was almost the only one of the traveling court, except Judge Davis, that went the whole way round the fourteen counties, year after year. The gypsylike freedom of the life appealed to him, and those days of tiresome sojourn, uncomfortable sleeping quarters, and bad food, were happy ones.

Judge Davis liked and trusted Abraham Lincoln enough to appoint him to the bench when he, the judge, was forced to be absent. This was unusual, to say the least, but perhaps more extraordinary still was the manner in which Lincoln handled his privilege and authority, never incurring enmity

or complaint. Instinctively, Judge Davis felt the mastery of men which was latent in Lincoln's nature.

Records of his helpful strength and abounding good nature must, however, be balanced by that other side of his nature which would persist in popping out every little while. At these times he was the gravest, most reserved man in the company, silent, lost in faraway reflection. One of his fellow circuit riders has left this impression: "He [Lincoln] would frequently lapse into reverie and remain lost in thought long after the rest of us had retired for the night; and more than once I remember waking up early in the morning to find him sitting before the fire, his mind apparently concentrated on some subject, and with the saddest expression I have ever seen in a human being's eyes."

Gradually, Lincoln's ability as a lawyer became recognized by the general public of Illinois. As a jury lawyer and at trial work he was unexcelled. His deep knowledge of human nature, his wit, and his power to go to the heart of a matter were exceptional. Between 1849 and 1860, he tried more cases than any other lawyer on the Eighth Circuit. In 1853 the Illinois Central Railroad retained him as counsel, and subsequently he was legal adviser

to the Rock Island Road. Upon several occasions "Big Business" engaged him, all of which led to his pitting his brains against the best in the state, and public records show him victor over the cleverest legal talent in the region.

The worst disappointment of his career in the law was in a reaper patent case tried in Cincinnati. Brilliant lawyers were engaged on the opposing side and Lincoln felt it the opportunity of his lifetime to do battle with them. Almost at the last minute Lincoln's client grew afraid of the strong counsel ranged in opposition and decided to get some one more powerful than the "country lawyer" he had retained. Edwin M. Stanton, then a well-known barrister, was called in. Lincoln, after having prepared himself thoroughly in the case, had the matter taken out of his hands. To add to the injury, he overheard Stanton sarcastically exclaim, "Where did that long-armed creature come from and what can *he* expect to do in this case?"

A few years later "the long-armed creature" was to reward the insult by making Stanton his Secretary of War!

Before a jury Lincoln was at his best. No one in the state of Illinois could touch him there. A child could understand his arguments, grasp his proposition. With a sure sweep he brushed away

details and presented the vital points. Keen logic was his, and keener humor. Both he used effectively. He probably laughed more cases out of court than any other man who ever practiced at the bar, yet he could be dramatic and pathetic to an extreme degree. His case of an old woman, the widow of a Revolutionary soldier, against a pension shark, has been cited a thousand times. In his plea he described the sufferings of the soldiers at Valley Forge, dwelt on the sorrows and pitiable weakness of his aged client, then blazed away at the robber defendant who would take food out of the mouths of the helpless. The court was dissolved in tears. Of course, Lincoln won the day.

But one of his most celebrated cases had to do with the defense of William Armstrong, son of that Clary Grove champion whom Lincoln worsted that early day in New Salem. William was held for murder. There had been a brawl in which he and a crony had beaten a third fellow, the latter dying of his injuries. Norris, the crony, had been sentenced to eight years in prison. Hannah Armstrong, the mother of William, appealed to Lincoln to save her son. He was in desperate plight, and the law of Illinois would not allow him to testify in his own behalf.

Taking the case in hand, Lincoln managed the witnesses so adroitly that no damaging testimony was given until a man named Allen swore that he actually saw the prisoner deal the blow which killed the deceased — a blow dealt with a slung-shot, or a similar weapon.

Lincoln pressed this witness hard and got him to fix the hour of assault in which he saw all this so clearly at eleven o'clock at night. Seeing his advantage, Lincoln bade Allen inform the jury how he could see at that time of night.

"By the moonlight," said Allen without hesitation.

"Well, was there light enough to see everything that happened?" insisted the dogged cross-examiner.

Allen then described in detail where the moon was at that hour, and furthermore said he noted it was almost full.

Hardly were the words spoken when Lincoln produced a calendar and by it proved to the jury that the moon at the hour and date specified was only slightly past its first quarter and therefore could have afforded little or no light! From that dramatic moment on, Lincoln swept everything before him, obtaining an acquittal for the youth he once had rocked in his homely cradle while Hannah

Armstrong got supper ready. The grateful mother offered to pay her counsel for saving her son from the hangman's noose, but Lincoln smiled at the idea and gently refused any remuneration.

Besides his generosity with clients, and his insistence on small fees, Lincoln himself had to believe in the justice of a case in order to defend it well. Many were the cases he gave up voluntarily because he could not sanction the cause. As a money-maker he was the despair of partners and legal brothers. Avarice had no place in his nature. Wealth to him was, as he often said, "simply a superfluity of things we don't need."

CHAPTER XIV

The Great Debates

To quote Lincoln's words, "In 1854 his profession had almost superseded the thought of politics in his mind, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused him as he had never been before." This "Missouri Compromise" was a law passed by Congress in the year 1820, which admitted Missouri to the Union as a slave state, and forbade slavery in all other territory of the United States north of the latitude 36° 30′, which was the southern boundary line of Missouri. However, most of the vast tracts of land lying in what was then the undeveloped West, out of which states were to be organized in the future, were north of this line; and the South, fearing the power which would come to the North through the creation of such free states, desired the repeal of this Compromise.

Differences over the institution of slavery were almost as old as the nation; and for a half-century they had torn the sections with strife. Negro labor had become essential to the South in their

pursuit of agriculture, but in the North the black man was not needed in business. The South took the stand that the North wanted to control them in the matter of having negroes for slaves, and that Northern people were against slavery because it was not a necessity among them. The North, on the other hand, said that to enslave another man, no matter what his color, was wrong and shameful in a country boasting of its freedom.

Lincoln had grown up in the midst of all this conflict of opinion and feeling. As we know, he expressed his ideas on the subject more than once; always, however, steering a middle course between rabid abolitionism and fanatic pro-slavery. He believed that the institution should be restricted to limits then fixed, and not allowed to spread; hence when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise opened up new fields for the growth of slavery, he was "aroused as never before." And, it is singular to note, his old antagonist, Douglas, now a senator, was the man mainly responsible for that repeal.

Indeed, for ten years Douglas, as senator, had tried to get Congress to organize the territory west of Missouri and Iowa. Little attention was paid his efforts. But in 1854 he came forward with a new proposition to offer in relation to the land. This was a bill providing that two territories —

Kansas and Nebraska — should be organized, and that the people of the territories be themselves allowed to decide whether they should be free or slaves states. In brief, that the Missouri Compromise of 1820 be declared void. When this bill was passed, the North was outraged, but the South was highly gratified.

Douglas was despised in the North. In his action was seen a desire to please the South and win its support for the presidency. In Illinois, his adopted state, the people were against him. Chicago went into public mourning and tolled funeral bells. Douglas tried to explain his acts to his constituents. It was in October, 1854, that Lincoln replied to one of Douglas's most glib speeches, at the Illinois Agricultural Fair, held at Springfield. Lincoln turned every one of Douglas's arguments inside out, proving them false to the Constitution of the United States and to the Ordinance of 1787. The gist of Lincoln's contention was in these words: —

"I admit that the emigrant to Kansas and Nebraska is competent to govern himself; but I deny his right to govern any other person without that person's consent."

So convincing were Lincoln's words that Douglas could not find an adequate reply, though he tried.

Some days later, at Peoria, Douglas again addressed a big crowd of people, and Lincoln again took the platform to combat the "Little Giant." Each spoke for three hours. At the end Douglas, discomfited, came up to Lincoln and said:—

"You understand this question of slavery in the territories better than all the opposition in the Senate of the United States. I cannot make anything by debating it with you. You, Mr. Lincoln, have here and at Springfield given me more trouble than all the opposition in the Senate combined."

Douglas then proposed that neither speak further during the campaign. To this Lincoln gave assent, but Douglas broke the agreement, and his antagonist once more entered the lists.

That election was for a senatorship. There were three parties represented in the Illinois legislature — Democrats, Whigs, and Anti-Nebraska Democrats. For the Senate the Democrats nominated General Shields, of duel celebrity, the Anti-Nebraska party were for Lyman Trumbull, and the Whigs named Lincoln. Most of the Anti-Nebraskas were eventually won over to Lincoln, but there were five of them who would not vote for a Whig under any circumstances. They held out for Trumbull, though their companions had gone over

to Lincoln. Realizing the deadlock, and fearing a Douglas Democracy triumph, Lincoln told his friends to cast their votes for Trumbull, which they did, much against their wishes. Lincoln had never desired a position more than this one of senator, but he sacrificed his ambition to the good of his cause. He lost that honor, but through his unselfish act won a host of new friends, even the five who had held out for Trumbull eventually coming under his standard.

In that year of 1856 was held the first Republican convention, and there Lincoln was named as one of the candidates for Vice-President. He received one hundred and ten votes. When he heard of it Lincoln laughed in incredulity and said he thought it was intended for another Lincoln — an eminent man in New England.

At Bloomington, Illinois, on May 29, 1856, Lincoln addressed a big state convention. This was his famous "lost speech," so called because everybody there in the capacity of reporter was so electrified by his eloquence that taking notes was an impossibility. The whole audience was literally swept off its feet by the power of the orator's words.

However, the opponents of slavery extension were divided between John C. Frémont and Millard

Fillmore in the election, and Buchanan, the Democratic candidate, was made President. It was a distinct triumph for the South, for although Buchanan was a Northern man, he was in sympathy with the principles held by the Southerners. Shortly following his election came the celebrated Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court, in which it was settled that a slave was always the undisputed property of his master, whether living in a free state or not. Dred Scott, the negro slave, had brought up the question in the courts, as he thought his residence on free soil made of him a freedman. Great excitement followed the case. The Supreme Court decision inflamed the anti-slavery people. And furthermore, the opinion of Chief-Justice Taney went to such extremes as to intimate that neither Congress nor a territorial legislature had any right to exclude slavery from a territory.

Then followed civil strife in Kansas. Both Southern and Northern emigrants had rushed to the territory to make it their own. Bloodshed had been the result, and the United States troops had been called out to maintain peace and order. The majority in Kansas wished the state to come in free, but the opposing element tried to maneuver it in under a slave constitution. Buchanan supported the latter move, which led to Douglas at-

tacking the administration. The President warned the "Little Giant" that he would be crushed for his daring. Douglas fearlessly maintained his stand. In one speech he said: —

"If Kansas wants a slave constitution she has a right to it. It is none of my business which way the slavery clause is decided. I care not whether the slavery clause is voted up or voted down."

Violence invaded the very precincts of the Senate. Senator Sumner, of Massachusetts, had delivered a speech in Congress denouncing the Kansas outrage. Because of his bitter eloquence, Senator Brooks, of South Carolina, rose one day from his seat, went over to where Sumner sat, and beat him with a heavy cane until he was almost dead, and only for the intervention of bystanders would have killed him. Fresh fuel was thus added to the fires of hatred burning throughout the land.

In the midst of it all came the election for senatorship in Illinois. It was the year 1858. Douglas was indorsed for the office by the Democrats, and on June 16 the Republican State Convention chose Abraham Lincoln as its candidate. Accepting this honor Lincoln made one of his most famous speeches — the "House Divided Against Itself" speech. It was a bold, brave statement of his deepest convictions, and his friends were afraid that his fear-

less handling of the subject would be fatal to his success in the coming campaign. They urged him to omit the well-known passage: —

"We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease, until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself 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 all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the 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."

His friends said these words would wreck him politically. Lincoln replied that he would rather be defeated with those sentiments given to the world than succeed without having uttered them.

He declared that one day it would be admitted that these were the wisest words he had ever spoken.

In the early summer of 1858 both candidates went canvassing. With ease and suavity Douglas addressed his audiences, convincing them that all he wanted was fair play all around. Lincoln, intense with moral purpose, showed how Douglas was glossing over the really vital points at issue. He denied that any one could dismiss the question as lightly as Douglas did, with his apparent indifference as to whether a people endured slavery or not.

On July 24 Lincoln challenged the "Little Giant" to a series of joint debates. Seven debates were arranged for in as many Illinois towns of importance. Douglas was to open and close four of them, Lincoln three. Immense crowds came to hear the speakers, and the people indulged in a semi-holiday. Many farmers came from a distance, bringing their midday meal. Twenty thousand assembled at the first great debate. Douglas arrived in a special car gay with bunting, and cannon and brass bands saluted him. Lincoln came quietly, without noise or show of any kind.

They were pretty evenly matched in power to hold and persuade a multitude. Both men had risen from obscurity. Physically they were in singular contrast. Douglas was short and rotund,

handsome and magnetic, with a sweeping eloquence that dazzled while it failed to convince. He was florid and effective, but lacking in wit. Lincoln was tall, plain in feature, but with a simplicity and purity of language that never clouded his meaning. His penetrating logic and homely humor were invaluable assets. Lincoln went to the point at issue; Douglas went around it. It was a battle royal they waged, Lincoln lunging straight at the mark, so to speak, while Douglas was a clever and bewildering fencer.

Their subject was that of slavery under its new aspects. Especially was its extension discussed, Lincoln showing how it was being forced upon the people, even against their will. The Republicans of Illinois did not want to free the slaves, he said; they were not abolitionists, "but they did want slavery restricted to its original area instead of spreading all over the country." Afresh, Douglas declared his principles of "popular sovereignty" — that the people of a territory should decide for themselves about the institution. Then Lincoln asked him about the attempted forcing of Kansas into the Union as a slave state, and what about the Dred Scott decision which, in substance, permitted an owner of slaves to conduct his property anywhere.

Douglas affirmed that the "Black Republicans," as he nicknamed the new political party, aimed at stirring up hatred of the South. This Lincoln denied, saying that all his party desired was the suppression of the spread of slavery into new states, following the evident plan of the "Fathers of our country," when they passed the Ordinance of 1787 forbidding slavery in the Northwest Territory.

At first, Douglas treated Lincoln rather condescendingly and in superior fashion, as befitted the best debater in the United States Senate. But it slowly dawned on Douglas that Lincoln was getting the better of him. Particularly was this true when Douglas, with overweening confidence, put a series of seven questions to Lincoln in an attempt to make him a loser at the outset. At this time they were met in the southern, or slave-infected, region of Illinois. However, Lincoln not only answered all questions successfully, but he propounded four himself — one so skillfully constructed that if Douglas answered at all, he would offend either the South or the Northern Democrats. Lincoln foresaw that his answer to the question would ruin Douglas's chances of ever becoming President, even if he did secure the reëlection to the Senate. Douglas, on the horns of this dilemma, chose what he thought the lesser evil in the way of an answer,

but as Lincoln foresaw, his words doomed him in the South.

So, in the remaining debates, Douglas grew fretful and spiteful. He used all his arts to anger Lincoln, but the latter remained calm, serene, and victorious. Though Lincoln was triumphant in this unprecedented debate, he was not elected to the Senate. The legislature voted for Douglas. Lincoln was disappointed, but philosophic. At any rate, he was convinced that Douglas would reach no higher office than the one he had held.

When asked how he felt about his defeat, he said that he was like the overgrown boy who stubbed his toe, "it hurt too bad to laugh and he was too big to cry."

These debates, nevertheless, made Lincoln known the country over. They had appeared in full in numerous newspapers, and people from Maine to California weighed the merits and the arguments of the two men and found Abraham Lincoln the better man.

CHAPTER XV

Nominated for President

A leading lawyer in the state, Lincoln returned to some of his most important cases after his historic contest with Senator Douglas. Once more we find him on the circuit. But his reputation had spread far and wide, and he was invited to speak in many places. In the autumn of 1859 he delivered addresses in Ohio. Then came his invitation to address a New York audience.

On February 27, 1860, Lincoln stood before his first New York public at Cooper Institute, and made what was the supreme effort of his career. All the culture of the great city was represented among his hearers. On the platform sat Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, and many scholars and politicians. They were perhaps prompted more by curiosity than by anything else in being present. Some of them expected to hear racy stories, questionable jokes, and the crude oratory of the Western stump speaker. Rumors had preceded the speaker, and a large majority of the audience expected to

be vastly entertained. And when the tall, gawky figure came forward, clad in ill-fitting black clothes, with hair rumpled, and awkward gestures, they thought their fun assured.

Lincoln began his immortal speech in a low voice and in diffident fashion, but his sincerity soon fired him and he forgot everything and everybody except his subject. Men stood up and cheered. It was one of the greatest speeches that any of his listeners had ever heard. Even Horace Greeley, who had been skeptical of this Westerner, acknowledged that it was the best address he had ever listened to, and he had often heard Webster.

Indeed, that Cooper Institute speech was a masterly summing up of the whole slavery question in this country, presented without bias or bitterness. Of the Southern and Northern attitudes, he said, —

"All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong."

There it was in a nutshell. His arguments were unanswerable. At the close of this remarkable address he uttered the famous words, —

"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."

It was almost a prayer.

Next day the newspapers printed his speech and reviewed it enthusiastically. Lincoln had won the East. To complete his conquest, he journeyed in New England and repeated his ideas and sentiments.

After this trip East, Lincoln was often spoken of as a possible candidate for the next presidential election, but he always said that he considered himself unworthy. There were many shrewd politicians in Illinois, however, who thought him worthy enough to enter the race, and they maneuvered to have a National Republican Convention held in Chicago. Meanwhile, at the Republican State Convention, held in Decatur on May 10, Lincoln was acclaimed first choice of Illinois for President.

It was at Decatur that Lincoln's cousin, John Hanks, appeared at a proper moment in the proceedings with two old fence rails over his shoulder, and a banner flying the words, —

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 — whose father was the first pioneer of Macon County.*

This was a signal for wild enthusiasm, and the convention shouted and stamped and waved hats

until Lincoln, who had only a few moments before been lifted over their heads to the platform, came forward and in an embarrassed manner said, —

"I suppose I am expected to reply to that. I cannot say whether I made those rails or not, but I am quite sure I have made a great many just as good."

A week later the National Republican Convention met at Chicago in their building called the "Wigwam." There were a number of men whose names were put before the convention as possible candidates. Most prominent of all was that of William H. Seward, of New York, who had been governor of that state, and who was the choice of the wealthy and powerful East. Edward Bates, of Missouri, a lawyer and firm friend of moderation in slavery measures, was another candidate. The delegates from Pennsylvania were for Simon Cameron, a man at that time not fully trusted by the people. Ohio presented the name of Salmon P. Chase, who was an avowed hater of slavery, and had been United States Senator and governor of Ohio.

And Lincoln was the first Republican ever selected by Illinois for such high honor. His political lieutenants at the convention were his old admirers, Judge Davis, of the Eighth Circuit, and two fellow-lawyers, Leonard Swett and Norman

B. Judd. These three astute managers of the Illinois candidate filled Chicago with enthusiasts for Lincoln.

It was the general opinion throughout the North that Seward would be chosen as the Republican candidate; but after much exciting balloting, Lincoln was nominated, receiving two hundred and fifty-four votes.

The uproar that followed was indescribable. People went mad. "Hurrah for Old Abe!" "Three cheers for Lincoln!" "Hooray for the rail-splitter!" was yelled by ten thousand throats.

Where was Lincoln all this time? In a Springfield newspaper office he sat, his chair tilted against the wall, an anxious look on his careworn countenance. A messenger from the telegraph office came in, breathless, with a message. Lincoln read it without comment and handed the slip over to the editor. Congratulations followed, but Lincoln broke away from his well-wishers with, —

"There is a little woman down the street who will be pleased to know about this. I think I will go and tell her."

Thus Lincoln brought the wonderful news to his wife, the woman who, as many as twenty years before, had declared that Abe would one day be President of the country.

But it was not all glory and honor. The Democrats, especially the Southern ones, were enraged at the choice of the Republicans. Then, in their own camp, came dissension and division. After a stormy session in Charleston, South Carolina, in April, the Democratic convention split into what might be termed Northern and Southern halves, the point of difference being slavery. They, however, agreed to meet again in Baltimore in June. But no reconciliation was possible then; so the Southern Democrats nominated John C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, for the presidency; and the other wing of the Democratic party chose Stephen A. Douglas for their candidate. To further complicate the political tides, some of the old Whig party, who thought the best way to treat the slavery issue was to ignore it, formed themselves into a new alliance and nominated John Bell, of Tennessee.

Four candidates for President, and each of the four parties with a different attitude toward the question of negro slavery!

Let us fix the attitudes of these four parties clearly in mind: —

The Republican party declared slavery was wrong, and that its spread into new states should be forbidden; the Douglas Democrats took no stand

for or against slavery, save that each state or territory might, and ought, to settle the question itself; the Southern Democrats supported slavery and advocated its extension; the followers of Bell, calling themselves the Union party, thought it best to say nothing about negro slavery in their political principles.

All that summer preceding the election, Lincoln remained quietly in Springfield, hearing himself abused by North and South. The friends of slavery called him a negro-lover, and made rude jokes at Lincoln's expense. Strange to say, the enemies of slavery attacked him too, for the rabid Abolitionists thought him half-hearted. Even men like Wendell Phillips cried, "Who is this huckster in politics? Who is this country court advocate?"

The two extremists hated and baited him. But he had the support of a vast majority among the common people. His lowly origin, his hard work, and his everyday wisdom appealed to them. Torchlight processions were introduced for the first time, and the famous "Wide-Awake Boys" marched all over the North. "Honest Abe" and "The Rail-Splitter" became bywords.

Election Day, November 6, brought the crisis. The result had been fairly anticipated. Lincoln

was chosen by the people as the next ruler of the United States. The popular vote was as follows: Lincoln, 1,866,452; Douglas, 1,375,157; Breckenridge, 847,953; Bell, 590,631. Of the electoral votes Lincoln had 180, the other three combined, only 123.

The next four months were a nightmare. Lincoln was compelled to watch and do nothing — for he was not yet inaugurated — while the country appeared to be going to pieces. President Buchanan took no stand against the movements of the South when, one by one, the slave states withdrew from the Union, and announced themselves an independent nation.

South Carolina led the other Southern states, six weeks after the November election. At Charleston a state convention was called, and it was proclaimed that South Carolina had severed her ties from the United States. Her palmetto flag was unfurled to the boom of cannon and loud huzzas. The United States forts in the harbor of Charleston were threatened.

The men in the councils of Buchanan were in sympathy with the South. They did everything they could to ruin the Federal government, and planned to seize all the forts and government properties possible.

Florida followed the example of South Carolina in seceding, and shortly afterwards Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas joined the ranks. Delegates met at Montgomery, Alabama, and formed their own government, naming their union the Confederate States of America, with Jefferson Davis for president and Alexander H. Stephens for vice president.

Now, to further embarrass and confuse the incoming administration in Washington, many of the leading Abolitionists vowed that the Southern states had every right to secede if they wanted to! Leaders of opinion in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston agreed that the slave states acted within their rights in leaving the Union. Horace Greeley led in this cry.

How different was Abraham Lincoln's opinion! In a letter of December 17, 1860, he said to Thurlow Weed,—

"My opinion is, that no State can in any way lawfully get out of the Union without the consent of the others; and that it is the duty of the President and other government functionaries to run the machine as it is."

A turn in the tide of public feeling in the North was brought about when a United States steamer, *Star of the West,* was fired on by the Confederate

soldiers as she was taking provisions to the forts. Added to this, the Southern government hauled down the American flag over its forts, seized an arsenal at Baton Rouge, and made demand that the revenue cutter at New Orleans be turned over to them. It was then that John A. Dix, recently appointed Secretary of the Treasury, sent his stirring dispatch over the wires —

"*If any man attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot.*"

Northern men at last realized the pitiful part they were playing in allowing the South to coerce them into submission and dishonor.

Amid all the turmoil Lincoln had remained firm and calm, though how sorely troubled no one could imagine. He was beset by frightened and weak individuals to do this, that, and the other thing, in the way of absurdity. Many put all the blame for the unfortunate conditions upon Lincoln himself. He was literally besieged in the governor's room of the Springfield capitol, where he saw visitors.

To wildest suggestions he listened quietly, answered those that required attention, and let nobody divert him from his chosen path. One of his letters warned a representative from Illinois,

"Entertain no proposition for a compromise in regard to the extension of slavery. The tug has got to come, and better now than later."

When not listening to his horde of nervous advisers, Lincoln would spend his hours in a little room over a store, composing his inaugural address, the important message he would give the country on the 4th of March; behind a locked door he wrote and pondered, changing phrases, altering words, endeavoring to make his thought strong and sure, yet without any trace of conscious effort or arrogance.

Before leaving for the capital of the nation, on February 11, he paid a farewell visit to his stepmother, and arranged to have a stone put over the grave of his father, Thomas Lincoln, who had died ten years before. At parting, his fond stepmother, who had always loved him as her own, wept bitterly and cried that she would never see him again. Shortly before his train left, Lincoln paid a last visit to his old office, and to Herndon, his law partner. Referring to their creaking sign in the doorway, he said, —

"Let it hang there undisturbed. . . . If I live I'm coming back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing law as if nothing ever happened."

Gathered at the little railroad station were hundreds of kindly neighbors and friends to see him off. The day was gloomy and wet, adding to the sadness of the occasion. Just prior to the train pulling out, Lincoln stood on the car platform, and with tears in his eyes, addressed them: —

"My friends: No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

CHAPTER XVI

"Vexed with Many Cares"

During the two weeks of his journey to the national capital, Lincoln stopped in some of the larger cities, as had been arranged, making addresses to the legislatures and delivering little talks to crowds of citizens. Always his words contained the same simple and unfaltering ideas: the preservation of the Union and the adherence to their principles. He could not say what his course would be. Events alone could determine that. But he had resolved on patience and prudence.

On the whole, his speeches disappointed his hearers; he was too reserved and cautious. But the time for taking the public into his confidence had not come.

Lincoln had reached Harrisburg when the rumors of a plot to assassinate him when visiting Baltimore alarmed his detective escort and accompanying friends. Much against his will, he was persuaded to return to Philadelphia and take a

train secretly for Washington, where he arrived on the morning of February 23.

The days remaining to him before the ceremony at the capitol he spent in official routine and in final steps regarding the choice of a cabinet. Prior to his nomination in Chicago, his family of advisers had been partly chosen. His managers, Judge Davis, Swett, and Judd, had promised certain delegates that if Lincoln were elected, Caleb B. Smith of Indiana, and Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, would be awarded high places. This political dicker had displeased Lincoln, especially as he had telegraphed his managers in the days of the Chicago convention, "*Make no contracts that will bind me.*"

Notwithstanding, Lincoln had to make good the promises made by his managers. Simon Cameron was appointed Secretary of War and Caleb Smith given the portfolio of Secretary of the Interior. For his Secretary of State, Lincoln chose his former powerful rival for the presidency, William Henry Seward, of New York; and he furthermore selected two other presidential rivals for his cabinet; Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio, was made Secretary of the Treasury, and Edward Bates, of Missouri, was appointed Attorney General. Two more were needed to complete his official family, and Lincoln

gave the secretaryship of the navy to Gideon Welles, of Connecticut; and made Montgomery Blair, of Maryland, the Postmaster General.

His choice of the seven members of his cabinet was severely criticized. Republicans complained that he was favoring the Democrats, inasmuch as four of the cabinet members were ex-Democrats, and that, in consequence, it was a poor balance of power. To this Lincoln replied good-naturedly,—

"Very well, since I myself am an ex-Whig, we shall be pretty well balanced."

One Republican described the cabinet as "an assortment of rivals." Seward and his followers were especially prejudiced and critical, and on March 2d, two days before the inauguration, Seward withdrew his name from the chosen cabinet. Four days later the new President persuaded the New York leader to come back to his fold of counselors.

The inauguration itself took place quietly and without any especial feature, though there had been threats that Lincoln would never be permitted to take the oath of office. Washington was full of his enemies, but General Winfield Scott and his troops kept order. In the procession that left the Senate Chamber for the public platform were many distinguished men, including Senator Doug-

las, who held his one-time rival's hat while Lincoln read his inaugural address to a vast assembly of people. His inaugural was a clear, gentle, but firm statement of the attitude of the new administration. Much of it was directed to the South, and in terms of reason and affection counseled them to abandon rash measures. In a dignified manner he pleaded with the discontented section. Among other sentiments, he said:—

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. . . . 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 cords 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."

These were the closing words. Their utterance over, Chief Justice Taney stepped forward to administer the oath of office. In a solemn moment Abraham Lincoln was made President of the United States. First to congratulate him was Senator Douglas, and a lifelong rivalry was ended in a hearty

handclasp. It is also well to state Douglas's idea of the existing political condition. While prominent Abolitionists, like Seward and Wendell Phillips, maintained that the Southern states had every right to declare a separate government, Douglas came out with this striking opinion: —

"If the Southern states attempt to secede, I am in favor of their having just so many slaves, and just so much slave territory, as they can hold at the point of the bayonet, and no more."

For a month after the inauguration there was no move made on the part of the South to carry out its program of enmity, and during that time Lincoln had taken hold of the reins of government. How well, is illustrated by his management of Seward. Either because Lincoln had shown anxiety to retain him as Secretary of State, or because he considered himself far above the Western rail-splitter in experience and education, Seward one day sent Lincoln a letter headed, "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." In this remarkable document Seward virtually dictated to the President what course he ought to pursue in relation to the present situation and in his dealings with foreign nations. By suggestion, he also gave Lincoln to understand that he, Seward, was the man equal to these emergencies. It was the same

as if he had said to Lincoln, "You must be a figurehead; I will be the real ruler."

Some of Seward's suggestions in this letter were utterly unworthy of the man and statesman. If Lincoln had been as weak or ignorant as Seward supposed, and had fallen in with the proposition, the whole system of our government might have been overturned and immeasurable calamity have befallen the country.

But Lincoln was master of the situation, and in a firm but gentle tone replied that he alone must decide those or any other vital questions; always, of course, with the privilege of seeking advice from the Cabinet if need be. Upon digesting this courteous but no less masterful answer to his "Thoughts," Seward appears to have recognized the quality of his chief; from that time forth he was tireless in his labors in behalf of the President.

For a while North and South played a waiting game. The Northerners thought the administration ought to settle matters one way or another — let the slaveholding states secede without objection — grant their separate government — anything to end the suspense. On the other hand, the Confederates urged Jefferson Davis to take some decisive step.

In this hour of tensity his Cabinet was of little help to Lincoln. They thought for the most part

that the easiest way was the best. Even old General Scott, head of the United States Army, advised the evacuation of Fort Sumter, which the South desired. This Lincoln refused to do.

Major Robert Anderson, with a small detail of soldiers, held Fort Sumter, and they were sadly in need of provisions. Lincoln determined to send supplies to the garrison, and notified General Beauregard, at Charleston, that he intended doing so. Upon receiving this news General Beauregard, on April 11, sent word to Major Anderson to surrender the fort or suffer consequences. Major Anderson replied that he would remain until starvation forced him out.

The next day the Confederates bombarded the fortress from the shore, keeping up their fire far into the night. Major Anderson returned shot as he might, but his defense was weak, and on the 13th Fort Sumter, badly battered, was given up to the Southerners. Meanwhile, the Federal relief expedition lay idle and helpless not far away.

Sumter was the strongest fortress on the South Atlantic coast, and the people of the South were overjoyed at its coming into their hands. The populace of Charleston was wild with enthusiasm at the victory. But the attack upon Sumter awoke all the slumbering patriotism of the North, and at

last Republican, Democrat, Abolitionist, and Whig realized that the Federal government had been defied and insulted. Like wildfire the spirit of fight spread in the North. When Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to serve three months, it was responded to by more men than could be handled. Camps sprung up like mushrooms overnight everywhere in the North. Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois alone offered all the men that could be used. Michigan had 50,000 ready for the front within her own borders. Massachusetts had a regiment equipped and marching before forty-eight hours had passed. The spirit of the North had awakened!

And Southerners were as loyal and ardent to fight for what they considered their rights. The Southern states that had not already seceded, did so — Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas joined their fortunes to the Confederate cause. Delaware alone, of the slaveholding states, responded to President Lincoln's call for troops.

On the whole, the South was better prepared for war than the North. Its states had been arming for months and the troops were well drilled. They felt that one of their soldiers was equal to ten Yankees, though in actual proportion the North numbered four whites to one in the South.

Though the rank and file had responded so overwhelmingly in the North, and the soldiers and sailors held true to the Stars and Stripes, there were many backsliders among trusted officers who went over to the enemy. General Winfield Scott, then the highest officer in the army, and seventy-six years of age, was offered the command of the Virginia troops. His answer was memorable:

"I have served my country under the flag of the Union for more than fifty years, and as long as God permits me to live, I will defend that flag with my sword, even if my own native State assails it!"

Just the opposite was the decision of Robert E. Lee, at that time a colonel in the United States Army. Though he said, "I cannot imagine a greater calamity than the dissolution of the Union," he decided to cast his lot with Virginia. General Scott, realizing that his age and infirmities barred him from taking the field, offered Lee the command of the Union Army. But Virginia, seceding, decided him against acceptance.

Another man who played a big part in bringing about this national crisis, vanishes from the earthly scene at this stage of affairs. Douglas had taken upon himself the task of traveling through the North to arouse the people to their danger. He spoke without rest, calling upon his strength until

it was taxed beyond further endurance. Curiously enough, in Chicago, the city that once put itself in mourning in mockery of his senatorial labors, he was taken ill, and died a victim of his love of country ere the first battle had been fought between the divided sections of the Union.

CHAPTER XVII

First Year of the War

While the tap of the drum was heard in every village in the North, and numerous factories had begun to manufacture ammunition and other army supplies, the situation of Washington, the capital, was reason for much disquiet. It lay in Southern territory, really, and was poorly defended. One of the first moves, then, was fortification. Regiments were on their way from Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, but their progress appeared all too slow to the anxious ones in Washington. Rumors came from time to time that Confederates were headed for the capital as well, and planned to take it before it was protected. And when the Sixth Regiment of Massachusetts on its way to Washington was attacked by a mob in Baltimore and demoralized, it looked as if the Southerners would have their way. Furthermore, Maryland, a neutral state, protested to Lincoln that no more soldiers should march across its soil to fight against her sister states.

"We must have troops," replied Lincoln, "and as they can neither crawl under Maryland nor fly over it, they must come across it."

But the strain of waiting for these troops to appear began to tell on the stoutest hearted. Even the President lost some of his wonderful calm. Pacing the floor, he was heard to exclaim, "Why don't they come! Why don't they come!"

On April 25 the Seventh Regiment, of New York, reached the capital, and the city welcomed the soldiers with shouts of joy. Shortly thereafter, General Benjamin F. Butler, without orders, descended upon Baltimore and took possession of that riotous city.

Besides these vital questions of safety and defense, Lincoln was worried by a relentless mob of office-seekers. He was hardly permitted to think over the national issues of life or death, he was so pestered by self-seeking politicians. To a friend he remarked one day, "I am like a man so busy in letting rooms at one end of his house that he cannot stop to put out the fire that is burning at the other." The patience and tact that he exercised, however, with this flood of petty office-seekers appeared inexhaustible.

No less skillful and tactful was he when handling men and affairs of greater importance, as testified

by his course with Seward's letter to our minister to England. Secretary Seward had drafted the dispatch under date of May 21, 1861, and it had to do with our relations to England during the crisis. Lincoln was shown it so that he might know what attitude the State Department was taking toward Europe's leading Power. The tone of the dispatch was too severe and dictatorial, Lincoln found, and he made changes in it so that England could not possibly take offense. His alterations, it is conceded, saved us from war with Great Britain and France; for already those nations had expressed sympathy with the Confederacy, and Seward's demands would have brought about open antagonism, if not actual alliance with the South. By this time Secretary Seward had come to acknowledge Lincoln's superior judgment and statecraft, and he felt no anger or hurt that Lincoln should correct his letter almost as one would correct a schoolboy's composition. Instead, soon after, he wrote to his wife, "The President is the best of us all."

Toward the end of May, impatience was the popular attitude North and South. The people wanted combat to settle their differences at once. Down in Dixieland the general cry was "On to Washington!" Up in the North that cry was

echoed by "On to Richmond!" Richmond was now the heart and capital of the Confederacy. All through June the Southern forces were gathering on the hills beyond the Potomac. The Confederate flag could be seen waving over the encampments from the windows of the White House. Washington was almost in a state of siege.

Before any battle took place Congress met, July 4, responding to the call for an extra session from the President. Only the Northern and Border states were represented. The question of the Border states — Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri — was a very delicate one. Both North and South contended for them. Their support meant everything.

Lincoln's message to Congress laid stress on the necessity for unalterable firmness in their stand. He showed how their cause was just, and how the South had been the aggressor against the peace and laws of the country. He spoke of the Border states and demonstrated how impossible was their attempt at "armed neutrality." It was evident they would have to cast their fate with one side or the other. He requested that Congress vote him 400,000 men and $400,000,000 at least, so that he might end the conflict without delay. Congress met his plea with generous enthusiasm;

he might have 500,000 men and $500,000,000 for his purposes.

A half million volunteers were straightway called for, to serve three years, unless the war ended sooner. Immediate was the response from all over the North.

Meanwhile, the forces in the field were moving to meet the enemy. General Butler took possession of Old Point Comfort. Into West Virginia General McClellan led an army to cut off any Confederate advance there. Troops in Missouri were under the command of General Frémont, who had distinguished himself in the Mexican War. The harbors of the South were blockaded. On July 21, owing to the urging in the North, President Lincoln ordered General McDowell to attack the Confederates at Bull Run. This was the first pitched battle of the war, and the opening action was in favor of the North, but General Beauregard being reënforced at a critical moment by General Johnston, the Union forces were routed, and retreated in panic and confusion from Virginia soil back to Washington. Had the Confederates known the utter fright and wreck of the Federals, they would have followed up their advantage and perhaps have captured the capital. Their victory, as it stood, elated them, however, to a point of delirious joy.

It was a sore blow to the confident North. Defeat made them realize that the Federal army was a raw organization, in need of discipline and training. Therefore, the day after the battle Lincoln sent for General McClellan to put the Union forces into shape. McClellan was a comparatively young man, and the unexpected honor of making him the head of the army dazzled him. Said he in a letter,

"I find myself in a new and strange position here: President, Cabinet, General Scott and all, deferring to me. By some strange operation of magic, I seem to have become the power of the land."

Though the position in which he found himself fed his vanity, he did masterful work in drilling the soldiers. But as a fighting general he was not a success. Nevertheless, he regarded himself as the one to save the nation. Perhaps he had better become dictator! And many took up the notion and foolishly thought it possible. It was of this ridiculous clamor that Lincoln told the story of the fellow caught in the thunder shower who prayed to the Lord to send more light and less noise.

General McClellan was short-sighted enough to suppose himself indispensable, and Lincoln's mild and willing air led him further astray. So "Little Mac" kept his attitude of lordliness, drilled the troops to perfection, but was so maddeningly slow

to engage the enemy that Lincoln lost patience with him, as is easily appreciated from the famous remark the President let drop, —

"If McClellan is through with the Army, I'd like to borrow it for the afternoon."

Trouble also came to Lincoln through the measures taken by General Frémont in Missouri. Without leave or license, Frémont took it upon himself to proclaim slaves free, and he also confiscated property when he considered it necessary. Now, it will be remembered, that one of the main issues was to preserve the Border states to the Union, and Lincoln had long fought to retain them. In a letter to a friend he had gone so far as to say, —

"I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone, we cannot hold Missouri, nor, I think, Maryland. These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us."

The Border states, still being neutral and also sanctioning slavery, of course objected to the high-handed methods of Frémont. To complicate the matter, the Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, backed up the acts of Frémont, and the Abolitionists throughout the North were enthusiastic. Some time previously General Butler had declared

negro slaves, when taken from owners who used them for war purposes, "contraband" — the same as other property. This had proved a popular move; and the Abolitionists thought General Frémont's work better still, as being a means of ending slavery wherever possible. Lincoln, however, considered it a grave mistake, and forbade it. He would sanction nothing beyond what was contained in an Act of Congress, passed in August, that only those slaves should be considered free who had been employed in military service by the Confederates.

Again was the North impatient for decisive fighting, but McClellan persisted in drilling and would not take the risk of battle just then. By the beginning of November, General Scott had resigned, and McClellan was placed in supreme charge. Once more the North fixed its hopes on "Little Mac," as he was called by his soldiers.

It looked as if the problems of the President were increasing day by day. The next thing to confront him was the case of the British mail steamship, *Trent*, which had been held up by Captain Wilkes, of the U. S. war sloop, *San Jacinto*, and two Confederate envoys taken from it. These men, Messrs. Mason and Slidell, were on their way to Europe to represent the Confederate cause abroad.

At their capture the North went wild with enthusiasm at the act of Captain Wilkes. Even Secretary of the Navy Welles sent Wilkes the seal of official approval. Lincoln saw the matter differently. He declared the hold-up unwise, without judgment, and wrong. He said: —

"We must stick to American principles concerning the rights of neutrals. We fought Great Britain for insisting, by theory and practice, on the right to do precisely what Captain Wilkes has done."

He alluded to the chief cause of the War of 1812. Despite the angry clamor at his attitude, the public reluctantly saw the justice of his reasoning, and when Great Britain demanded reparation and apology, they were given. Lincoln had said, "One war at a time," and that phrase set the people thinking. It is now acknowledged that this act of Lincoln's made it impossible for either France or England to give aid to the Southern people.

As we have seen, Secretary Cameron set himself against the President on the Frémont issue in Missouri. Now Frémont was guilty of further breach. Without consulting the President or submitting his ideas to any higher authority, he sent broadcast his annual report in which he recommended that the slaves be armed and made part

of the Union forces. Learning of this flagrant act, Lincoln recalled the report by telegraph and had it revised, so that the arming of negroes, if attempted, should appear a military necessity rather than an order emanating from the government.

In January, 1862, Lincoln removed Cameron from the Cabinet on this account and because there was widespread dissatisfaction with the conduct of the War Department. The man chosen by the President to fill the office was Edwin Stanton, the man who, years ago, had disparaged Lincoln so bitterly at the time of the reaper lawsuit. And even later Stanton had violently attacked the course of the government, one of his frequent phrases being, "The painful imbecility of Lincoln."

Once more we are constrained to note the marvelous amiability and forgiveness of Lincoln in choosing his assistants; he knew Stanton was a man of worth and ability, and refused to let any personal feeling influence his selection of a man for an office. We must note, too, that his choice of Stanton was one of the wisest he ever made, though Stanton was to embarrass and interfere with the President, again and again.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Emancipation Proclamation

Stanton went to work with terrific energy to reorganize the War Department. Totally different from Cameron, he kept tab of every detail of his office. One of his innovations was making his quarters the center of the telegraphic system of the United States, by which means he kept himself informed of every move made in the capital and on the field. Conscientious to a degree, he held himself responsible for all military operations.

As the winter of 1862 progressed, Stanton, among his strongest convictions, felt that McClellan's course of inaction was demoralizing the Union spirit. The mania of McClellan was for more men — and yet more. Constantly he complained of having too few soldiers, though he had one hundred thousand men. The enemy, he thought, outnumbered him greatly.

Out of patience, Lincoln ordered that a forward movement be made not later than February 22d.

The President offered a plan for an advance on Richmond — a maneuver having the backing of several military experts. McClellan announced that he had a better plan, but still he dallied. Not until the *Monitor*, " the cheese-box on a raft," had met and defeated the hitherto invincible *Merrimac* in the waters of Hampton Roads, on March 9, did McClellan make a move. By that time the Confederates had retreated beyond reach, and all McClellan's elaborate preparations went for naught. His too great caution and obstinacy enraged the North, and on March 11 Lincoln found it necessary to deprive him of supreme command of the Union Army; he was retained, however, at the head of the Army of the Potomac, and in that position undertook the disastrous Peninsular Campaign against Richmond.

Politically, several important steps were taken in relation to slavery. In March, Lincoln proposed to Congress that money be appropriated and given to any state that would undertake the gradual abolishment of slavery. His effort was futile. But in April slavery was forbidden in the District of Columbia. It was also prohibited in territories over which Congress had control, and on vessels and in forts belonging to the United States. Lincoln hesitated, however, about declaring any sweep-

ing freedom for negroes, and he was slow in giving his permission to arm slaves that had fallen into Northern hands. He was fearful lest he arouse the enmity of the Border states. And members of Congress from these doubtful states he tried to argue and convince into agreeing to compensation for slave property. Lincoln also advanced his pet scheme of ridding the country of negroes by colonizing them in a land of their own. But the Border states were deaf to all such propositions.

Meanwhile no decisive victories came to encourage the North. Farragut had captured New Orleans, and an obscure soldier named Grant appeared to be doing deeds of daring in the West — he had taken Fort Donelson and sent ringing through the land his phrase of "unconditional surrender" — but McClellan was gaining nothing. Midsummer found him in retreat and full of complaints.

Almost inconsolable at the result of the Peninsular Campaign, Lincoln, on July 1, issued a call for 300,000 more volunteers, an act he dreaded. On the whole, the summer of 1862 was the blackest the North had to face. The outlook promised no relief. Despairing, the President went down to visit McClellan in Virginia to see what could be done.

After his return from the front, it is said that Lincoln came to the conclusion that emancipation of the negroes was in reality now an imperative war measure. Long had he fought this idea, thinking his own scheme to pay slaveholders for their human chattels would be the most just and welcome solution of the problem.

On July 22, Lincoln called together his Cabinet and told them he was ready for the vital step of emancipation by proclamation. He asked their opinion, saying, at the same time, that he had settled it in his own mind. None of his counselors volunteered anything important except Secretary Seward, who said he thought it would be a serious mistake to announce the freedom of the negroes at that time when the North was in the depths. Better to wait for some noteworthy victory, advised Seward, then cap it with such a proclamation. Lincoln was struck with the sanity of this analysis and said he would defer his measure until a propitious moment arrived.

While awaiting a victory this long summer, the sorely beset President was attacked in the New York *Tribune*, by Horace Greeley, who denounced what he considered Lincoln's vacillation and weakness. Greeley headed his editorial, "The Prayer of Twenty Millions." Lincoln answered

Photograph by Scharf Bros., Chicago.

ST. GAUDENS' STATUE OF LINCOLN IN LINCOLN PARK, CHICAGO.

the severe criticism in a lucid and reasonable letter that scored Greeley, and took the people into his confidence. It was a masterly stroke. Lincoln's most telling words in that reply were these: —

"I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored the nearer the Union will be the Union as it was. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union."

Trouble with military heads came apace. After his visit to McClellan, in Virginia, Lincoln had made Henry W. Halleck, General in Chief; and

he promoted Pope, who had won some battles in the West, to the head of a new army in Virginia. Both generals recommended that McClellan be recalled from his position on the Peninsula. Then followed fresh defeats for the Northern arms. Generals Pope and Banks were thwarted by Generals Lee and Jackson, and the second battle of Bull Run completed the Union woes. It seemed as if the Northern cause were doomed.

At this new crisis Lincoln turned once more to McClellan as an organizing genius, and "Little Mac" was again placed in charge of the forces in Washington. Stanton was angry and fumed at such a course of action, but Lincoln remained firm and told his Secretary of War that if he could furnish a better man for the emergency, to get him quick.

September came and still no Union victory. Lee threatened an invasion of Maryland. Was this the end? In haste McClellan was sent to meet the Confederate military genius who had concentrated his forces. The bloody battle of Antietam, on September 17, was the result. Everything was in favor of the Union, McClellan having almost twice the number of men that Lee had. Realizing his danger, Lee gave the order to retreat. This was McClellan's greatest opportunity to

retrieve his reputation. Eagerly, Lincoln telegraphed McClellan to be sure not to let Lee get away — to destroy him. But, as of yore, McClellan obeyed his own judgment. He thought his troops were not in condition to follow up the flying foe.

Nevertheless, Antietam was a victory for the North, though not as great and decisive as had been hoped for and expected. Nothing loath, Lincoln embraced the propitious moment in keeping with his intention and stood ready to give the world the greatest of state papers — The Emancipation Proclamation.

On September 22, he called his Cabinet together for the auspicious occasion. When they were gathered in solemn conclave, the President, in one of his jocose moods, tried to lighten the meeting by reading a chapter from Artemus Ward's book of nonsense stories. Wondering what could be the matter with their chief, the assembled statesmen listened respectfully while he read and laughed. Out of courtesy, all except Stanton tried to express enjoyment of the humor.

Suddenly, becoming graver, the President began on the real business in hand, and told his council that he had determined on the step which he had outlined to them in July. He said he had promised himself and his Maker that he would issue a

proclamation of emancipation when a Northern success at arms warranted the issue. Then he read to them his immortal document. It was to be given to the world immediately, but it was not to go into effect until January 1, 1863. On that date all persons held in bondage in the Southern states were declared free forevermore. This was not to include the Border states, as they were not in rebellion against the Federal authority.

The immediate result was not encouraging. As Lincoln said in a letter to Vice-President Hamlin, "The North responds to the Proclamation sufficiently in breath; but breath alone kills no rebels." State elections that autumn showed a spirit of discontent with the Republican party in general.

Meanwhile military achievement shed no glory on the Union arms. McClellan was again demonstrating his strange incompetency in attacking the enemy. Lincoln urged him to no purpose. At length, wearied with argument and desiring some triumph to please the North, Lincoln, on November 7, deprived McClellan of command and gave General Burnside his position. Alas, Burnside proved a loser, too. He had planned an advance upon Richmond by way of Fredericksburg. Lincoln said it might be done if rapidly executed.

Burnside was slow. Lee was strongly intrenched. On December 13, therefore, the Union forces suffered terrible defeat at Fredericksburg, thus closing this black year of 1862.

To take Burnside's place, Lincoln selected "Fighting Joe" Hooker, though it must be added that Burnside was dropped more because of quarrels with subordinates than because he had not achieved victory. The year closed also over Cabinet squabbles. Seward and Chase were the chief factors. From the beginning, Seward had a multitude of political enemies, and finally a Senate committee went so far as to request the President to make certain changes in his Cabinet. By means of an innocent ruse, Lincoln brought together the discontented committee and the Cabinet, that grievances might be aired openly. It resulted in both Chase and Seward resigning. Lincoln shrewdly declined to accept either resignation, thus showing his impartiality, and both factions were compelled to acknowledge his fairness. Lincoln considered it a triumph to keep both men in his Cabinet, as they balanced opposing elements. After this outbreak and its amicable ending, Lincoln remarked to a friend, "Now I can ride; I have got a pumpkin in each bag," comparing himself to a farmer riding with saddle bags, well balanced.

The new year was signalized by Lincoln taking the final step in emancipation. Tired from receiving a host of callers, he withdrew to sign the paper that was to give four million slaves their liberty. Signing it, his fingers, weary from much hand-shaking, trembled, and characteristically he made some joking allusion to his nervousness at affixing his signature to the world-famous document.

CHAPTER XIX

Dark Days

With the realization of the Emancipation Proclamation two things were achieved; European powers regarded the North more favorably, and the employment of negro soldiers proved an advantage. On the other hand, compulsory army service brought riots and even bloodshed, while "Copperheads" were rampant. Northern men who expressed public sympathy with the Confederate cause were called "Copperheads," their badge being a Liberty head cut out of a copper coin.

The case of Vallandigham was the most notorious of the kind. For his treasonable speeches General Burnside arrested him and a military tribunal convicted him. Loud was the protest in the North because the action tended to curb free speech. Imprisoning Vallandigham was equal to Russian despotism, said many malcontents. Lincoln himself was doubtful of Burnside's right to do as he had done, but the President was willing

to share the blame. Eventually, Lincoln disposed of the troublesome case in an unlooked-for, clever manner — he sent the culprit South where lay his sympathies.

Though Lincoln knew that desertion from the ranks was punishable by death, he could rarely resist an appeal to pardon a doomed fellow. Hundreds of stories are told of his tender heart in this respect. In some cases his generals were compelled to cut the telegraph lines so that a deserved sentence might be carried out and discipline preserved.

In truth, Lincoln was very sympathetic and lenient in his treatment of his soldiers. He loved the boys in the ranks like so many sons and they, in turn, were happy to call him "Father Abraham." At the Soldiers' Home, where he spent the summer months, he was on friendly footing with the members of his guard, and occasionally joined them in their mess. It was noticed, too, that he never failed to visit the wounded and dying in the military hospitals, giving a cheerful word to a sufferer, or placing a gentle hand on an agonized brow.

The story of Lincoln and the sleeping sentinel is one typical of his great heart. This young soldier was found asleep at his post while on guard duty in the national capital. A serious, even criminal

offense. Military authorities decided to make an example of the boy, and he was condemned to die. All appeals to the generals were vain. As a last resort, the boy's friends sought the President and pleaded for his life.

Imagine the prisoner's astonishment when, a few hours later, President Lincoln was ushered into his tent. The illustrious visitor asked him a number of questions about himself, and learned that the lad was from the mountains of Vermont, his mother and father living on a farm there. He showed Lincoln a picture of his mother which he carried. The President told the boy that he knew what it was to be a farmhand, and how hard it was for a fellow of that kind to keep awake at night. He promised to pardon him, but warned the prisoner that the bill would be high. Hearing the glad news, the Vermont boy was overjoyed, and vowed that his father would raise enough money to pay in full. Then Lincoln told him that he misunderstood — that *he* only could pay the bill by becoming, in future, one of the bravest and most faithful defenders of the flag.

Gladly, the young fellow pledged his life to his benefactor, and not long afterwards he saw his first battle. Among the earliest to engage the enemy, he was one of the last to give up fighting

when the retreat had been sounded. A river had to be crossed in the retreat and many wounded men were unable to breast the water. The Vermont lad swam back and forth under a hail of bullets, saving his helpless comrades, until a shot ended his heroic endeavor. He died blessing Lincoln, the man who had given him a chance to prove himself worthy of self-sacrifice and glorious martyrdom.

Before we leave the consideration of this merciful side of Lincoln's nature, let us quote the President's letter to a poor widow, Mrs. Bixby, whose five sons had fallen in battle. So lofty is this letter in its expression of noble sympathy that, at the present moment, it stands out in characters of gold on the wall of one of the rooms at Oxford University, England.

"I have been shown on the file of the War Department," he wrote, "a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming; but I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our

Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavements, and leave only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

From January to July, 1863, there was little to encourage the hope of Lincoln. The Emancipation Proclamation was accomplishing its purpose, but slowly; faster came the fury of the South against its growing effect. Lincoln urged the arming of negroes wherever he thought it prudent and advisable. To Andrew Johnson, military governor of Tennessee, he wrote in March, —

"The colored population is the great available and yet unavailed of force for restoring the Union. The bare sight of fifty thousand armed and drilled black soldiers upon the banks of the Mississippi would end the rebellion at once; and who doubts that we can present that sight if we but take hold in earnest?"

Confederate leaders thought that, if captured, the white generals who headed negro battalions ought to be dealt with as outlaws and criminals, though subsequently Jefferson Davis organized black troops in imitation of the North. Up North, there was a group of men that demanded the same pay and privileges for the black soldier

as the white one enjoyed. Frederick Douglass, the famous negro orator, went to Lincoln with such a demand. The President listened patiently, then pointed out that the negro soldier ought to wait until he had proven himself as valiant and intelligent before he could expect the same rewards. Using them at all was protested against in many sections of the Union, Lincoln reminded Douglass, and at best it was a grave experiment. The negro orator saw the truth of these remarks, and used his influence against the unreasonable movement. All of which shows how many and complicated were the causes brought to the harassed President, and how unfailingly he met them with wisdom and justice.

The strong hand of Lincoln was also needed during this disturbing period in the matter of privateering, England being a prime offender in assisting the South in its depredations on our commerce. Both the country at large and Congress were inclined to take revenge by authorizing privateers on their own account, and an act was passed giving the President power to do so whenever he thought fit. But Lincoln never saw fit. Instead, he avoided inviting additional warfare, by refusing to accept offers of privateers; and ultimately, through his firm manipulation of this

delicate international matter, he forced England to pay full indemnity for her part in aiding the South to prey upon our commerce.

While the letter to Mrs. Bixby shows his tenderness, the one written to General Hooker, on placing him in command of the Army of the Potomac, January 26, 1863, shows his strength and tact with a commander already under a cloud of suspicion. Here is the letter: —

"*General:* I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons; and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you.

"I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not indispensable, quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm. But I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition, and thwarted him as much as you could; in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have

heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set themselves up as dictators. What I ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders.

"I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it.

"And now, beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories."

Like McClellan, General Hooker speedily got the disorganized army into fighting shape, but he delayed getting it into action; and the Southern warriors, seizing their opportunity, inflicted one of their most terrible blows against the North in the battle of Chancellorsville, fought May 2–4, 1863. At this encounter Hooker failed to do the very

thing that Lincoln had repeatedly told him to do — to use all of his men.

The news from the front was well-nigh crushing. The President did not sleep that night; he paced the floor wearily, trying to see a ray of light in the encompassing darkness. It was one of his worst hours. When the clerks came to office duties in the morning, they found Lincoln eating his breakfast at his desk and intent upon instructions for General Hooker that he had jotted down during his lone night vigil; notes that were to urge Hooker on and on in the desperate fight.

CHAPTER XX

A Big Battle and a Little Speech

After the crushing defeat at Chancellorsville, the victorious Lee, seeing with what ease he routed one general after another of the foe's armies — McClellan, Pope, Burnside, and Hooker — determined to invade the North and carry warfare right into Washington. Aware of this move of the Confederates, Hooker outlined a plan for swooping down upon the unprotected capital of the Confederacy — Richmond. Instantly Lincoln saw the folly of this plan. He advised Hooker, —

"If left to me, I would not go south of the Rappahannock upon Lee's moving north of it. If you had Richmond invested to-day, you would not be able to take it in twenty days; meanwhile your communications, and with them your army, would be ruined. I think Lee's army, and not Richmond, is your true objective point. If he comes toward the upper Potomac, follow on his flank and on his inside track, shortening your lines while he lengthens his. Fight him, too, when

opportunity offers. If he stays where he is, fret him and fret him."

No more important decision could have been made at this most critical moment. Still, Hooker lagged, though he chased the Confederate forces across Maryland, and they entered Pennsylvania June 22, to the horror of that state. The cities of Pittsburg and Philadelphia were panic stricken. And at this dire instant, when the whole North was holding its breath, there was a petty quarrel between the Union generals, and, annoyed at being ordered by Lincoln to submit to the authority of Halleck, Hooker resigned. Everybody was stunned at such a turn. Lincoln and Stanton made haste, however, to appoint General Meade in Hooker's place.

To his everlasting fame, Meade took hold of his forces with promptitude and decision; he led his ninety thousand men after the invaders and compelled them to turn about at Gettysburg village to save themselves. For the first three days of July, a gigantic and desperate battle raged over fertile fields and fruitful valleys, hosts of men falling on either side. It was the decisive battle of the war. The total killed and wounded of the Union soldiers was 23,186; that of the Southern army almost as many, and Lee's loss was the greater

because he had fewer men. The Confederate ranks were terribly shattered. But the Union was saved!

Broken, Lee and his ragged legions retreated slowly across the Potomac. Now, at the height of its accomplishment, the same fatality appeared to follow the Army of the Potomac; its commander refused to pursue the crushed enemy and deal the blow that would finish the war, though Meade had been reënforced with fresh troops. This failure to follow up an enormous advantage made Lincoln as nearly angry as anything could, and he criticized Meade rather sharply. In answer Meade expressed satisfaction at the enemy having been driven from Northern soil, at least. But Lincoln was impatient of such an argument and said, —

"Why will not our generals get that notion out of their heads? All American soil is ours!"

That Fourth of July, 1863, was a truly glorious one for the North, however, for besides a victory at Gettysburg, word came flashing over the wires that General Grant had at last conquered sweepingly in the West. A little more than a year before, this little-heard-of commander had captured Fort Donelson, a stronghold of great importance in the Mississippi Valley, and since then he had been struggling against seemingly insuperable

odds of nature and Southern intrenchment at Vicksburg. But finally, on the Fourth of July, this citadel capitulated. Grant's campaign had been one of tremendous difficulty and required all the courage and hardihood of real heroes to win it. How Grant ran the gantlet of the powerful batteries to attack the stronghold is one of the big feats of American history. In spite of sickness among his men, and many other handicaps as well, he conquered Vicksburg, and the Confederacy was literally cut in two; the Mississippi was once more open as a highway to the North. As Lincoln himself phrased it, "The 'Father of Waters' again goes unvexed to the sea."

Rejoicing was great in the North, and the end of the war was expected in short order. All the more, then, the people resisted the "drafts," the compelling of men to join the army. But losses had been tremendous, and as volunteering had almost stopped, the government was forced to take drastic measures. If a man were rich enough, however, he might "buy off" for three hundred dollars instead of serving his time of three years. This caused bitter feeling among the poor, especially in New York City, and in 1863, from July 13 to 16, there were mobs and riots which resulted in terror and death. Ten thousand troops were called out

to quell the disturbance in the metropolis. Such a state of affairs sorely troubled Lincoln, and it was another grief added to the many he already bore. Fortunately, these conditions soon abated, and in many parts of the country volunteering was resumed when the Northern victories gave a new glory to the standard of the Union. Autumn saw Grant winning notable successes around Chattanooga. The battle of Lookout Mountain was fought and won "in the clouds," and the victory on Missionary Ridge was a thrilling achievement.

Crowning all the inspiriting midsummer of 1863 came the dedication of a national burying-ground at Gettysburg, where the war had reached its bloody crisis and where so many of our bravest soldiers had given up their lives. A multitude met on November 19 to witness the solemn ceremonies. Edward Everett, the celebrated New England orator, was to be the chief speaker of the day, a large chorus of voices was to render sacred music, and President Lincoln was expected to make "a few appropriate remarks."

Everett had prepared a two-hour speech and it was delivered with all the eloquence and passion of which its author was capable. Lincoln had hastily jotted down his few remarks, and almost

THE "GETTYSBURG ADDRESS" IN LINCOLN'S HANDWRITING

Address delivered at the dedication of the
Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers
brought forth on this continent, a new na-
tion, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated
to the proposition that all men are cre-
ated 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 battle-field
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 alto-
gether fitting and proper that we should
do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedi-

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

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19, 1863.

up to the last moment, he had been occupied in shaping his ideas on scraps of paper. When it came his turn to address the throng, they saw a gaunt, care-worn man rise on the platform, his face the very semblance of sadness, and before they realized it he had finished speaking and sat down again.

A feeling of disappointment followed. All had looked for something more inspiring from him, something of greater style and impressiveness. Secretary Seward, one of those seated on the platform, addressing Everett, said,

"He has made a failure, and I am sorry for it. His speech was not equal to him."

Lincoln himself felt that he had failed miserably in his effort. But that speech was to be acclaimed a masterpiece equal to any classic of its kind, comparable indeed to the immortal efforts of the Greek orators. This noble address, enshrined to-day in the hearts of countless thousands, is so fine and flawless, that to alter a single word would be to mar its perfection. It is here given in full: —

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

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

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

Seeing it in print, many were quick to recognize its greatness that had not realized its perfection when delivered from Lincoln's lips. First among these was Everett, who paid the President a graceful tribute of appreciation.

"I should be glad," he wrote, "if I could flatter myself that I came as near the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes."

CHAPTER XXI

Intimate Glimpses

Elevated to the highest position in the gift of his countrymen, Abraham Lincoln remained the same in word and manner. There was no change in the outward man from the friendly neighbor with a "howd'y" for all in Springfield, to the ruler of twenty millions in the White House, with a great army at his command. No man ever bore more simply such honor and such power.

As one of Springfield's leading citizens, it was no unusual sight to see him chopping his own wood, milking his cow, going to market, a basket on his arm, or working about his stable; and, without a thought as to how it might strike others, he would carry his boys on his back or sprawl on the floor with them in some game. Indeed, he always delighted in the company of children, whether they were his own or not. The anecdote of the little girl who asked him to let his whiskers grow, so that he would look better, is an instance that shows his big, childlike heart.

Just before his election this little girl wrote him a letter pointing out to him the advantage of whiskers. Lincoln, no doubt smiling boyishly to himself, answered the child as follows: —

"My dear little Miss: Your very agreeable letter of the fifteenth is received. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughter. I have three sons, one seventeen, one nine, and one seven years of age. They, with their mother, constitute my whole family. As to the whiskers, never having worn any, do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affectation if I were to begin now?"

But he evidently thought better of it, for there came a time when he let his whiskers grow, and while stopping at a town on his way to be inaugurated, he faced a crowd and asked for the little girl, Miss Grace Bedell. She was there, sure enough, and was brought forward to meet her idol. Lincoln kissed her and called her attention to his brand-new whiskers. We may picture her embarrassment and delight.

At the White House he did not give up his country habits. He rose with the dawn, and as early as six o'clock he would be seen at the gate of the White House impatiently craning his neck for sight of the newsboy. Regulation clothes he detested, and whenever it might properly be done, he would

don his dressing-gown and put on slippers. Furthermore, he was fond of cocking his feet above his head and almost sitting on his shoulder-blades! Of course, only in his resting hours and in his own particular rooms would such a sight present itself. At times, when full dress and dignified manners were required, Lincoln could comply with the forms of etiquette, though in his heart he was bored at social functions.

The servants in the White House were never under rigid control. They seemed to come and go as they pleased, even going to the length of interrupting state conferences to deliver some unimportant message from Mrs. Lincoln. President Lincoln stood their free and easy attitude with good nature and never rebuffed them. Once, it is said, a caller on a Sunday morning rang the White House bell vainly until, tiring of receiving no response, he walked in. Still not a servant was in sight to announce the visitor. Taking his courage in hand, he knocked on the President's door, and explained his extraordinary reception to Lincoln. "Oh," laughed the head of the nation, "the boys are all out this morning."

His children, "Tad" and "Willie," took full possession of the White House when the family moved there. "Tad" or Thomas was eight and

Willie ten years old when they went to live in the historic mansion. Together they played boisterously through the stately halls and rooms. Each of them had a pet goat hitched to a little wagon that they drove and raced. Ponies were theirs, too, and the little lads had lots of fun, heedless of the terrible shadow hanging over their father. Often it was only their merry voices echoing about the place that relieved the gloom in the hearts of those anxious ones in the White House. Lincoln loved to hear them and have them swoop down on him suddenly with joyous proposals to frolic. And grave senators and elegant gentlemen were occasionally shocked to see the head of the nation playing with his boys as if he were one of them, entering their ball game with zest and running bases like a long-legged, overgrown youngster.

Willie Lincoln died in February, 1862, just when everything else seemed blackest, and the loss was well-nigh unbearable for the afflicted father, while it almost affected the reason of the bereaved mother. Lincoln had all he could do to master that melancholy which was always ready to take possession of him. But his other responsibilities roused his courage beyond despair. Tad, after this sorrow, became the light of his father's eyes. The little fellow was permitted all

sorts of liberties. He was allowed to seek out his father and demand attention, no matter what task of state might be occupying the President; and Lincoln only laughed indulgently at any complaint against the child. His own childhood had been so full of hard work that he appeared resolved that his boy's life should be filled to overflowing with play and gladness.

Whenever Mrs. Lincoln and Tad were absent from home on a trip or visit for any length of time, Lincoln, in sending messages to his wife, never forgot to include news of importance to Tad. The goats occupied the main position in these telegrams. Once he telegraphed that, "Nanny was found resting herself and chewing her little cud in the middle of Tad's bed." Again, the information was, "Tell Tad the goats and father are very well — especially the goats."

Tad somehow succeeded in making Secretary Stanton his slave. Usually Stanton was stern, abrupt, and full of business, but he did so far forget himself one day as to make Tad a lieutenant in the army. Tad took his appointment with due respect and dignity, and managed to get a suitable uniform for his rank. He drilled and messed with his father's guard of soldiers, and, once exercising his authority, dismissed them from duty. A new

guard was to be organized by him out of the White House laborers, he decided. Some one brought it to the President's notice as a serious matter. Lincoln saw only the amusing side of the affair.

Another trait of the little boy was one that reminded people of his father. Tad would get up fairs for the sick and wounded soldiers, and solicit support. He might raise a racket playing "Minstrel Show" in the attic in a morning, but perhaps the same afternoon would find him running a charitable "fair," or going among his father's crowd of callers, finding out their troubles, and then importantly leading to the President those that had touched his sensibilities.

It was Tad's habit to report each evening to his father all his interests and activities of the day. Laying aside his cares and labors, Lincoln would listen to the childish confidences, nodding gravely over a vital act, or laughing at some ridiculous happening. Generally, before he was half through his recital, Tad fell asleep, usually on the floor, when the father would gather up his precious burden and carry him to bed.

We have alluded to the crowd of callers that besieged the White House. Never before or since has such a stream of humanity, bearing all sorts of complaints or seeking favors, deluged the home of

our chief executive. They were welcome to see the President several days of the week, in the early afternoon, when he had finished with senators and other important personages. Lincoln loved these hours when he met the people face to face. He used to refer to these informal receptions as his "public opinion baths." The crowd was as a rule received by him while seated in an armchair, and on a table close at hand rested a Bible — a book which he read more and more as he grew older.

All sorts of people sought him in this way. There were endless office-seekers, relatives of soldiers caught in the toils of war, cranks who knew the way to end the war at once, and enthusiastic inventors wishing support of wild projects. Many women, widows and orphans of dead soldiers, were in this assemblage of pleaders. To every one Lincoln listened courteously and kindly, having a sympathetic word for one, a funny yarn for another, and for all any real help that lay in his power.

Two women one day begged him to release their husbands from jail; the men were needed by their families; they had been arrested for refusing to be drafted. After a moment's thought, the President reached for his pen and signed the order of release, also setting free other men jailed for the

same reason. One of the women was aged. She turned to the man who had granted her wish. With deep emotion she said, "I shall probably never see you again until we meet in heaven."

Lincoln was touched by the simple words of faith. To his friend Joshua Speed, who happened to be standing near, he said that the old woman's remark had gladdened him more than anything else that had happened that day. Then he added those words that were so beautiful and true of himself. "Die when I may," he said, "I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow."

Sometimes the old joke-telling Lincoln would throw off his weight of responsibility, and for an evening, surrounded by a few kindred spirits, he would laugh and spin yarns by the hour. Such a light hour was given him when Dennis Hanks, his old chum and fellow farm-laborer, came to see him in Washington, to plead for some friends of his who had been locked up as Copperheads.

Dennis Hanks came all togged out in his best Sunday clothes to call on his old friend, now the first man of the land. He was naturally nervous and awkward in his manner of making known his desire to the guards who felt like laughing at the

rustic visitor. However, Dennis made his way past the gibing fellows and was highly gratified to find "Abe" the same as ever, and delighted to greet him. Indeed, the President insisted on Dennis spending a lot of time with him, and they swapped old-time memories of happy days. Of course, Lincoln granted his friend's request for pardon of the offenders in Illinois, and sent him home the proud possessor of a silver watch, engraved with words commemorating the occasion.

Careless about his appearance generally, Lincoln was equally careless about his eating and the routine of business. It was a common thing for him to forget to come to meals, and after he had eaten, it was often difficult for him to recall what he had taken. His indifference to petty office details drove others to distraction. Letters that required an answer he used to keep in his tall hat. If he got a new hat, or changed to another, it would be likely that his correspondence suffered! It is on record that he once apologized for not replying to a letter because it was in his old hat. When he was practicing law, it was customary for him to bundle miscellaneous memoranda together, tie them up and label the packet, —

"When you can't find *it* anywhere else, look into this."

Lincoln relied on his retentive and accurate memory. Card indexes and files were not for him. But he never forgot the principal points or facts in a matter. Great issues were clear to him, and his mind would sweep aside all except the vital parts. Woe betide the individual who tried to gloss over a moral issue or becloud an honest argument. In such cases Lincoln's mind was like an X-ray, penetrating to the very soul of things.

He never found fault with subordinates, and rather than demand a service of them would perform a task himself. Thus he would work early and late, sparing everybody but himself.

Social functions must have wearied him more than all his other labors put together, yet no one was more patient and courteous, tolerating bores and putting at ease those who were awkward and tongue-tied in his presence. While his voice and wit were with the brilliant company, his heart and soul were out with "the boys in blue" fighting on bloody battlefields, or his mind would plunge into the ineffable sadness ever ready to infold him. A French marquis described such remarkable changes in the face of the President one evening during a reception. The nobleman counted twenty alterations of countenance, from animated gayety to sudden, profound melancholy. More than one

commentator has thought Lincoln wore the cloak of humor to hide his natural sadness.

In no home was the ravage and tragedy of the war felt more keenly than in the Lincoln family at the White House. Lincoln himself had a number of dear friends fighting for the North, as well as an equal number on the Southern side. It will be remembered that the President was born a Southerner, and that his wife was a Kentuckian. Both of them suffered personal griefs as the armies clashed. Several of Lincoln's dearest friends were killed in battle, and his heart was torn by deaths in Confederate and Union ranks equally. Mrs. Lincoln, on the other hand, had brothers fighting on the Southern side. Two of them were killed on the field of battle. Her favorite brother lay dying at Shiloh while she had to open a grand ball in honor of that Union victory!

Lincoln had no vacations, but in the summer time he lived in a cooler retreat than the White House. This was the Soldiers' Home, a short distance out of Washington. It was a familiar sight to see him driving between the two places, a mounted guard of twenty-five or thirty cavalry attending him, their swords drawn and upright. Stanton would insist on these protectors though Lincoln complained of them. "They make such

From the Collection of Americana of Frederick H. Meserve, New York.

MARY TODD LINCOLN.

The Lady of the White House.

a noise that Mrs. Lincoln and I cannot hear ourselves talk," he would protest.

To walk or sit under the stars in the cool of the evening was one of Lincoln's habits. He loved to get away from the crowded, maddening world and meditate in the dark. Frequently he went to a little mall adjoining the White House, there to think and perhaps to pray. The sculptor, Borglum, has conceived him so in his "Lonely Lincoln," which is a very human monument that gives an enviable touch to the city of Newark, New Jersey. Lincoln would have commended the spirit of the sculptor, for he always expressed an admiration for the lowlier aspects of life, and once told of a dream to illustrate this trait of his. In this dream he heard himself criticized as being a common-looking man, and turning to the speaker the President rebuked him, saying, —

"Friend, the Lord prefers common-looking people; that is why he made so many of them."

CHAPTER XXII

Tension and Reëlection

Before the year 1863 ended, Lincoln, in his annual message, again betrayed his never-sleeping desire to forgive his enemies. He made it known that he was ready to pardon all rebels, with the exception of certain offenders, provided they took oath to support the Constitution, the Union, and the proclamation concerning slavery. Also, he outlined a plan of restoring to the Union the seceded states that might wish to come in. Much opposition in congress and throughout the North resulted. They held that the President was going too far. His authority, they contended, was not great enough to permit him to make such a declaration. As a consequence of this and the prospect of unabated warfare, Lincoln's renomination looked extremely doubtful. Politicians were especially set against him. The Secretary of the Treasury, Chase, counted himself a possible rival candidate, and after injuring Lincoln's cause as much as he could, he resigned from the Cabinet

because his disloyalty became a common topic of conversation. It is strange to note that the most powerful men of Lincoln's Cabinet all tried thwarting or rivaling him — always to their shame and defeat in the end. And Chase was no exception, for, when the time for nomination came, his own state, Ohio, preferred Lincoln.

Perhaps the year of 1864 was harder then any on Lincoln. Everything depended on the army now. The victories of 1863 had buoyed the people up with false hopes of the immediate cessation of war. Under Grant, who had been created Commander in Chief, they expected speedy triumph over the Confederates in the spring. Instead, the Southern generals, Lee and Johnston, proved that they possessed the strength and purpose of desperation and decision. Frightful slaughter was the outcome of the battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, and Cold Harbor. The losses of Grant amounted to fifty thousand men in little more than a month. Yet he sent forth his ringing slogan to hearten the gloomy North: —

"*I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.*"

Then he settled down to besiege Petersburg, come what might. General Sherman, the other leader

depended upon, was in Georgia, fighting his way heroically, every foot of progress costing precious blood.

Among the political leaders it seemed as if any one save Lincoln was preferred as a candidate for the next presidential election; still, the "plain people" did not swerve from their support of the man at the helm; and largely through their firmness and devotion he was renominated at the Baltimore Convention, June 8, 1864, the Republicans dropping their party name and choosing him on what was called the Union ticket, with Andrew Johnson, a Democrat of Tennessee, for Vice-President. Learning this, a delegation of admirers called at the White House to express its pleasure at the outcome. With a look of quizzical seriousness on his face, Lincoln answered: —

"I do not allow myself to suppose that either the Convention or the League have concluded that I am either the greatest or the best man in America, but rather they have concluded it is not best to swap horses while crossing the river, and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse that they might not make a botch of it in trying to swap."

His quaint and homely words caught the popular fancy, and on all sides was echoed and reëchoed

the phrase, "Don't swap horses while crossing a river," which in this fashion was molded into a campaign watchword. But doubtful days were hard upon these loyal supporters. All summer the war went on without sign of breaking. The Southerners bore the favor of Fortune, apparently. Once they came up as far as the environs of the capital, and at the time Washington was almost defenseless. Terror reigned, and a steamer was prepared to carry off the President and his Cabinet to safety should Confederates descend upon the city. Fortunately, help came from Grant at the proper moment and the enemy fled.

Midsummer was with them and still no victory to cheer the North. Complaint was general. It would seem the worst time possible to call for more men to fight, yet Lincoln determined to do so. Political well-wishers told him it would ruin his chances of reëlection. To this advice he replied,

"It is not a personal question at all. It matters not what becomes of me. We must have men. If I go down, I intend to go like the *Cumberland*, with my colors flying."

So the President had the courage to call for 500,000 men, and, furthermore, proclaimed that if they were not supplied by the various states by September, it would be necessary to draft them.

As the summer merged into August unmarked by a Union victory, Lincoln saw nothing but failure ahead. The Democrats held their convention on August 31, and nominated McClellan for President. In their platform they declared that the time had come to end the terrible war by means of peaceful agreement; that four years of strife and bloodshed had failed to accomplish the desired end. And many prominent Republicans believed the same thing. When Lincoln heard of an attempt to drive out of the army one of his generals for speaking in favor of McClellan, he prevented the deed, saying, —

"Supporting General McClellan for the presidency is not violation of army regulations, and as a question of taste in choosing between him and me — well, I'm the longest, but he's better-looking."

Even Lincoln agreed with those who foretold his failure to gain reëlection. Many thought that he ought to withdraw from the ticket and allow another to take his place. So convinced was Lincoln of a coming defeat that he sat down one morning in August and penned a resolution which he had made in his own heart. It ran as follows:

"This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this administration will

not be reëlected. Then it will be my duty to so coöperate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration, as he will have secured the election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterwards."

But his forebodings were to be happily dispelled. In September the country was electrified by the sweeping victories of Sherman, who took Atlanta, and by the prowess of Sheridan in the Shenandoah. Lincoln called on the people to give public thanks. Rejoicing was uppermost in the hearts of the North.

Triumph at the polls now appeared certain for Lincoln. Success blessing the Federal arms also shed an air of glory around him. Election returns in November gave him a majority of about half a million votes. Lincoln was in the War Department waiting the returns and filling in idle moments by reading the amusing yarns of Petroleum V. Nasby. In times of deep feeling and tensity it relieved him to divert his mind with jokes and humor, as we have seen again and again in his career.

When his reëlection was assured, his first thought was of his wife, as it had been on the former occasion. Turning to a subordinate, he exclaimed, —

"Send the word over to Madam; she will be more interested than I am."

As the days passed, further victories crowned the arms of the Union. Sheridan took possession of the Shenandoah Valley, Sherman swept triumphantly to the sea, and General Thomas routed the Confederates in Tennessee. The cause of Secession was doomed.

Victory did not make Lincoln proud, nor did it cause him to think of the so-called sweets of revenge. All he felt was sorrow and sympathy for his brothers in the South. He was anxious to bring peace speedily and to be as easy and as gentle with the defeated ones as was possible. To this end he argued with his Cabinet and with Congress, for neither of these bodies was inclined to leniency. Moreover, he consented to meet representatives of the Confederate government in Hampton Roads, headed by their vice-president, Alexander H. Stephens, to talk over plans for peace without further strife. In agreeing to meet these emissaries he cared nothing for his dignity or his pride — all he desired was an end to the horrors of war. But he was disappointed in this conference, for the Confederate delegates insisted upon recognition of their government as the first issue in the matter of conciliation. The President could not recognize any other nation set up within the boundaries of the United States. One of the

representatives, in argument, used Charles I. of England as an example for Lincoln in his negotiations. To this Lincoln dryly remarked, —

"All I distinctly recollect about Charles I. is that he lost his head!"

This attempt at peace, February 3, was a complete fizzle. Arms really had to settle the differences between the divided nation. Still, Lincoln persisted in his endeavor to bring about a cessation of bloodshed. After his return from the Hampton conference, he planned to submit to Congress a scheme whereby an appropriation of four hundred million dollars be made as compensation to the South for the loss of their slaves, provided they consented to lay down arms before the 1st of April. With one voice his Cabinet cried out against the idea. Facing them, the President said sorrowfully, —

"I see that you are all opposed to me, and I will not send it."

Compensated emancipation had been a favorite idea of Lincoln's for many years, but it never became a reality. Everywhere it was rejected; by the South, by the Border states, by the North. However, he had the happiness to see the launching of an amendment to the Constitution forbidding slavery anywhere in the United States.

His second inauguration was, if anything, more solemn than his first. It was almost in the nature of a religious ceremony. Rain had filled the day of his inauguration up to the moment he took the oath of office, when the sun burst through the clouds and clothed him in radiance. Four years before Lincoln had faced the listening multitude, his gigantic task only begun. Now he stood virtually a conqueror, the end in sight, but still humble and gentle. In those four years he had grown old, wrinkled, and careworn; on his sad face was written the tragic epic of a war waged by brother against brother; he looked like some prophet whose past words had been translated into scourge and fire, whose present words were to bring healing and balm to the stricken nation. Slowly, impressively, he began his noble oration that was to sway and thrill the throng that heard, and was to touch the hearts of endless unborn generations of men: —

"Fellow-Countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been

constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the Nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

"On the occasion corresponding to this, four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, 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. One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and

extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even, by war; while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

"Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered — that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the Providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the

woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those Divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all 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 with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

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

CHAPTER XXIII

The Curtain Falls

Spring of 1865 brought the bustle of preparation for renewed struggle. General Grant broke winter quarters, and the President, anxious to be near the scene of the close of the conflict, so confidently expected, went down the James River and established himself on board a steamer called *River Queen*, where his accommodations were anything but comfortable. He wanted to be ready in case of emergency that he alone felt empowered to handle. Afraid lest Grant discuss political matters in the event of Lee's capitulation, he had written,

"Such questions the President holds in his own hands, and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions."

Mrs. Lincoln and Tad were sent for that they might enjoy a change, and Robert, the oldest son, obtained leave from Harvard to have some practical soldiering under Grant.

The President appeared in excellent spirits, his gloom gone for the time being. At Grant's

winter quarters at City Point, he sat with officers round a camp fire telling entertaining stories and listening to others.

One memorable day, when General Sherman had arrived in camp from Georgia, Grant and Admiral Porter joined him, and together they went to consult with Lincoln. Final plans were to be discussed. The gentle-souled President shrank from the idea of more carnage.

"Must more blood be shed? Cannot this last bloody battle be avoided?" he asked, gravely, pain coming to his eyes.

The three fighting men in answer agreed that Lee would never surrender until driven to it. That wonderful Confederate leader had gathered his tattered and broken army about him for a desperate stand, refusing to admit defeat even in the face of the awful facts.

The 1st of April brought the news of Sheridan's success at Five Forks. That was enough to assure the fall of Richmond. The day following the battle, Jefferson Davis sat in his pew joining in prayers for divine succor, when word came that Lee was in flight before the hosts of Grant. Richmond was without protection, open to the enemy, for the first time in four years! Jefferson Davis, his cabinet, and the paraphernalia of the Confederate

government, were hurried to trains and whirled farther South.

Richmond citizens, rich and poor, fled at the approach of the invaders, some of them setting fire to the military supplies, and soon the flames spread to other parts of the frenzied city. A horde of underworld criminals began looting and drinking. Disorder and destruction reigned when the Union forces reached the scene. The conquerors did not join the orgy, but set about extinguishing fires, quelling the drunken thieves, and giving food to hundreds of the famished population that had suffered all the deprivations of a siege.

In the deserted home of Jefferson Davis the commander of the Union troops, General Weitzel, took up residence, and the Stars and Stripes once more flung its folds over the capital of the Confederacy.

The joyous tidings were brought to Lincoln at City Point. "Thank God that I have lived to see this!" he exclaimed. "I want to see Richmond." Hardly any preparations were made. Like the humblest citizen he entered the fallen stronghold of the Confederacy, and walked through the city, his only escort a handful of sailors. He walked about a mile and a half, fearless of any crazed or vengeful enemy that might seek his life.

During his walk he was constantly besieged by negroes in ecstasies of joy and thanksgiving. Many prostrated themselves before him. Some kissed his feet. Others strove to touch him. Most of them danced around in a frenzy of rejoicing, singing hymns, exclaiming that salvation was at hand. Their exclamations were those of camp-meeting hysteria: "Glory! Hallelujah!" "God bress Massa Linkum!" "Open de pearly gates!" "Jerusalem, my happy home!" "I'se bound for de lan' ob Canaan!" "No more sighin' an' weepin'!" These and many other shouts made a din that deafened. Lincoln sought to stay their exhibitions of mad worship. He was hot and uncomfortable, and he fanned himself with his "stove-pipe" hat.

"God bless you, and let me pass on," said he to the clamorous blacks. He cautioned and counseled them to be quiet and orderly.

At last he reached the home of Jefferson Davis, and quite exhausted he sank into the Confederate President's chair, at his desk. He sat in reverie.

On April 5, Lincoln journeyed back to Grant's headquarters at City Point. Four days later he turned his face toward Washington, on April 9, the day Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox

Court House. These two great leaders, Grant and Lee, were equally noble in their demeanor at that momentous meeting, the Union general recognizing in his antagonist a worthy but unfortunate rival, the Southern leader rendering homage to a brave and successful brother-in-arms.

The Southern soldiers were weary, shabby, and hungry; and the first thought of the conquerors was to feed and clothe their former enemies. Lincoln heard of this Christian spirit with deep gratification. Personally, he had always regarded the rebellious Southerners as brothers, misguided and obstinate, fighting for a lost cause with souls that should have burned for a more worthy ideal. And his desire had ever been to treat them as prodigals returned to the fold.

As he went up the Potomac that April Sunday morning from City Point, he read his favorite Shakespearian play — *Macbeth*. One passage he read aloud to his companions, then read it again as if wishing to impress the significant words on his mind forever: —

> "Duncan is in his grave;
> After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
> Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign envy, nothing,
> Can touch him further."

As the boat neared Washington Mrs. Lincoln voiced her perpetual fear. "That city is filled with our enemies!" she said apprehensively.

"Enemies!" echoed her husband. "We must never speak of that."

But there were many who hated him, who saw him in the guise of a monster — this gentle man who would, if he could, restrain the outburst of rejoicing in the North over the defeat of their foes — this man who applauded the way Grant treated the beaten enemy when that general commanded the artillery to cease firing in honor of Lee's downfall.

Two days after the surrender, on April 11, a big crowd collected about the White House in the evening, to show their joy at the outcome of the long, tragic war. Lincoln appeared in a window and read to them a short speech which contained nothing of exultation or boastful reflection. He was quiet, earnest, with his uppermost thought betraying his anxiety to restore the South to the Union as soon and easily as could be managed.

Nothing of especial note occurred during the next few days. The President was deep in his plans for reconstruction. Neither Johnston, in the Carolinas, nor General Kirby Smith, west of the Mississippi, had yet laid down arms, but their

surrender was merely a matter of time. So Lincoln went ahead with the political machinery that would reëstablish the fallen South to its original relationship to the Federal government. April 14 dawned like many another April day, though its close was to mark one of the greatest tragedies of history. Strangely enough, it happened to be Good Friday.

At the White House a Cabinet meeting was held. More important than any other topic was that of how to dispose of the Confederate leaders. Should they be hanged as traitors, or what? Lincoln declared that no one need expect him to sanction such retaliation.

"Frighten them out of the country!" he exclaimed. "Scare them off!" The speaker here threw up his long arms as if "shooing" imaginary sheep. "Enough lives have been sacrificed. We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union." Again he counseled, "All must begin to act in the interest of peace."

The Cabinet meeting ended with the President's plea ringing in their ears. Lincoln was in unusually good spirits. The mountain of cares that had oppressed him for the past four years seemed to be dissolving like a mirage. But Secretary Stanton was worried over the fact that the Presi-

dent had arranged to go to the theater that night, and had also invited General Grant and Mrs. Grant to occupy the box with him and Mrs. Lincoln. Stanton did not approve of Lincoln and Grant exposing themselves to unnecessary danger. Washington was by no means free from desperate and bitter enemies, and frequently Lincoln's life had been threatened in anonymous letters. Lincoln himself was careless of all threats, and had an intense dislike of bodyguards or special efforts at protection in his behalf.

On this April day, however, he had resolved to forget, if possible, the burdens he had lately borne. He went driving with Mrs. Lincoln in the afternoon and proved so gay and care-free that she could hardly believe her ears and eyes. Fondly he talked of their past struggles, of the hard but happy days in Springfield; how he longed to travel as well as to be back among "home folks"; but he added that they ought to enjoy life to the full when his term of office had expired.

Instead of being gladdened by his sanguine mood, Mrs. Lincoln was apprehensive.

"I have seen you thus only once before," she said; "it was just before our dear Willie died."

That afternoon Lincoln signed a pardon for a soldier sentenced to death for desertion. Also on

petition, he granted the discharge of a Southern prisoner. His last official acts were those of mercy.

Word came that the Grants could not attend the theater party that evening, and Mrs. Lincoln invited in their stead a young couple recently betrothed, Major Rathbone and a Miss Harris. Visitors detained the President until the hour was quite late to go to the theater. It was about nine o'clock when the Presidential party appeared in the box reserved for them. As Lincoln was recognized, the orchestra played "Hail to the Chief," and the performance stopped temporarily, while the audience cheered enthusiastically.

Lincoln and his party settled themselves to enjoy the rollicking fun of "Our American Cousin," a comedy from the pen of Tom Taylor, a famous English dramatist. Thus, an hour went by.

Meanwhile, one of Lincoln's fanatical enemies was carrying out a well-laid plot to kill him. John Wilkes Booth was an actor, a Southern radical, and came of a celebrated family of players, of whom Edwin Booth was the most illustrious member. John Wilkes Booth was a handsome, dissipated young man of twenty-eight. With others, he concocted the dastardly scheme of murdering both the President and Secretary Seward, the latter then ill in bed.

Up and down Pennsylvania Avenue the destroyer paced, awaiting his appointed hour to strike, drinking heavily to inflame further his mad purpose. At about ten o'clock he crept into Ford's Theater. He had taken the precaution, beforehand, to prepare the door of the presidential box so that there might be no hitch in his work. A hole had been bored in the door for spying, and a length of board had been provided to use as a bar to keep out any assistance.

Noiselessly the assassin stepped into the little anteroom back of the box, a pistol in one hand, a dagger in the other. The audience meanwhile was convulsed with laughter at the lines being spoken on the stage. Between the gusts of merriment, Lincoln had been talking to his wife of their peaceful future together, and his mind had reverted to his desire to travel. "There is no place I should like so much to see as Jerusalem," he said.

The dreadful moment came.

The very angels must have hidden their faces as the crazed Booth aimed the pistol at the back of Lincoln's head and fired a shot that pierced the brain. For a moment no one realized what was happening. As the shot sounded, Lincoln was seen to rise in his chair and then fall back, his head limp upon his chest. Major Rathbone

quickly recovered from his moment of surprise and horror, and dashed at Booth, who, dropping his pistol, dug at the Major with his dagger. It was driven into Rathbone's outstretched arm.

Then Mrs. Lincoln screamed. Booth leaped to the edge of the box and sprang for the stage, a distance of about eight feet. Folds of the American flag that had been draped about the front of the President's box caught his spur and in the leap he broke his leg. But he was so far gone in insane passion that he did not feel the injury enough to give him pause. Standing on the stage he flourished his knife and shouted, "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" which was the motto of his native state, Virginia.

Commotion was now on all sides, and was increasing till it sounded like the surge of great waves. Owing to the confusion, the assassin managed to escape through the stage door where his horse was being held in readiness for him. He jumped into the saddle and clattered away, his broken leg-bone fairly rending his flesh.

An eyewitness, Walt Whitman, " the good, gray poet," has left us this vivid account of the event: —

"A moment's hush — a scream — the cry of murder — Mrs. Lincoln leaning out of the box,

with ashy cheeks and lips, with involuntary cry, pointing to the retreating figure, 'He has killed the President!' And still a moment's strange, incredulous suspense — and then the deluge! — then that mixture of horror, noises, uncertainty — (the sound, somewhere back, of a horse's hoofs clattering with speed) — the people burst through chairs and railing, and break them up — that noise adds to the queerness of the scene — there is inextricable confusion and terror — women faint — feeble persons fall and are trampled on — many cries of agony are heard — the broad stage suddenly fills to suffocation with a dense and motley crowd like some horrible carnival — the audience rush generally upon it — at least the strong men do — the actors and actresses are there in their play costumes and painted faces, with mortal fright showing through the rouge — some trembling, some in tears — the screams and calls, confused talk — redoubled, trebled — two or three manage to pass up water from the stage to the President's box — others try to clamber up. Amidst all this, a party of soldiers, two hundred or more, hearing what is done, suddenly appear; they storm the house, inflamed with fury, literally charging the audience with fixed bayonets, muskets, and pistols, shouting, 'Clear out! clear out!' . . .

And in the midst of that pandemonium of senseless haste — the infuriated soldiers, the audience, the stage, its actors and actresses, its paints and spangles and gaslights — the life blood from those veins, the best and sweetest of the land, drips slowly down, and death's ooze already begins its little bubbles on the lips."

Doctors at once assumed charge of the stricken hero, but they quickly saw that there was no hope, for the bullet had penetrated the brain. Many willing hands carried the dying martyr from the theater to a little house opposite. The curtain of Ford's Theater fell, never to rise again!

Everything that affection or medical skill could do was unavailing; the President never recovered consciousness; he hovered on the brink of eternity for hours, and the next morning, at twenty-two minutes past seven, he died, surrounded by weeping friends. As Lincoln breathed his last, Stanton said in a hoarse, grief-stricken whisper, "Now he belongs to the Ages!"

Not much remains to tell. It was found that a similar attempt had been made on Secretary Seward's life as he lay in bed. In the struggle the Secretary and his son were severely slashed with a murderous knife, and for a time the elder Seward's life was despaired of. Nearly two weeks later

Booth was cornered in a barn by a posse and, refusing to give himself up, was shot to death. His fellow-conspirators were hanged.

When it was known throughout the land that Lincoln was dead, there was such a display of public sorrow as seldom occurs in the history of the world. People were dazed by the shock of it, and joy at the finish of hostilities between North and South was turned to mourning. Europe sent genuine expressions of grief at the loss of the man who had, as Emerson said, "been permitted to do more for America than any other American man."

Little Tad was overcome and inconsolable at the loss of his best friend and playfellow. After tempestuous grieving he sought consolation.

"Do you think, sir, that my father has gone to heaven?" he asked of a visitor.

"I have not a doubt of it," replied the gentleman.

"Then I am glad he has gone there," said Tad in a tearful voice, "for he was never happy after he came here. This was not a good place for him!"

Tributes were paid his memory by countless pens and tongues, and they continue to be paid. But none of them comes nearer the mark of true appreciation clothed in beautiful language than

Lowell's "Ode." The following lines are often quoted and should be a household treasure: —

"How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.

* * * * * * *

"Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

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