

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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THE noblest inheritance we Americans derive from our British ancestors is the memory and example of the great and good men who adorn your history. They are as much appreciated and honoured on our side of the Atlantic as on this. In giving to the English-speaking world Washington and Lincoln we think we repay, in large part, our obligation. Their pre-eminence in American history is recognised, and the republic, which the one *founded* and the other *preserved*, has already crowned them as models for her children.

In the annals of almost every great nation some names appear standing out clear and prominent, names of those who have influenced, or controlled the great events which make up history. Such were Wallace and Bruce, in Scotland; Alfred and the Edwards, William the Conqueror, Cromwell, Pitt, Nelson, and Wellington, in England; and such in a still greater degree were Washington and Lincoln.

I am here, from near his home, with the hope that I may, to some extent aid you in forming a just and true estimate of Abraham Lincoln. I knew him somewhat intimately in private and public life for more than twenty years. We practised law at the same bar, and during his administration I was a member of Congress, seeing him and conferring with him often, and, therefore, I may hope without vanity, I trust that I shall be able to contribute something of value in enabling you to judge of him. We in America, as well as you in the old world, believe that "blood will tell;" that it is a great blessing to have had an honourable and worthy ancestry. We believe that moral principle, physical and intellectual vigour in the forefathers are qualities likely to be manifested

in the descendants. Fools are not the fathers or mothers of great men. I claim for Lincoln, humble as was the station to which he was born, and rude and rough as were his early surroundings, that he had such ancestors. I mean that his father and mother, his grandfather and grandmother, and still further back, however humble and rugged their condition, were physically and mentally strong, vigorous men and women; hardy and successful pioneers on the frontier of American civilization. They were among the early settlers in Virginia, Kentucky, and Illinois, and knew how to take care of themselves in the midst of difficulties and perils; how to live and succeed when the weak would perish. These ancestors of Lincoln, for several generations, kept on the very crest of the wave of Western settlements—on the frontier, where the struggle for life was hard and the strong alone survived.

His grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, and his father, Thomas, were born in Rockingham County, Virginia.

About 1781, while his father was still a lad, his grandfather's family emigrated to Kentucky, and was a contemporary with Daniel Boone, the celebrated Indian fighter and early hero of that State. This, a then wild and wooded territory, was the scene of those fierce and desperate conflicts between the settlers and the Indians which gave it the name of "The dark and bloody ground."

When Thomas Lincoln, the father of the President, was six years old his father (Abraham the grandfather of the President) was shot and instantly killed by an Indian. The boy and his father were at work in the corn-field, near their log-cabin home. Mordecai, the elder brother of the lad, at work not far away, witnessed the attack. He saw his father fall, and ran to the cabin, seized his ready-loaded rifle and springing to the loop-hole cut through the logs, he saw the Indian, who had seized the boy, carrying him away. Raising his rifle and aiming at a silver medal, conspicuous on the breast of the Indian, he instantly fired. The Indian fell, and the lad, springing to his feet, ran to the open arms of his mother, at the cabin door. Amidst such scenes, the Lincoln family naturally produced

rude, rough, hardy, and fearless men, familiar with woodcraft; men who could meet the extremes of exposure and fatigue, who knew how to find food and shelter in the forest; men of great powers of endurance—brave and self-reliant, true and faithful to their friends and dangerous to their enemies. Men with minds to conceive and hands to execute bold enterprises.

It is a curious fact that the grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, is noted on the surveys of Daniel Boone as having purchased of the Government, five hundred acres of land. Thomas Lincoln, the father, was also the purchaser of government land, and President Lincoln left as a part of his estate, a quarter-section (one hundred and sixty acres), which he had received from the United States, for services rendered in early life as a volunteer soldier, in the Black-Hawk Indian war. Thus for three generations the Lincoln family were land-owners directly from the Government.

Such was the lineage and family from which President Lincoln sprung. Such was the environment in which his character was developed.

He was born in a log-cabin, in Kentucky, on the 12th of February, 1809.

It will aid you in picturing to yourself this young man and his surroundings, to know that, from boyhood to the age of twenty-one, in winter his head was protected from the cold by a cap made of the skin of the coon, fox, or prairie-wolf, and that he often wore the buckskin breeches and hunting-shirt of the pioneer.

He grew up to be a man of majestic stature and Herculean strength. Had he appeared in England or Normandy, some centuries ago, he would have been the founder of some great Baronial family, possibly of a Royal dynasty. He could have wielded, with ease, the two-handed sword of Guy, the great Earl of Warwick, or the battle-axe of Richard of the Lion-heart.

## HIS EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

The world is naturally interested in knowing what was the education and training which fitted Lincoln for the great work which he accomplished. On the extreme frontier, the means of book-learning was very limited. The common free schools, which now closely follow the heels of the pioneer and organized civil government, and prevail all over the United States, had not then reached the Far West. An itinerant school teacher wandered occasionally into a settlement, opened a private school for a few months, and, at such, Lincoln attended at different times, in all about twelve months. His mother, who was a woman of practical good sense, of strong physical organization, of deep religious feeling, gentle and self-reliant, taught him to read and write.

Although she died when he was only nine years old, she had already laid deep the foundations of his excellence. Perfect truthfulness and integrity, love of justice, self-control, reverence for God, these constituted the solid basis of his character. These were all implanted and carefully cultivated by his mother, and he always spoke of her with the deepest respect and the most tender affection. "All that I am, or hope to be," said he, when President, "I owe to my sainted mother."

He early manifested the most eager desire to learn, but there were no libraries and few books in the back settlements in which he lived. Among the stray volumes which he found in the possession of the illiterate families by which he was surrounded were Æsop's Fables, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, a Life of Washington, the poems of Burns, and the Bible. To these his reading was confined, and he read them over and over again until they became as familiar almost as the alphabet. His memory was marvellous, and I never yet met the man more familiar with the Bible than Abraham Lincoln. This was apparent in after life both from his conversation and writings, scarcely a speech or state paper of his in which illustrations and allusions from the Bible cannot be found.

While a young man, he made for himself, of coarse paper, a

scrap book, into which he copied everything which particularly pleased him. He found an old English grammar, which he studied by himself; and he formed, from his constant study of the Bible, that simple, plain, clear Anglo-Saxon style, so effective with the people. He illustrated the maxim that it is better to know thoroughly a few good books than to skim over many. When fifteen years old he began (with a view of improving himself) to write on various subjects and to practise in making political and other speeches. These he made so amusing and attractive that his father had to forbid his making them in working hours, for, said he, "when Abe begins to speak all the hands flock to hear him." His memory was so retentive that he could repeat *verbatim* the sermons and political speeches which he heard.

While his days were spent in hard manual labour, and his evenings in study, he grew up strong in body, healthful in mind, with no bad habits; no stain of intemperance, profanity, or vice of any kind. He used neither tobacco nor intoxicating drinks, and thus living, he grew to be six feet four inches high, and a giant in strength. In all athletic sports he had no equal. I have heard an old comrade say, "he could strike the hardest blow with the woodman's axe, and the maul of the rail-splitter, jump higher, run faster than any of his fellows, and there were none, far or near, who could lay him on his back." Kind and cordial, he early developed so much wit and humour, such a capacity for narrative and story-telling that he was everywhere a most welcome guest.

#### A LAND SURVEYOR.

Like Washington, he became in early life a good practical surveyor, and I have in my library the identical book from which at eighteen years of age, he studied the art of surveying. By his skill and accuracy, and by the neatness of his work, he was sought after by the settlers, to survey and fix the boundaries of their farms, and in this way, in part, he earned a support while he studied law. In 1837, self-taught, he was admitted and licensed by the Supreme Court of Illinois to practise law.

## A LAWYER.

It is difficult for me to describe, and perhaps more difficult for you to conceive, the contrast when Lincoln began to practise law, between the forms of the administration of justice in Westminster Hall, and in the rude log court-houses of Illinois. I recall to-day what was said a few years ago by an Illinois friend when we visited for the first time Westminster Abbey, and as we passed into Westminster Hall. "This" he exclaimed, "this is the grandest forum in the world. Here Fox, Burke, and Sheridan hurled their denunciations against Warren Hastings. Here Brougham defended Queen Caroline. And this," he went on to repeat, in the words of Macaulay (words as familiar in America as here) "this is the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which has resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, and which has witnessed the trials of Bacon and Somers, and Strafford and Charles the First." "And yet," I replied, "I have seen justice administered on the prairies of Illinois without pomp or ceremony, everything simple to rudeness, and yet when Lincoln and Douglas led at that bar, I have seen justice administered by judges as pure, aided by advocates as eloquent, if not as learned, as any who ever presided, or plead in Westminster Hall."

The common law of England (said to be the perfection of human wisdom) was administered in both forums, and the decisions of each tribunal were cited as authority in the other, both illustrating that reverence for, and obedience to law which is the glory of the English-speaking race.

Lincoln was a great lawyer. He sought to convince rather by the application of principle than by the citation of authorities. On the whole, he was stronger with the jury than with the court. I do not know that there has ever been, in America, a greater or more successful advocate before a jury, on the right side, than Abraham Lincoln. He had a marvellous power of conciliating and impressing everyone in his favour. A stranger entering the court, ignorant of the case,

and listening a few moments to Lincoln, would find himself involuntarily on his side and wishing him success. He was a quick and accurate reader of character, and seemed to comprehend, almost intuitively, the peculiarities of those with whom he came in contact. His manner was so candid, his methods so direct, so fair, he seemed so anxious that truth and justice should prevail, that everyone wished him success. He excelled in the statement of his case. However complicated, he would disentangle it, and present the important and turning-point in a way so clear that all could understand. Indeed, his statement often alone won his cause, rendering argument unnecessary. The judges would often stop him by saying, "If that is the case, brother Lincoln, we will hear the other side."

His ability in examining a witness, in bringing out clearly the important facts, was only surpassed by his skilful cross-examinations. He could often compel a witness to tell the truth, where he meant to lie. He could make a jury laugh, and generally weep, at his pleasure. On the right side, and when fraud or injustice were to be exposed, or innocence vindicated, he rose to the highest range of eloquence, and was irresistible. But he must have faith in his cause to bring out his full strength. His wit and humour, his quaint and homely illustrations, his inexhaustible stores of anecdote, always to the point, added greatly to his power as a jury-advocate.

He never misstated evidence or misrepresented his opponent's case, but met it fairly and squarely.

He remained in active practice until his nomination, in May, 1860, for the presidency. He was employed in the leading cases in both the federal and state courts, and had a large clientelage, not only in Illinois, but was frequently called on special retainers, to other States.

#### AN ILLINOIS POLITICIAN.

By his eloquence and popularity he became, early in life, the leader of the old Whig party, in Illinois. He served as member of the State Legislature, was the candidate of his

party for speaker, presidential elector, and United States senator, and was a member of the lower house of Congress.

#### SLAVERY.

When the independence of the American republic was established, African slavery was tolerated as a local and temporary institution. It was in conflict with the moral sense, the religious convictions of the people, and the political principles on which the government was founded.

But having been tolerated, it soon became an organized, aggressive power, and, later, it became the master of the Government. Conscious of its inherent weakness, it demanded and obtained additional territory for its expansion. First, the great Louisiana territory was purchased, then Florida, and then Texas.

By the repeal, in 1854, of the prohibition of slavery north of the line of 36° 30' of latitude (known in America as the "Missouri Compromise"), the slavery question became the leading one in American politics, and the absorbing and exciting topic of discussion. It shattered into fragments the old Conservative Whig party, with which Mr. Lincoln had theretofore acted. It divided the Democratic party, and new parties were organized upon issues growing directly out of the question of slavery.

The leader of that portion of the Democratic party, which continued, for a time, to act with the slavery party, was Stephen Arnold Douglas, then representing Illinois in the United States Senate. He was a bold, ambitious, able man, and had, thus far, been uniformly successful. He had introduced and carried through Congress, against the most vehement opposition, the repeal of the law, prohibiting slavery, called the Missouri Compromise.

#### THE CONTEST BETWEEN FREEDOM AND SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES.

The issue having been now distinctly made between freedom and the extension of slavery into the territories, Lincoln and Douglas, the leaders of the Free-soil and Democratic



parties, became more than ever antagonized. The conflict between freedom and slavery now became earnest, fierce, and violent, beyond all previous political controversies, and from this time on, Lincoln pleaded the cause of liberty with an energy, ability, and eloquence, which rapidly gained for him a national reputation. From this time on, through the tremendous struggle, it was he who grasped the helm and led his party to victory. Conscious of a great cause, inspired by a generous love of liberty, and animated by the moral sublimity of his great theme, he proclaimed his determination, ever thereafter, "to speak for freedom, and against slavery, until everywhere the sun shall shine, the rain shall fall, and the wind blow upon no man who goes forth to unrequited toil."

#### THE LINCOLN AND DOUGLAS DEBATE.

The great debate between Lincoln and Douglas, in 1858, was, unquestionably, both with reference to the ability of the speakers and its influence upon opinion and events, the most important in American history. I do not think I do injustice to others, nor over-estimate their importance, when I say that the speeches of Lincoln published, circulated, and read throughout the Free States, did more than any other agency in creating the public opinion which prepared the way for the overthrow of slavery. The speeches of John Quincy Adams, and those of Senator Sumner, were more learned and scholarly, and those of Lovejoy and Wendel Philips were more vehement and impassioned; Senators Seward, Chase, and Hale spoke from a more conspicuous forum, but Lincoln's speeches were as philosophic, as able, as earnest as any, and his manner had a simplicity and directness, a clearness of illustration, and his language a plainness, a vigour, an Anglo-Saxon strength, better adapted than any other to reach and influence the understanding and sentiment of the common people.

At the time of this memorable discussion, both Lincoln and Douglas were in the full maturity of their powers. Douglas

being forty-five and Lincoln forty-nine years old. Douglas had had a long training and experience as a popular speaker. On the hustings (stump, as we say in America) and in Congress, and especially in the United States Senate, he had been accustomed to meet the ablest debaters of his State and of the Nation.

His friends insisted that never, either in conflict with a single opponent, or when repelling the assaults of a whole party, had he been discomfited. His manner was bold, vigorous, and aggressive. He was ready, fertile in resources, familiar with political history, strong and severe in denunciation, and he handled with skill all the weapons of the dialectician. His iron will, tireless energy, united with physical and moral courage, and great personal magnetism, made him a natural leader, and gave him personal popularity.

Lincoln was also now a thoroughly trained speaker. He had contended successfully at the bar, in the Legislature, and before the people, with the ablest men of the West, including Douglas, with whom he always rather sought than avoided a discussion. But he was a courteous and generous opponent, as is illustrated by the following beautiful allusion to his rival, made in 1856, in one of their joint debates: "Twenty years ago, Judge Douglas and I first became acquainted; we were both young then; he a trifle younger than I. Even then we were both ambitious, I, perhaps, quite as much as he. With me the race of ambition has been a flat failure. With him it has been a splendid success. His name fills the Nation, and it is not unknown in foreign lands. I affect no contempt for the high eminence he has reached; so reached, that, if the oppressed of my species might have shared with me in the elevation, I would rather stand on that eminence than wear the richest crown that ever pressed a monarch's brow."

We know, and the world knows, that Lincoln did reach that high, nay, far higher eminence, and that he did reach it in such a way that the "oppressed" did share with him in the elevation.

Such were the champions who, in 1858, were to discuss,

before the voters of Illinois, and with the whole Nation as spectators, the political questions then pending, and especially the vital questions relating to slavery. It was not a single combat, but extended through a whole campaign.

On the return of Douglas from Washington to Illinois in July, 1858, Lincoln and Douglas being candidates for the Senate, the former challenged his rival to a series of joint debates to be held at the principal towns in the State. The challenge was accepted, and it was agreed that each discussion should occupy three hours, that the speakers should alternate in the opening and the close—the opening speech to occupy one hour, the reply one hour and a half, and the close half an hour. The meetings were held in the open air, for no hall could hold the vast crowds which attended.

In addition to the immense mass of hearers, reporters from all the principal newspapers in the country attended, so that the morning after each debate the speeches were published and eagerly read by a large part, perhaps a majority, of all the voters of the United States.

The attention of the American people was thus arrested, and they watched with intense interest and devoured every argument of the champions.

Each of these great men, I doubt not, at that time sincerely believed he was right. Douglas's ardour, while in such a conflict, would make him think, for the time being, he was right, and I *know* that Lincoln argued for freedom against the extension of slavery with the most profound conviction that on the result hung the fate of his country. Lincoln had two advantages over Douglas, he had the best side of the question and the best temper. He was always good-humoured, always had an apt story for illustration, while Douglas sometimes when hard pressed was irritable.

Douglas carried away the most popular applause, but Lincoln made the deeper and more lasting impression. Douglas did not disdain an immediate *ad captandum* triumph, while Lincoln aimed at permanent conviction. Sometimes when Lincoln's friends urged him to raise a storm of applause

(which he could always do by his happy illustrations and amusing stories), he refused, saying the occasion was too serious, the issue too grave. "I do not seek applause," said he, "nor to amuse the people, I want to convince them."

It was often observed during this canvass, that while Douglas was sometimes greeted with loudest cheers, when Lincoln closed the people seemed solemn and serious, and could be heard all through the crowd, gravely and anxiously discussing the topics on which he had been speaking.

Douglas secured the immediate object of the struggle, but the manly bearing, the vigorous logic, the honesty and sincerity, the great intellectual powers exhibited by Mr. Lincoln, prepared the way, and, two years later, secured his nomination and election to the presidency. It is a touching incident, illustrating the patriotism of both these statesmen, that widely as they differed, and keen as had been their rivalry, just as soon as the life of the Republic was menaced by treason, they joined hands to shield and save the country they loved.

The echo and the prophecy of this great debate were heard, and inspired hope in the far-off cotton and rice fields of the South. The toiling blacks, to use the words of Whittier, began to hopefully pray :

"We pray de Lord. He gib us signs  
Dat som day we be free.  
De Norf wind tell it to de pines,  
De wild ducks to de sea.

"We tink it when de church-bell ring,  
We dream it in de dream,  
De rice-bird mean it when he sing,  
De eagle when he scream."

#### THE COOPER INSTITUTE SPEECH.

In February, 1860, Mr. Lincoln was called to address the people of New York, and speaking to a vast audience, at the Cooper Institute (the Exeter Hall of the United States), the poet Bryant presiding, he made perhaps the most learned, logical, and exhaustive speech to be found in American anti-

slavery literature. The question was, the power of the National Government to exclude slavery from the territories. The orator from the prairies, the morning after this speech, awoke to find himself famous.

He closed with these words, "Let us have faith that *right* makes *might*, and in that faith let us, to the end, do our duty as we understand it."

This address was the carefully finished product of, not an orator and statesman only, but also of an accurate student of American history. It confirmed and elevated the reputation he had already acquired in the Douglas debates, and caused his nomination and election to the presidency.

If time permitted, I would like to follow Mr. Lincoln, step by step, to enumerate his measures one after another, until, by prudence and courage, and matchless statesmanship, he led the loyal people of the Republic to the final and complete overthrow of slavery and the restoration of the Union.

From the time he left his humble home in Illinois to assume the responsibilities of power, the political horizon black with treason and rebellion, the terrific thunder clouds—the tempest which had been gathering and growing more black and threatening for years—now ready to explode; on and on, through long years of bloody war, down to his final triumph and death—what a drama! His eventful life, terminated by his tragic death, has it not the dramatic unities and the awful ending of the old Greek tragedy?

#### HIS FAREWELL TO HIS NEIGHBOURS.

I know of nothing in history more pathetic than the scene when he bade good-bye to his old friends and neighbours. Conscious of the difficulties and dangers before him—difficulties which seemed almost insurmountable; with a sadness as though a presentiment that he should return no more was pressing upon him, but with a deep religious trust which was characteristic; on the platform of the rail-carriage which was to bear him away to the Capital, he paused and said, "No one can realize the sadness I feel at this parting. Here have

I lived more than a quarter of a century. Here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you again. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He never would have succeeded but for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which at all times he relied. . . . I hope you, my dear friends, will all pray that I may receive that Divine assistance without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain."

And as he waved his hand in farewell to the old home, to which he was never to return, he heard the response from many old friends, "God bless and keep you." "God protect you from all traitors." His neighbours "sorrowing most of all" for the fear that they should see his face no more.

#### HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS AND APPEAL FOR PEACE.

In his inaugural address, spoken in the open air, and from the eastern portico of the Capitol, and heard by thrice ten thousand people, on the very verge of civil war, he made a most earnest appeal for peace. He gave the most solemn assurance, that "the property, peace, and security of no portion of the Republic should be endangered by his administration." But he declared, with firmness, that the union of the States must be "perpetual," and that he should "execute the laws faithfully in every State." "In doing this," said he, "there need be no bloodshed nor violence, nor shall there be unless forced upon the National Authority." In regard to the difficulties which thus divided the people, he appealed to all to abstain from precipitate action, assuring them that intelligence, patriotism, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken the Republic, "were competent to adjust, in the best way, all existing troubles."

His closing appeal against civil war was most touching, "In your hands," said he, and his voice, for the first time, faltered, "in your hands, and not in mine, are the momentous issues of civil war. . . . You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. . . . I

am," continued he, "loth to close; we are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies: though passion may strain, it must not break the bonds of affection."

The answer to these appeals was the attack upon Fort Sumpter, and immediately broke loose all the maddening passions which riot in blood and carnage and civil war.

I know not how I can better picture and illustrate the condition of affairs, and of public feeling at that time, than by narrating two or three incidents.

#### DOUGLAS'S PROPHECY, JANUARY 1, 1861.

In January, 1861, Senator Douglas, then lately a candidate for the presidency, with Mrs. Douglas, one of the most beautiful and fascinating women in America, a relative of Mrs. Madison, occupied, at Washington, one of the most magnificent blocks of dwellings, called the "Minnesota Block." On New Year's Day, 1861, General Charles Stewart, of New York, from whose lips I write an account of the incident, says:

"I was making a New Year's call on Senator Douglas; after some conversation, I asked him: 'What will be the result, Senator, of the efforts of Jefferson Davis, and his associates, to divide the Union?' We were," said Stewart, "sitting on the sofa together when I asked the question. Douglas rose, walked rapidly up and down the room for a moment, and then pausing, he exclaimed, with deep feeling and excitement:

"'The Cotton States are making an effort to draw in the Border States to their schemes of secession, and I am but too fearful they will succeed. If they do, there will be the most fearful civil war the world has ever seen, lasting for years.' Pausing a moment, he looked like one inspired, while he proceeded: 'Virginia, over yonder, across the Potomac,' pointing towards Arlington, 'will become a charnel-house—but in the end the Union will triumph. They will try,' he continued, 'to get possession of this Capital, to give them *prestige*

abroad, but in that effort they will never succeed ; the North will rise *en masse* to defend it. But Washington will become a city of hospitals, the churches will be used for the sick and wounded. This house,' he continued, 'the *Minnesota Block*, will be devoted to that purpose before the end of the war.'

"Every word he said was literally fulfilled—all the churches nearly were used for the wounded, and the *Minnesota Block*, and the very room in which this declaration was made, became the 'Douglas Hospital.'

"What justification for all this?' said Stewart.

"There is no justification,' replied Douglas. 'I will go as far as the constitution will permit to maintain their just rights. But,' said he, rising upon his feet and raising his arm, 'if the Southern States attempt to secede, I am in favour 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.'

#### WILL THE NORTH FIGHT ?

Many Southern leaders believed there would be no serious war, and laboured industriously to impress this idea on the Southern people.

Benjamin F. Butler, who, as a delegate from Massachusetts to the Charlestown Convention, had voted many times for Breckenridge, the extreme Southern candidate for president, came to Washington, in the winter of 1860-1, to inquire of his old associates what they meant by their threats.

"We mean," replied they, "we mean Separation—a Southern Confederacy. We will have our independence, a Southern Government—with no discordant elements."

"Are you prepared for war?" said Butler, coolly.

"Oh, there will be no war; the North won't fight."

"The North *will* fight," said Butler; "the North will send the *last man* and expend the *last dollar* to maintain the Government."

"But," replied Butler's Southern friends, "the North can't fight—we have too many allies there."

"You have friends," responded Butler, "in the North who



will stand by you so long as you fight your battles in the Union, but the moment you fire on the flag, the North will be a unit against you. And," Butler continued, "you may be assured if war comes, *slavery ends.*"

THE SPECIAL SESSION OF CONGRESS, JULY, 1861.

On the brink of this civil war, the President summoned Congress to meet on the 4th of July, 1861, the anniversary of our Independence. Seven States had already seceded, were in open revolt, and the chairs of their representatives, in both Houses of Congress, were vacant. It needed but a glance at these so numerous vacant seats to realize the extent of the defection, the gravity of the situation, and the magnitude of the impending struggle. The old pro-slavery leaders were absent, some in the rebel government, set up at Richmond, and others marshalling troops in the field. Hostile armies were gathering, and from the dome of the Capitol, across the Potomac, and on toward Fairfax, in Virginia, could be seen the Confederate flag.

Breckenridge, late the Southern candidate for president, now senator from Kentucky, and soon to lead a rebel army, still lingered in the Senate. Like Cataline among the Roman senators, he was regarded with aversion and distrust. Gloomy and, perhaps, sorrowful, he said, "I can only look with sadness on the melancholy drama that is being enacted."

Pardon the digression while I relate an incident which occurred in the Senate at this special session.

Senator Baker, of Oregon, was making a brilliant and impassioned reply to a speech of Breckenridge, in which he denounced the Kentucky senator for giving aid and encouragement to the enemy by his speeches. At length he paused, and turning toward Breckenridge, and fixing his eye upon him, he asked, "What would have been thought if, after the battle of Cannæ, a Roman senator had risen amidst the Conscript Fathers, and denounced the war, and opposed all measures for its success?"

Baker paused, and every eye in the Senate and in the

crowded galleries was fixed upon the almost solitary senator from Kentucky. Fessenden broke the painful silence by exclaiming, in low deep tones, which gave expression to the thrill of indignation which ran through the hall, "He would have been hurled from the Tarpeian Rock."

Congress manifested its sense of the gravity of the situation by authorizing a loan of two hundred and fifty millions of dollars, and empowering the President to call into the field five hundred thousand men, and as many more as he might deem necessary.

#### SURRENDER OF MASON AND SLIDELL.

No act of the British Government, since the "Stamp Act" of the Revolution, has ever excited such intense feeling of hostility towards Great Britain as her haughty demand for the surrender of Mason and Slidell. It required *nerve* in the President to stem the storm of popular feeling, and yield to that demand, and it was, for a time, the most unpopular act of his administration. But when the excitement of the day had passed, it was approved by the sober judgment of the nation.

Prince Albert is kindly and gratefully remembered in America, where it is believed that his action, in modifying the terms of that demand, probably saved the United States and Great Britain from the horrors of war.

#### LINCOLN AND THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

When in June, 1858, at his home, in Springfield, Mr. Lincoln startled the people with the declaration, "This Government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free," and when, at the close of his speech, to those who were labouring for the ultimate extinction of slavery, he exclaimed, with the voice of a prophet, "We shall not fail; if we stand firm we shall *not* fail. Wise counsels may accelerate, or mistakes delay, but sooner or later the victory is sure to come;" he anticipated success, through years of discussion, and final triumph through peaceful and constitutional means by the

ballot. He did not foresee, nor even dream (unless in those dim mysterious shadows, which sometimes startle by half revealing the future) of his own elevation to the presidency. He did not then suspect that he had been appointed by God, and should be chosen by the people, to proclaim the emancipation of a race, and to save his country. He did not foresee that slavery was so soon to be destroyed, amidst the flames of war which itself kindled.

#### HIS MODERATION.

He entered upon his administration with the single purpose of maintaining national unity, and many reproached and denounced him for the slowness of his anti-slavery measures. The first of the series was the abolition of slavery at the National Capitol. This act gave freedom to three thousand slaves, with compensation to their loyal masters. Contemporaneous with this was an Act conferring freedom upon all coloured soldiers who should serve in the Union armies and upon their families. The next was an Act, which I had the honour to introduce, prohibiting slavery in all the territories, and wherever the National Government had jurisdiction. But the great, the decisive Act of his administration was the "Emancipation Proclamation."

#### EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

The President had urged, with the utmost earnestness, on the loyal slaveholders of the Border States, gradual and compensated emancipation, but in vain. He clearly saw, all saw, that the slaves, as used by the Confederates, were a vast power, contributing immensely to their ability to carry on the war, and that by declaring their freedom he would convert millions of freed men into active friends and allies of the Union. The people knew that he was deliberating upon the question of issuing this Emancipation Proclamation. At this crisis the Union men of the Border States made an appeal to him to withhold the edict, and suffer slavery to survive.

They selected John J. Crittenden, a venerable and eloquent

man, and their ablest statesman, to make, on the floor of Congress, a public appeal to the President to withhold the proclamation. Mr. Crittenden had been governor of Kentucky, her senator in Congress, Attorney-General of the United States, and now, in his old age, covered with honours, he accepted, like John Quincy Adams, a seat in Congress, that in this crisis he might help to save his country.

He was a sincere Union man, but believed it unwise to disturb slavery. In his speech he made a most eloquent and touching appeal, from a Kentuckian to a Kentuckian. He said, among other things, "There is a niche, near to that of Washington, to him who shall save his country. If Mr. Lincoln will step into that niche, the *founder* and the *preserver* of the Republic shall stand side by side." . . . Owen Lovejoy, the brother of Elijah P. Lovejoy, who had been mobbed and murdered because he would not surrender the liberty of the press, replied to Crittenden. After his brother's murder, kneeling upon the green sod which covered that brother's grave, he had taken a solemn vow of eternal war upon slavery. Ever after, like Peter the Hermit, with a heart of fire and a tongue of lightning, he had gone forth preaching his crusade against slavery. At length, in his reply, turning to Crittenden, he said: "The gentleman from Kentucky says he has a niche for Abraham Lincoln—where is it?"

Crittenden pointed towards heaven.

Lovejoy, continuing, said, "He points upward; but, sir, if the President follows the counsel of that gentleman, and becomes the perpetuator of slavery, he should point *downward* to some dungeon in the temple of Moloch, who feeds on human blood, and where are forged chains for human limbs; in the recesses of whose temple woman is scourged and man tortured, and outside the walls are lying dogs gorged with human flesh, as Byron describes them, lying around the walls of Stamboul. That," said Lovejoy, "is a suitable place for the statue of him who would perpetuate slavery."

"I, too," said he, "have a temple for Abraham Lincoln, but it is in Freedom's holy fane, . . . not surrounded by slave

fetters and chains, but with the symbols of freedom—not dark with bondage, but radiant with the light of liberty. In that niche he shall stand proudly, nobly, gloriously, with broken chains and slaves' whips beneath his feet. . . . That is a fame worth living for, aye, more, it is a fame worth dying for, though that death led through Gethsemane and the agony of the accursed tree.” . . .

“It is said,” continued he, “that Wilberforce went up to the judgment-seat with the broken chains of eight hundred thousand slaves! Let Lincoln make himself the Liberator, and his name shall be enrolled, not only in this earthly temple, but it shall be traced on the living stones of that temple which is reared amid the thrones of heaven.”

Lovejoy's prophecy has been fulfilled—in this world—you see the statues to Lincoln, with broken chains at his feet, rising all over the world; and—in that other world—few will doubt that the prophecy has been realized.

In September, 1862, after the Confederates, by their defeat at the great battle of Antietam, had been driven back from Maryland and Pennsylvania, Lincoln issued the proclamation. It is a fact illustrating his character, and showing that there was in him what many would call a tinge of superstition, that he declared to Secretary Chase that he had made a solemn vow to God, saying, “If General Lee is driven back from Pennsylvania, I will crown the result with the declaration of FREEDOM TO THE SLAVE.” The final Proclamation was issued on the 1st of January, 1863. In obedience to an American custom, he had been receiving calls on that New Year's Day, and, for hours, shaking hands. As the paper was brought to him by the Secretary of the State, to be signed, he said, “Mr. Seward, I have been shaking hands all day, and my right hand is almost paralyzed. If my name ever gets into history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it. If my hand trembles when I sign the proclamation, those who examine the document hereafter will say, ‘He hesitated.’”

Then, resting his arm a moment, he turned to the table,

took up the pen, and slowly and firmly wrote *Abraham Lincoln*. He smiled as, handing the paper to Mr. Seward, he said, "That will do."

From this day to its final triumph the tide of victory seemed to set more and more in favour of the Union cause. The capture of Vicksburg, the victory of Gettysburg, Chattanooga, Chica-mauga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Sheridan's brilliant campaign in the Valley of the Shenandoah; Thomas's decisive victory at Nashville; Sherman's march, through the Confederacy, to the sea; the capture of Fort McAllister; the *sinking of the Alabama*; the taking of Mobile, by Farragut; the occupation of Columbus, Charlestown, Savannah; the evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond; the surrender of Lee to Grant; the taking of Jefferson Davis a prisoner; the triumph everywhere of the National arms; such were the events which followed (though with delays and bloodshed) the "Proclamation of Emancipation."

#### THE AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION.

Meanwhile Lincoln had been triumphantly re-elected, Congress had, as before stated, abolished slavery at the Capital, prohibited it in all the territories, declared all negro soldiers in the Union armies and their families free, and had repealed all laws which sanctioned or recognised slavery, and the President had crowned and consummated all by the proclamation of emancipation. One thing alone remained to perfect, confirm, and make everlastingly permanent these measures, and this was to embody in the Constitution itself the prohibition of slavery everywhere within the Republic.

To change the organic law required the adoption by a two-thirds vote of a joint resolution by Congress, and that this should be submitted to and ratified by two-thirds of the States.

The President, in his annual message and in personal interviews with members of Congress, urged the passage of such resolution. To test the strength of the measure in the

House of Representatives, I had the honour, in February, 1864, to introduce the following resolution :—

“ *Resolved*, That the Constitution should be so amended as to abolish slavery in the United States wherever it now exists, and to prohibit its existence in every part thereof for ever ” (Cong. Globe, vol. 50, p. 659). This was adopted by a decided vote, and was the first resolution ever passed by Congress in favour of the entire abolition of slavery. But, although it received a majority, it did not receive a majority of two-thirds.

The debates on the Constitutional Amendment (perhaps the greatest in our Congressional history, certainly the most important since the adoption of the Constitution) ran through two sessions of Congress. Charles Sumner, the learned senator from Massachusetts, brought to the discussion in the Senate his ample stores of historical illustration, quoting largely in its favour from the historians, poets, and statesmen of the past.

The resolution was adopted in the Senate by the large vote of ayes 38, noes 6.

In the Lower House, at the first session, it failed to obtain a two-thirds vote, and, on a motion to reconsider, went over to the next session.

Mr. Lincoln again earnestly urged its adoption, and, in a letter to Illinois friends, he said, “ The signs look better. . . . Peace does not look so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay, and so come as to be worth keeping in all future time.”

I recall, very vividly, my New Year’s call upon the President, January, 1864. I said :—

“ I hope, Mr. President, one year from to-day I may have the pleasure of congratulating you on the occurrence of three events which now seem probable.”

“ What are they ? ” inquired he.

“ 1. That the rebellion may be entirely crushed.

“ 2. That the Constitutional Amendment, abolishing and prohibiting slavery, may have been adopted.

"3. And that Abraham Lincoln may have been re-elected President."

"I think," replied he, with a smile, "I would be glad to accept the first two as a compromise."

General Grant, in a letter remarkable for that clear good sense and practical judgment for which he is distinguished, condensed into a single sentence the political argument in favour of the Constitutional Amendment: "The North and South," said he, "can *never* live at peace with each other except as *one nation*, and *that without slavery*."

#### GARFIELD'S SPEECH.

I would be glad to quote from this great debate, but must confine myself to a brief extract from the speech of the present President, then a member of the House. He began by saying: "Mr. Speaker, we shall never know why slavery dies so hard in this Republic, and in this Hall, until we know why sin outlives disaster and Satan is immortal. . . . How well do I remember," he continued, "the history of that distinguished predecessor of mine, *Joshua R. Giddings*, lately gone to his rest, who, with his forlorn hope of faithful men, took his life in his hands and, in the name of justice, protested against the great crime, and who stood bravely in his place until his white locks, like the plume of Henry of Navarre, marked where the battle of freedom raged fiercest. . . . In its mad arrogance, slavery lifted its hand against the Union, and since that fatal day it has been a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth."

Up to the last roll-call, on the question of the passage of the resolution, we were uncertain and anxious about the result. We needed Democratic votes. We knew we should get some, but whether enough to carry the measure none could surely tell.

As the clerk called the names of members, so perfect was the silence that the sound of a hundred pencils keeping tally could be heard through the hall.

Finally, when the call was completed, and the Speaker



announced that the resolution was adopted, the result was received by an uncontrollable burst of enthusiasm. Members and spectators (especially the galleries, which were crowded with convalescent soldiers) shouted and cheered, and before the Speaker could obtain quiet, the roar of artillery on Capitol Hill proclaimed to the City of Washington the passage of the resolution. Congress adjourned, and we hastened to the White House to congratulate the President on the event.

He made one of his happiest speeches. In his own peculiar words, he said, "*The great job is finished.* I cannot but congratulate," said he, "all present, myself, the country, and the whole world on this great moral victory."

#### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

And now, with an attempt to sketch very briefly some of his peculiar personal characteristics, I must close.

This great Hercules of a man had a heart as kind and tender as a woman. Sterner men thought it a weakness. It saddened him to see others suffer, and he shrunk from inflicting pain. Let me illustrate his kindness and tenderness by one or two incidents. One summer's day, walking along the shaded path leading from the Executive Mansion to the War Office, I saw the tall awkward form of the President seated on the grass under a tree. A wounded soldier, seeking back pay and a pension, had met the President, and, having recognised him, asked his counsel. Lincoln sat down, examined the papers of the soldier, told him what to do, and sent him to the proper Bureau with a note which secured prompt attention.

After the terribly destructive battles between Grant and Lee, in the Wilderness of Virginia after days of dreadful slaughter, the lines of ambulances, conveying the wounded from the steamers on the Potomac to the great field hospitals on the heights around Washington, would be continuous—one unbroken line from the wharf to the hospital. At such a time I have seen the President, in his carriage, driving slowly along the line, and he looked like one who had lost the dearest

members of his own family. On one such occasion, meeting me, he stopped and said, "I cannot bear this; this suffering, this loss of life—is dreadful."

I recalled to him a line from a letter he had years before written to a friend, whose great sorrow he had sought to console. Reminding him of the incident, I asked him, "Do you remember writing to your suffering friend these words:—

*"And this too shall pass away,  
Never fear. Victory will come."*

In all his State papers and speeches during these years of strife and passion, there can be found no words of bitterness, no denunciation. When others railed, he railed not again. He was always dignified, magnanimous, patient, considerate, manly, and true. His duty was ever performed "with malice toward none, with charity for all," and with "firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right."

#### NEVER A DEMAGOGUE.

Lincoln was never a demagogue. He respected and loved the people, but never flattered them. No man ever heard him allude to his humble life and manual labour, in a way to obtain votes. None knew better than he, that splitting rails did not qualify a man for public duties. He realized painfully the defects of his education, and laboured diligently and successfully to supply his deficiencies.

#### HIS CONVERSATION.

He had no equal as a talker in social life. His conversation was fascinating and attractive. He was full of wit, humour, and anecdote, and at the same time original, suggestive, and instructive. There was in his character a singular mingling of mirthfulness and melancholy. While his sense of the ludicrous was keen, and his fun and mirth were exuberant, and sometimes almost irrepressible; his conversation sparkling with jest, story, and anecdote and in droll description, he would pass suddenly to another mood, and become sad and

pathetic—a melancholy expression of his homely face would show that he was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

#### HIS STORIES.

The newspapers, in America, have always been full of Lincoln's stories and anecdotes, some true and many fabulous.

He always had a story ready, and, if not, he could improvise one, just fitted for the occasion. The following may, I think, be said to have been *adapted* :—

An Atlantic port, in one of the British provinces was, during the war, a great resort and refuge for blockade-runners, and a large contraband trade was said to have been carried on from that port with the Confederates. Late in the summer of 1864, while the election of president was pending, Lincoln being a candidate, the Governor-General of that province, with some of the principal officers, visited Washington, and called to pay their respects to the executive. Mr. Lincoln had been very much annoyed by the failure of these officials to enforce very strictly the rules of neutrality, but he treated his guests with great courtesy. After a pleasant interview, the Governor alluding to the approaching presidential election, said jokingly, but with a grain of sarcasm : “I understand, Mr. President, everybody votes in this country. If we remain until November can we vote ?”

“You remind me,” replied the President, “of a countryman of yours, a green emigrant from Ireland. Pat arrived in New York on election day, and was, perhaps, as eager as your Excellency to vote, and to vote early and late and often. So, upon his landing at Castle Garden, he hastened to the nearest voting place, and, as he approached, the judge who received the ballots inquired, ‘Who do you want to vote for ? on which side are you ?’ Poor Pat was embarrassed, he did not know who were the candidates. He stopped, scratched his head, then with the readiness of his countrymen, he said :—

“‘I am forment the Government, anyhow. Tell me, if your Honour plases, which is the rebellion side, and I'll tell

you how I want to vote. In Ould Ireland, I was always on the rebellion side, and, by St. Patrick, I'll stick to that same in America.'

"Your Excellency," said Mr. Lincoln, "would, I should think, not be at all at a loss on which side to vote?"

#### THE BOOKS HE READ.

The two books he read most were the Bible and Shakespeare. With them he was familiar, reading and quoting from them constantly. Next to Shakespeare, among the poets, was Burns, with whom he had a hearty sympathy, and upon whose poetry he wrote a lecture. He was extremely fond of ballads, and of simple, sad, and plaintive music.

I called one day at the White House, to introduce two officers of the Union army, both Swedes. Immediately he began and repeated from memory, to the delight of his visitors, a long ballad, descriptive of Norwegian scenery, a Norse legend, and the adventures of an old Viking among the fiords of the North.

He said he had read the poem in a newspaper, and the visit of these Swedes recalled it to his memory.

On the last Sunday of his life, as he was sailing up the Potomac, returning to Washington from his visit to Richmond, he read aloud many extracts from Macbeth, and, among others, the following, and with a tone and accent so impressive that, after his death, it was vividly recalled by those who heard him :

"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 levy, nothing,  
Can touch him further !"

After his assassination, those friends could not fail to recall this passage from the same play.

" This Duncan  
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against  
 The deep damnation of his taking-off."

#### HIS RELIGION.

It is strange that any reader of Lincoln's speeches and writings, should have had the hardihood to charge him with infidelity, but the charge, having been repeatedly made, I reply, in the light of facts accessible to all, that no more reverent Christian (not excepting Washington) ever filled the chair of President. Declarations of his trust in God, his faith in the efficacy of prayer, pervade his speeches and writings. From the time he left Springfield, to his death, he not only himself continually prayed for Divine assistance, but never failed to ask the prayers of others for himself and his country.

His reply to the negroes of Baltimore, who, in 1864, presented him with a beautiful Bible, as an expression of their love and gratitude, ought to have silenced all who have made such charges. After thanking them, he said: "This great book is the best gift God has given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated through this book."

When a member of Congress, knowing his religious character, asked him why he did not join some church, Mr. Lincoln replied, "Because I found difficulty, without mental reservation, in giving my assent to their long and complicated confessions of faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar the Saviour's condensed statement of law and gospel: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart."

## WHAT HE ACCOMPLISHED.

Let us try to sum up in part what he accomplished.

When he assumed the duties of the executive he found an empty treasury, the National credit gone, the little nucleus of an army and navy scattered and disarmed, the officers who had not deserted to the rebels, strangers; the party which elected him in a minority (he having been elected only because his opponents were divided between Douglas, Breckenridge, and Everett); the old Democratic party, which had ruled most of the time for half a century, hostile; and even that part of it in the North, from long association, in sympathy with the insurgents; his own party made up of discordant elements, and neither he nor his party had acquired prestige and the confidence of the people. It is the exact truth to say that when he entered the White House he was the object of personal prejudice to a majority of the American people, and of contempt to a powerful minority. He entered upon his task of restoring the integrity of a broken Union without sympathy from any of the great powers of Western Europe. Those which were not hostile, manifested a cold neutrality, exhibiting toward him and his government no cordial goodwill, nor extending any moral aid. Yet, in spite of all, he crushed the most stupendous rebellion, supported by armies more vast, by resources greater, and an organization more perfect, than ever before undertook the dismemberment of a nation. He united and held together, against contending factions, his own party, and strengthened it by securing the confidence and winning the support of the best part of all parties. He composed the quarrels of rival generals; and at length won the respect and confidence and sympathy of all nations and peoples. He was re-elected, almost by acclamation, and, after a series of brilliant victories, he annihilated all armed opposition. He led the people, step by step, to emancipation, and saw his work crowned by an amendment of the Constitution, eradicating and prohibiting slavery for ever throughout the Republic.

Such is a brief and imperfect summary of his achievements during the last five years of his life. And this good man, when the hour of victory came, made it not the hour of vengeance, but of forgiveness and reconciliation.

These five years of incessant labour and fearful responsibility told even upon his strength and vigour. He left Illinois for the Capital, with a frame of iron and nerves of steel. His old friends who had known him as a man who did not know what illness was; who had seen him on the prairies before the Illinois courts, full of life, genial, and sparkling with fun; now saw the wrinkles on his forehead deepened into furrows; the laugh of the old days lost its heartiness; anxiety, responsibility, care, and hard work wore upon him, and his nerves of steel, at times became irritable. He had had no respite, had taken no holidays. When others fled away from the dust and heat of the Capital, he stayed. He would not leave the helm until all danger was past, and the good ship of State had made her port.

I will not dwell upon the unutterable sorrow of the American people at his shocking death. But I desire to express here, in this great City of this grand Empire, the sensibility with which the people of the United States received, at his death, the sympathy of the English-speaking race.

That sympathy was most eloquently expressed by all. It came from Windsor Castle to the White House; from England's widowed Queen to the stricken and distracted widow at Washington. From Parliament to Congress, from the people of all this magnificent Empire, as it stretches round the world, from England to India, from Canada to Australia, came words of deep feeling, and they were received by the American people, in their sore bereavement, as the expression of a kindred race.

I cannot forbear referring in particular to the words spoken in Parliament on that occasion by Lords Russell and Derby, and especially by that great and picturesque leader, so lately passed away, Lord Beaconsfield. After a discriminating eulogy upon the late President, and the expression of profound sympathy, he said :

“ Nor is it possible for the people of England, at such a moment, to forget that he sprang from the same fatherland and spake the same mother-tongue.”

God grant that in all the unknown future, nothing may ever disturb the friendly feeling and respect which each nation entertains for the other. May there never be another quarrel in the family.