

Stories of Abraham Lincoln

FREEDOM SERIES

CRAVENS · BALDWIN · SCOVILLE

Stories of Abraham Lincoln

Selected Authors

Libraries of Hope

Stories of Abraham Lincoln
Freedom Series

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The Story of Lincoln for Children

By Frances Cravens

CHAPTER 1
His Early Home

Many years ago there moved from Virginia to what is now Kentucky, a number of families who wished to settle a new state. Daniel Boone led the way across the mountains into this hunting ground of the Indians.

Among the number who went with him and settled in the wild region where bears, deer, and buffalo were plentiful, was a family named Lincoln. One member of this family afterward settled in Harden county, near the present little village of Hodgenville. His name was Thomas Lincoln.

He cut his way through the underbrush and lived on the game he killed with his rifle. One day he came to a beautiful ever-flowing spring and decided to build him a home near by. He soon chose a site and in a very short time had built a one-room cabin. He thought it unnecessary to make a door and hang it on hinges, so he simply left an open doorway facing the spring. Neither did he provide any window except an open space near the large clay chimney, through which not only light, but snow, rain, or sleet could easily enter.

It was to this cabin he brought his young bride, Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Although there was no floor except the hard, bare earth, and no ceiling except the hewn boards of the roof, Mrs. Lincoln tried to make the cabin home-like and comfortable.

As soon as the cold, wintry winds began to blow, she hung a piece of her own hand-spun cotton over the window and a large bear or deer skin at the doorway.

She kept a glowing fire in the great fireplace, and on the rude bed, made of poles and covered with furry skins, she

spread some of the bright quilts she had made before her marriage.

It was in this rude log cabin on the 12th of February, 1809, that a little baby boy was born, who was one day to be known all over the world. Two years before, a little girl had come into the home; her name was Sarah.

The little fellow was named Abraham, after his grandfather. The baby grew rapidly and was, in time, strong enough to go into the woods with his sister to pick violets or watch the rabbits and birds.

He and his sister had neither playmates nor toys, but they were happy children, for their mother was very kind and gentle; and, although she was always busy, she found time to talk with them about the wild flowers and animals, and to tell them beautiful stories from the Bible.

Having to work all the time herself, she taught the children to help her in many ways; and even though they were so small they were constantly at her side. They could fill her shuttle with the bright yarn which she wove into their clothes, or run to the spring near by, for the water which was to make the "hoe-cake" or "corn dodger" for dinner.

They also soon learned to use the rake and hoe and were able to help the dear mother who in the springtime toiled in the garden all day long.

The children soon learned that their mother liked to have her little cabin neat; and they were proud to hear the neighbors say, that their house was the cleanest in the whole neighborhood.

CHAPTER 2
Abraham Learns to Read

Although Mrs. Lincoln had grown up among the rude people of the backwoods, and had never known a different life, she could do one thing that very few of the settlers could do — she could read. She taught her husband to read, also, and to write his name.

She earnestly desired that her children should know how to read and write, so she began reading the Bible to them just as soon as they were old enough to understand. Abe learned to love the beautiful stories of Joseph and David, and thought, "How nice it would be if I could only read those stories myself. I will learn, and when mother is busy, I can read to her." His mother taught him and he was very proud of his knowledge. The neighbors thought it a wonderful thing that so young a boy should be able to read. There were very few of them who could do so much, and besides, they did not see any reason why they should wish to learn. They felt that what they most needed to know was to shoot a rifle. Soon after Abe's mother had taught him to read, a school-master came to the neighborhood and obtained leave to teach school in a cabin not far from Mr. Lincoln's. To this teacher Abraham was sent. He was the only little child in the school, but he could spell and read better than any of the grown pupils.

CHAPTER 3
They Remove to Indiana

But Abraham was not to go to this school very long, because his father had concluded to move to Indiana.

The family lived near the Rolling Fork river which flows into the Ohio, and Mr. Lincoln concluded to transport a portion of his goods in a flat-boat which he and Abe would build. When the boat was finished, Mr. Lincoln started out alone to seek a new home.

Abe and a friend of his, named Austin Golliher, went every day to an old carpenter shop near the Lincoln home to play "tumbling summer sault" in the pile of shavings his father had left. These little backwoods boys had many a frolic together, and we are told that in one of these Austin saved Abe's life. They were one day chasing partridges. While trying to "coon" across Knob creek on a log, Abe fell in, and not knowing how to swim would have drowned had not Austin helped him out. This he did with a branch of a sycamore tree.

But we must now follow Abe's father on his winding journey down the river. He rowed safely into the Ohio, but there his raft broke in pieces. He, however, fished out his kit of tools and most of his goods, and continued his journey, landing safely in Indiana at the home of a settler named Posey.

He left his goods with Mr. Posey and started alone to find a location for his new home. During his first day's journey he selected a spot which pleased him. He then returned to Knob Creek for his family.

What a humble picture they must have made with their few possessions! Bedding, clothing, and a few pans and kettles

were strapped to the saddles of the two borrowed horses. The poor creatures stumbled many times as they trod the narrow path through the wild region, bearing the Lincoln family and their household goods. For seven days they traveled, stopping under the shade of trees, near some silvery brook to rest. At night where do you suppose they slept? On the green grass with a blanket beneath them, and one for cover. This was a weary journey for the tired mother and the little sister, but they cheerfully bore the trials, and talked gaily of the trip.

When they came to the spot Mr. Lincoln had selected, he said, "Welcome to your new home." This home was yet only a clump of big trees, and no house at all. They slept on the ground, as usual. Early in the morning Mr. Lincoln and Abe began to clear a spot on which to build a cabin.

During the morning a neighbor came to bring them some dinner, and stayed to help with the cabin. Mrs. Lincoln, Sarah, Abe, and the two men worked hard that day, and when night came they had shelter, for they had finished building what the early settlers called a "half-face camp." This was a rude shed made of poles and covered with leaves and branches. It was enclosed only on three sides, leaving one side entirely open. In front of the open side, a fire was kept burning all the time to warm the "camp." Over the fire was suspended a large iron kettle, and in this kettle Mrs. Lincoln prepared the wild game, beans, corn, or other food for the dinner and supper. She sometimes baked Irish or sweet potatoes in the ashes, and here, too, the children often roasted nuts.

The interior of the camp was as comfortable as Mrs. Lincoln's deft hands could make it. Abraham and Sarah carried in fresh leaves to cover the hard earth floor, and over these were spread big furry skins of wild animals. In this camp the family spent the first year in Indiana. Would you like to have lain down to sleep night after night where bears, deer, and other wild animals could easily walk into your home? Think of the cold nights, of the howling wind, and the deep

snows of those long months! But the Lincoln family were used to many hardships, and Thomas Lincoln was well satisfied as long as he could live where wild game was plentiful, and he and Abraham could easily keep the family supplied with meat.

Mr. Lincoln was a kind-hearted man and fond of his children. Often, after a busy day of felling the trees, out of which a new home was built in the spring, he would sit in the evening with Abraham on his knee, telling him thrilling tales of the Indians. One of these stories was of Abe's grandfather. Abraham liked to hear his father talk of Indians, but this one of his grandfather almost made his hair stand on end.

"One morning, when I was only six years old," began Mr. Lincoln, "My father started out to work. He took my two older brothers and myself with him. We had gone only a short distance from our cabin when an Indian darted out from behind a tree, rushed toward us, and before we had time to defend ourselves, killed our father. My younger brother started for the nearest fort for help, but Mordecai, my eldest brother, ran home for his musket. He climbed up in the loft where he could see the Indian plainly, and took good aim. He fired and the Indian fell dead. I sat there beside my father, sobbing as if my heart would break. I was too scared to move. The Indian was just about to seize me when Mordecai shot him. I screamed with fright, and in a few minutes Mordecai took me in his arms and tried to soothe me; but I did not get over the fright for a long time."

The story telling did not last very late at night, because all had to retire early in order to be ready for the next day's work. Those were busy days for Abraham, although he was only a little boy. Hunting, chopping, hewing, and trapping, left him little time to play; but perhaps he did not think of that.

But there came some terribly cold days during this winter in the camp, when Abraham could not go out of doors to work. Those days Abraham never forgot, for at such times his mother taught him how to write.

At last the long winter passed and spring came with birds, wild flowers, and sunshine. It was then that the new cabin was built. Although it was only a rude log house with one room below and a loft above, the family thought it very fine; as indeed it was, compared with their other homes.

CHAPTER 4
His Mother's Death

Everybody was busy all day long that spring and summer. The vegetables had to be planted and cared for; cooking, washing, ironing, spinning, all required Mrs. Lincoln's care. Besides this the corn had to be planted and tended, and the good mother helped with everything. Poor, tired mother!

When autumn came the willing hands of the children had to take care of the house, for Mrs. Lincoln had become too weak to work. One day she was taken very ill. The neighbors came and did all in their power to ease her pain, but nothing helped her.

A few days after this she called Abe to her bedside and told him she must leave him very soon. Abe knew what those words meant, and he sobbed bitterly; but his mother calmed him at last by telling him she was going to a beautiful home, where he could come some day if he would try to live as she had taught him. One of the things she said to him was, "Mother wants her little boy to be honest, truthful, and kind to everybody, and always to trust in God."

In early October, she closed her tired eyes, and Abraham knew she would not open them again. Kind neighbors buried her under a large sycamore tree near by. Here they tenderly laid Nancy Lincoln to rest.

How lonely the children were during that long winter which followed! Abraham was very sad because no minister could be present to preach a funeral sermon. But not one lived in all that country. At last one day the lonely child thought of a preacher they had known in Kentucky. He

believed he would come if they could let him know about it. He asked permission of his father to write a letter asking the preacher to come. Mr. Lincoln consented and helped Abraham by making a pen from a goose quill.

When the letter was finished it was directed to David Elkin — this was the preacher's name — and sent by some friend to Kentucky.

At last the letter reached the good man, who was so touched by Abraham's sorrowful pleading that he set out at once for the Lincoln home, although he knew he would gain no reward except the gratitude of the child. Perhaps he thought, too, that in doing a noble act he would feel happier than money could make him. It was a long journey, over a hundred miles, through trackless forests inhabited by wild animals; but he never faltered in his determination.

At last when early spring had come he arrived. Again the kind neighbors gathered to honor the memory of her whom they all loved. They listened to the comforting words of the minister, sang hymns, and joined fervently in the prayers that were offered. From that day Abraham Lincoln was a nobler boy. He seemed to feel the force of his mother's teachings and to resolve to become a man who would be an honor to his Christian mother. When he was president of the United States he once said: "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

CHAPTER 5
His New Mother

The year after his mother's death was the saddest Abraham ever knew. He longed so much for her that his father felt troubled about him. Knowing how Abe loved books he concluded to find him something to read, thus hoping to help the little fellow forget his sorrow. Hearing that a friend living twenty miles away owned "Pilgrim's Progress," he walked all that distance, bought the book, and took it home to Abe, who read it with great delight.

Before the next December a beam of sunshine came into Abe's lonely life. A new mother came with Mr. Lincoln on his return from a visit to his old Kentucky home.

Sarah and Abraham were glad indeed to welcome the cheery, bright-faced woman whom their father brought home as his wife. They were also pleased to see the two happy girls and the boy who, they were told, were to be their sisters and brother. Their faces fairly glowed with happiness when they discovered the six good chairs, a bureau, and some other pieces of furniture, beside a nice soft feather bed, which their new mother had brought with her for their home. They felt that a happy change had come into their lives. Indeed it was not long before they realized the comfort and cheer their new mother had also brought, for Mrs. Lincoln was a tender-hearted woman and felt very sorry for the two poorly-dressed, barefooted children who had greeted her so kindly. She made warm clothes for them and when night came she tucked them into a clean soft bed with plenty of warm covers. She persuaded her husband to lay a wooden floor, to "chink" the

crevices between the logs, and to hang a door. After this was done, she arranged her good furniture so as to make the once cheerless house very bright and home-like.

Mrs. Lincoln loved children and was as kind to Sarah, Abraham, and a little cousin, John Hanks, who made his home with them, as to her own, but perhaps the one who showed her the greatest love and kindness in return was Abraham. She soon learned to lean upon him and to wish to help him to gain the education he so much craved.

CHAPTER 6
At School

Not many months after this marriage, the people of the neighborhood decided to build a school-house; and soon the men met and chopped down the trees, hewed the logs, and raised the cabin. There were no desks in the school-houses in Indiana at that time, but the sturdy youths did not object to sitting on seats made of logs split in two. The men made several benches, built a chimney of sticks and clay, and left a space for one window. This they covered with greased paper. When the house was completed, a man named Azel Dorsey was engaged to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. Mrs. Lincoln started Abe to school. He had on a buckskin suit of clothes, and a cap which Mrs. Lincoln made from the skin of a raccoon.

He carried an old arithmetic as well as a speller; how proud and happy he felt, and how rapidly he learned that winter! One day during this term, Mr. Dorsey said to his pupils, "Boys, somebody has broken my buck's horns that were nailed to the back of my house. Do you know who did it?"

"Yes, sir," said Abe, "I did it. I was hanging on them with my whole weight, and they broke right off. I did not think they would break, or I should not have done it, and I am very sorry."

Abe had not forgotten the words of his own mother, "Be truthful and honest."

CHAPTER 7
He Loves to Read

There were many wild animals in Indiana at that time, and Abe had to go through the dense woods alone, where bears were frequently seen. But it would have taken more than bears to keep him away from school. He wanted to learn. There were many things he wanted to know.

But Abe's school days were soon over. His father thought he was losing too much time. However, Abe was determined to continue studying. As soon as his day's work was done, he began his lessons. He read, wrote, and ciphered. His loving mother encouraged him by allowing him to use all the books she had, borrowing others, and buying the *Life of Henry Clay* for him. *The Bible, Æsop's Fables, Robinson Crusoe, The Pilgrim's Progress,* a *History of the United States*, and the lives of *Washington* and *Franklin* soon became familiar to him. He loved to read, and he was so very anxious to procure other books that he borrowed from any neighbor who would lend. Weems' *Life of Washington* had been loaned to him by Mr. Crawford, his former teacher.

Before he had finished reading this book he left it in a window one day, when a rainstorm coming on the book was so thoroughly wet as to spoil it. Abraham was greatly pained by the accident. His honest heart would not allow Mr. Crawford to lose by his thoughtlessness, and he went to him, showed him the ruined volume and said, "This has happened through my neglect. I have not enough money to pay you for the book, but will 'work out' its value."

"Well, Abe," said Mr. Crawford, after thinking a little

while, "as it's you I won't be hard on you. Come over and pull fodder for two days and we will call our account even."

It was in this life of Washington that young Abraham Lincoln first began to study the history of American independence. He was young, but very thoughtful, for he afterwards spoke of the impression it made on him. Once when speaking to the Senate of New Jersey of the battle of Trenton, he said, "I recollect thinking then, boy though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for."

Much as Abe loved to read of battles, and of the lives of great men, he was not satisfied with what he could learn from these alone. He used to write and "do sums" in arithmetic on the wooden shovel by the fireside. When he covered it with letters or figures, he shaved off the surface and began again.

Although he was fond of his books, he liked to play as well, and was a leader in all outdoor sports. He loved to swim, hunt, jump, run races, box, and could throw every boy in the neighborhood; besides, he must have been what our boys call a "good shot." One day when he was only a little boy, he was sitting in his cabin home in Indiana. He saw through a crack in the log walls a flock of wild turkeys. He at once took down the old rifle, put the long barrel through the opening, took hasty aim and fired. When the smoke cleared away, he walked out and picked up a dead turkey.

CHAPTER 8
Hard Work

It was not long after this that he took a grist upon the back of his father's horse and went to a mill fifty miles away. This mill was a very crude one, driven by horse power. Each boy had to wait his "turn," no matter how far he was from home; he had also to use his own horse to propel the machinery. When Abe's turn came he hitched his mare to the lever. He was following her closely upon her rounds, and urging her with a switch, when suddenly, just as he was "clucking" to her, she gave him a kick which knocked him senseless. The moment he became conscious he finished his "cluck" and went on with his work.

From the time Abraham left school, until he was of age, his father let him out to the neighbors for any job that was offered. When he was seventeen he was earning six dollars a month and his board and lodging, but his father got all the money. Sometimes he husked corn, at other times he split rails or slaughtered hogs. There was no easy work. Perhaps it might have seemed easier to Abe if he could have kept some of his own earnings, but much as he longed for money to buy books, he seemed never to have complained of his lot. He must have disliked the constant drudgery, as he was ambitious to do better things.

How strange it seems to us to read of his gratitude and pride when he earned his first dollar. Long afterward when he was President, he told the story to some friends at the White House.

He said, "Seward, you never heard, did you, how I earned

my first dollar?"

"No," rejoined Mr. Seward.

'"You know," continued Mr. Lincoln, "I belong to what they call 'the scrubs' down South.

"We had raised, chiefly by my labor, sufficient produce, as I thought, to justify me in taking it down the river to sell. After much persuasion, I got the consent of my mother to go. I constructed a little flat boat large enough to take a barrel or two of things that we had gathered, down to the nearest market. We had, you know, no wharves on the Western streams; and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings, for them to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping and taking them on board.

"I was contemplating my new flat boat, and wondering whether I could make it stronger, or improve it in any particular, when two men came down to the shore in carriages with trunks, and looking at the different boats singled out mine, and asked, 'Who owns this?' I answered somewhat 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. I supposed that each of them would give me two or three bits. The trunks were put on my flat boat, the passengers seated themselves on the trunks, and I sculled them out to the steamboat. They got on board, and I lifted up their heavy trunks, and put them on the deck.

"The steamer was about to put on steam again, when I called out that they had forgotten to pay me. Each of them took from his pocket a silver half-dollar, and threw it on the floor of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money.

"Gentlemen, you may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life. I could hardly believe that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in so short a time by honest work.

The world seemed kinder and fairer before me. I was a more hopeful and confident being from that time."

CHAPTER 9
In Illinois

When Abe was nearly twenty-one years old, his father concluded to move to Illinois. He thought his poverty was due to his surroundings, and believed he could do better in another state. In February, he and his family, with their scanty household goods, began a journey which lasted fourteen days. Finally they stopped at a bluff on the Sangamon, a stream which flows into the Illinois river. Here Thomas Lincoln, with an ax, saw, and knife, built a rough cabin of hewed logs, a smokehouse, and a stable. It was now almost time for Abe to start out in life for himself, but before he went, he, with the aid of John Hanks, cleared fifteen acres of land, split rails and fenced it in, planted it with corn and gave it to his father as the last work of his boyhood.

After he left home, his life at first did not change much from what it had been when he worked for his father. He did any job he could find. He split four hundred rails for Mrs. Nancy Miller "for every yard of brown jeans, dyed with white walnut bark, that would be necessary to make him a pair of trousers." After this job was completed he met a man named Offutt, who asked him and two other young men to take a cargo of hogs, pork, and corn to New Orleans. The three men were to have each fifty cents a day, and sixty dollars to divide equally among them at the end of the journey. Abe and his two companions accepted the offer, and started on their long journey down the Mississippi. They met many hardy planters and other raftsmen, with whom they exchanged stories around the evening camp fire.

As the three men went farther and farther down the Mississippi, the songs of the slaves could be heard as they returned from their work. The plaintive melodies touched Mr. Lincoln deeply. He said to himself, "Poor souls, their bondage is told in their songs." When he arrived at one city on the route, he saw some colored people in chains waiting to be sold. His eye flashing with indignation he exclaimed, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing (meaning slavery), I'll hit it hard." He then made up his mind to help the colored race if he ever had the opportunity.

At last, New Orleans was reached. There the young men sold the boat and its load; after which they started on their long tramp home. When Lincoln reached New Salem, Mr. Offutt offered him a clerkship in his store. He accepted, and while staying in the neighborhood met Jack Armstrong, whose family was afterward very kind to him. Jack himself, until Abraham Lincoln came into the neighborhood, had been the champion athlete of the community. He did not believe that any man was stronger or more active than himself, but one day a champion match was arranged in which Abraham Lincoln came off victor. Jack admired the skill and strength of his opponent so much that they were warm friends ever afterward.

As you know, Abraham was always anxious to secure any book. At this time he desired, especially, an English grammar. Having sought one in the neighborhood in vain, he heard of one six miles away. The next morning he got up early, walked over and borrowed it. He studied every page in it and soon knew it almost by heart. Perhaps it was during the time he was studying the grammar and committing rules that he charged the woman more than was due for her goods.

You have, no doubt, read the story of how one day, when he was busy, a woman came in to make some purchases, and he, through mistake, charged her six and one-fourth cents too much. He did not discover the error until she had gone home.

He was very sorry and was eager for night to come that he might have time to return the money. The moment he closed the store he started out on a journey of six miles to give the woman what was due her. He was no doubt very tired on his return home, but do you not believe he slept the more soundly for having been honest? Honesty was his watchword.

Before the end of the year Mr. Offutt failed in business and Abraham was left without employment.

CHAPTER 10
A Look at the Country

Suppose we take a look at the country, and leave Abe to seek work. The settlers knew nothing, by experience, of comfortable homes, of plenty of books, of handsome clothes. Their only social gatherings were horse racings, corn shuckings, political meetings, quiltings, weddings, log-rollings where the neighbors gathered to collect the logs of a newly-cleared lot for burning, or at a house raising where a cabin was set up for a newcomer. Once in a long time a dance was given. Men and women danced barefoot. They could not do any better, for their boots and shoes were likely to be home-made. The boys and girls who were born in the settlement, like Abraham Lincoln, had no idea of better times, but the people helped each other with a generous kindliness of which our grandfathers boast today.

When Abe was growing to manhood the hunting shirt and leggings made of skins were considered a fashionable garb. A young lover who could wear buck skin breeches, dyed green, was sure to captivate the hearts of the girls. By the time, however, that Abe was grown, jeans pants were fashionable, and the girls wore dresses of home-spun linsey, dyed with butternut hulls. The houses were mostly "half-faced camps," open upon one side to the weather, but some of the settlers had cabins without doors, floors, or windows. Others a little more wealthy, had greased paper windows and puncheon floors. At one corner the bed was made by driving crotched sticks into the ground, from which poles extended to the crevices of the walls. Boards were laid on these poles, then

leaves, skins, and bed-clothing covered the boards.

Three-legged stools and tables were hewn from trees. This was done with an ax, which the owner often walked miles to sharpen. When a girl wanted a mirror, she scoured a tin pan. The women washed their clothes in troughs. Men plowed the ground with wooden plows. There was scarcely any money in use, but people exchanged one kind of goods for another. The village groceries were meeting places for the men from miles around. There the stories were told and laughed at. There the political discussions arose, and there sometimes fights took place. Abraham Lincoln was always the center of an admiring group at such times. He was witty, good-natured, and had a never-ending fund of bright stories. All these things made him a favorite with the common people. He became interested in them and understood how to please them.

Whatever else may be said of those early times the people, as a rule, were honest, as the following story will show: A man left his wagon load of corn stuck in the prairie mud for two weeks. The road in which the wagon stood was traveled over frequently. When he returned to get his wagon, some of his corn was gone, but on opening the sacks, he found money enough to pay for what had been taken. If any one did steal anything, and the people found it out, the thief and his family had to leave the neighborhood.

It must seem strange to you to hear how they conducted court in Lincoln's district at that time. During the morning the men gathered. "Boys, come in, our John is going to hold court," the sheriff would say. The men then entered the tavern or log cabin and took seats beside the judge on the bed. The judge would hear the evidence and soon turn the case over to the jurors, who pronounced judgment upon the case.

All this was true during Lincoln's boyhood; but a few years later, instead of the log cabins in the villages, two-story frame houses, comfortably furnished and with some well-filled book shelves, became more common.

During those few years Illinois had improved so rapidly that all modes of life were different. Men of more ability and fortune had sought homes in the great West, and brought civilization with them.

CHAPTER 11
The Black Hawk War

Perhaps you would like to hear something of the Indians who lived near these settlers.

There is little to tell, since the early settlers of Illinois were seldom troubled with the Indians, as were the early settlers of other states. Sometimes a woman alone in her cabin was frightened by the appearance of an Indian; at other times poultry or pigs disappeared, and the settlers knew that some red man made way with them. But few people were ever hurt or killed.

It is said that one day a great chief in his paint and feathers came to a family who were clearing a piece of timber, and said, "Too much come white man t'other side Sangamon." He threw a handful of dried leaves in the air to show how he would scatter the pale faces, but he never kept his word. He came into the villages sometimes, but only to ask for a drink. But there was one tribe that still gave trouble. The name of their leader was Black Hawk. In 1832 Governor Reynolds issued his call for volunteers to move the tribe of Black Hawk across the Mississippi. For years the Rock Island neighborhood had been kept in terror by raids of this Indian chief.

Among the first to volunteer was Abraham Lincoln, who was twenty-three years old. Then it was that his companions showed their appreciation of him as a leader. He was much surprised when they chose him as their captain. Some one suggested an election, and immediately three-fourths of the men walked over and stood in pairs behind him. This was their plan of voting. Later in life he said he appreciated this

unsought honor more than any ever conferred upon him. It was his start in life.

His company immediately marched to join its regiment. When the company had been on the march three days they came to the Henderson river, "a stream some fifty yards wide, swift, and swollen with the spring thaws." The banks were both high and steep. Many armies would have turned back, or waited for the river to fall, but those backwoodsmen went to work like beavers, and in less than three hours the river was crossed, with the loss of only one team of horses and a wagon.

When they came to Yellow Banks on the Mississippi, the provision boat had not arrived, and they waited for three days without food — Governor Reynolds with the others. When the boat arrived with supplies, Governor Reynolds thought it was the most beautiful boat he had ever seen.

The war did not last long, yet there is one very interesting story connected with it. Black Hawk, the Chief, was taken captive and carried in triumph to President Jackson, in Washington. This is what he said to the President: "I am a man, you are another: I did not expect to conquer the white people. I took up the hatchet to avenge injuries which could no longer be borne. Had I borne them longer my people would have said: 'Black Hawk is a squaw; he is too old to be a chief; he is no Sac.' I say no more; all is known to you." He was returned to Iowa, and died a few years later at his camp in Des Moines. His people buried him in gala dress with cocked hat and sword, and the medals presented to him by two governments.

One June morning, only a short time after Lincoln had enlisted as a soldier, he was mustered out, the war being over. He and a friend named Harrison started to walk to New Salem from White Water, Wisconsin, a distance of over two hundred miles. Some soldiers who were more anxious to get home had taken both of their horses, but they started off merrily on foot on their long journey.

Mr. Harrison says of their journey: "When we arrived at Peoria we bought a little canoe, and Mr. Lincoln made an oar while I bought food for the voyage. There was but a slight current, as the river was low, so we did not make as good time as we could have made with our legs on shore. We used to let our boat drift all night, and when we awoke in the morning we recognized the surrounding objects of the evening before. Thus you can see how slowly we went, but we paddled our way to Pekin where we overtook two men on a raft of sawlogs. They invited us on their raft, and prepared breakfast for us. Abe certainly relished the feast of fish, bread, butter, eggs, and coffee, and we both ate more than was good for us, this being our first warm meal for several days. When we had finished breakfast we went back to our canoe, and after some time reached Havana, where we sold our boat and started on our walk home. It was not easy walking in the loose sand. Lincoln made long strides and slipped back six inches every step. These steps just fitted me, and he had a hearty laugh at my walking in his tracks to keep from slipping."

CHAPTER 12
Candidate for the Legislature

Mr. Lincoln arrived in New Salem only ten days before the August election. In this election he was deeply interested, for before he had enlisted as a soldier, he had announced himself as a candidate for the legislature. For some time he had been practicing public speaking, and had learned to think on his feet. In fact, he had been making speeches ever since he was a boy. Some of the old farmers, for whom he worked, used to tell how they had been annoyed at finding their men listening to Abe's speeches instead of harvesting the grain.

One day Mr. Posey, a candidate for the legislature, made a speech in Macon. John Hanks, a cousin of Lincoln's, said, "Abe can beat that." He turned a keg on end, Abe mounted it and made his speech, and it was said by those who heard him that "Abe did beat it to death."

It is also told of him that when he was about sixteen years old he walked fifteen miles to a trial at Booneville. This was his first experience in court, and he was intensely interested in everything that took place. When the famous lawyer, Mr. Breckinridge, began pleading in defense of his client, the boy was simply carried beyond himself.

The moment the eminent man concluded his speech, Abraham Lincoln, the poorly dressed, barefooted country lad walked across the court room, clasped the hands of the lawyer and exclaimed: "That was the greatest speech I ever heard." Little, perhaps, did the great Mr. Breckinridge imagine that he had awakened the fire of ambition and patriotism in this boy's heart, that would lead to his election to the greatest

office in the gift of a nation. But it was true, for from that day on, Abraham Lincoln believed he would become president of the United States.

Just ten days before the election day, Abraham Lincoln began his canvass for a seat in the state legislature. The circular letter in which he announced himself contained these words: "I am young, and unknown to many of you. I was born, and have ever remained in the humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or powerful relations to recommend me." He added that he appealed to the independent voters of the country, and if they elected him they would confer a favor upon him for which he would labor unremittingly to repay them.

In those days it was the practice for rival candidates to meet and make speeches, that the people might judge of their ability. Mr. Lincoln's first campaign speech was made at Pappsville. You will be interested to hear what he said: "I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by my friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet. I am in favor of a national bank, am in favor of the internal improvement system, and of 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."

Springfield was then the center of all political conflicts, and a few days after the speech, quoted above, he made a better one there, which impressed the people favorably, but at the election he was defeated.

CHAPTER 13
Surveyor, Postmaster, and Lawyer

After his defeat, Lincoln, with a man named Berry, opened a country store. This business was a failure. Berry died, leaving a debt which Lincoln worked hard for years to pay. His sense of honor compelled him to pay this debt, although it could not have been collected legally.

During the days when he was merchant he began to read law from books borrowed from Major Stuart, a friend he had made at Springfield. He used to lie on his back under a big oak tree poring over these books. Some one describes him with his feet resting on the trunk of the tree, his long, gaunt figure, habited in homespun, stretched to its full length on the grass.

Having determined to become a good lawyer, he never lost a moment that he could spend in profitable study. He bought a second-hand copy of Blackstone's Commentaries, and mastered it in a few months. He often walked to Springfield, a distance of fourteen miles, to borrow some book, which he studied all the way home. It was not many months before he began to practice law before country juries; but in spite of his economy and industry he found it difficult to earn sufficient money to pay for his board and clothes.

He now turned to a different occupation in order to support himself until his law practice grew. He had, before moving to Illinois, learned a little about surveying. He now began to study again and, without any teacher, he learned enough from a book in six weeks to become so expert as to be chosen deputy surveyor of Sangamon county, and it is said that he

used a grapevine for a chain.

About this time he was appointed postmaster of New Salem. He accepted this office because it afforded an opportunity to study, and he read eagerly every paper that came to the office. He carried the mail in his hat, and whenever he met a person for whom he had a letter, stopped and gave it to him. He kept the office until New Salem ceased to be a post station. Years after, he was called on by an agent of the government with a bill for seventeen dollars, the balance due from the New Salem office. Abraham Lincoln had known long years of pinching poverty since the post office had closed, and his friends present, being afraid that he had been obliged to use the money, began to search for their pocketbooks to loan him what was needed. He thought a moment, walked to the corner, unlocked a little trunk, took out an old cotton handkerchief, and in this was rolled up seventeen dollars which he handed to the agent, saying, "Here it is; I never use any man's money but my own."

CHAPTER 14
Lincoln as Legislator

You remember that Mr. Lincoln was defeated the first time he was a candidate for the legislature. Two years rolled round and the time came to elect another legislator in Sangamon county. His friends asked Lincoln again to be their candidate. He did so, and was elected.

It was a proud moment for this sturdy young man from the backwoods; this first political victory. It was no small honor. He began to realize that all his years of honesty, toil, self-sacrifice, and ambition really counted for something. In spite of his poverty and lack of advantages he would yet make for himself a noble career.

His election to the legislature opened a new life for him. At Vandalia, where the General Assembly then met, he associated with more intelligent men, and became acquainted with better forms of society than he had ever known.

Although he was very awkward, and extremely homely, his kindness, unselfishness, and modesty won him friends and position in the best society of the capital. He, like other members of the legislature, wore a decent suit of blue jeans; and was rather a quiet young man, good natured and sensible. Among the first persons he met there was Stephen A. Douglas. Before the winter was over his strong common sense made a marked impression, and his honesty and faithfulness won the loyal support of his constituents, who re-elected him for a second term.

When he announced himself for the second term he expressed his views in the following letter: "I go for all sharing

the privileges of the government, who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently I am for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females)." He was elected by the Whigs, and served his county faithfully as he had promised.

On his return to his home, a dinner was given in his honor. This was one of the toasts offered: "Abraham Lincoln, one of nature's noblemen."

One of the most important questions before the assembly during Mr. Lincoln's second term was the removal of the capital from Vandalia to Springfield. Mr. Lincoln used his influence and helped to secure it for the latter place. This so pleased the people of Springfield that they urged him to make his future home there. He accepted the invitation, and became the law partner of his old friend, John T. Stuart.

Mr. Lincoln was elected to the legislature for the third time directly after he moved to his new home, and was re-elected every term until after the memorable log-cabin campaign when William Henry Harrison was elected president. This was called the log-cabin campaign because General Harrison had once lived in one, and his opponents had made fun of his poverty.

CHAPTER 15
Harrison Elected President

The whole nation was wildly excited. At every voting precinct a log-cabin was seen. The Harrison men hung a gourd on one side of the door and a coon-skin on the other. This pleased the common people and the old settlers.

Abraham Lincoln began making speeches for Harrison, and threw his powerful energy and zeal into the campaign. On the opposing side was a young lawyer known as "The Little Giant," whose real name was Stephen A. Douglas. These two young lawyers met in joint debate, and those who heard them say no more interesting political speeches were ever made. Everybody admired the cleverness of these two gifted young speakers, and scarcely any one was able to say which was the brighter man. It must have been a pleasure for Mr. Lincoln to have General Harrison elected, even though Illinois did not cast her vote for him.

Soon after he went to live at Springfield, he had an opportunity to befriend a family who had once kindly offered him a home for the winter. The name of the family was Armstrong. You have not forgotten Jack Armstrong, the champion athlete. It was at his home that Abe had spent the winter after he lost every thing in the store. Jack had never been a good boy, and now word came to Mr. Lincoln that his old friend had been charged with murder. Mr. Lincoln could not believe he was guilty. Jack's mother, who was now a widow, did not believe it either, but she was poor, and was not able to employ a lawyer to defend her son. She was in despair. But one day her heart was made glad by the following letter:

Springfield, Ill., Sept. 18, 18—.

Dear Mrs. Armstrong:

I have just heard of your deep affliction, and the arrest of your son for murder. I cannot believe he can be guilty of the crime alleged against him. It does not seem possible. I am anxious that he should have a fair trial, at any rate, and gratitude for your long continued kindness to me in adverse circumstances prompts me to offer my humble services gratuitously in his behalf. It will afford me an opportunity to requite, in a small degree, the favors I received from you and your lamented husband, when your roof afforded me grateful shelter, without money and without price.

Yours truly,
Abraham Lincoln.

Mr. Lincoln went to the trial. When one of the witnesses perjured himself by testifying that he saw the murder committed by the light of the moon, Mr. Lincoln proved by the almanac that the moon was not shining on that night. Mr. Lincoln closed his speech to the jury in these words: "If justice is done, as I believe it will be, before the sun shall set it will shine upon my client a free man."

The jury retired, and in half an hour returned with the verdict, "Not guilty."

As soon as these words were pronounced, Jack Armstrong rushed to Mr. Lincoln, grasped his hand, but could not speak. Mr. Lincoln pointed to the west and said, "It is not yet sundown, and you are free."

Mr. Lincoln rose rapidly in his profession as a lawyer. He now felt able to have a home of his own. The lady who became his wife was Miss Mary Todd, daughter of Hon. Robert S. Todd, of Lexington, Ky. The wedding occurred on the 4th of November, 1842.

Two years later he was elected to congress, and on the first Monday in March of the following year he took his seat. There he met again his former opponent, Stephen A. Douglas. He met many other men of prominence, among whom were John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Jefferson Davis. One very notable thing which he did during this term was to introduce a bill abolishing the slave trade in Washington City.

CHAPTER 16
His Great Debate with Douglas

When Mr. Lincoln's term in congress closed, he returned to Springfield, where he again settled down to the practice of law. His business grew rapidly but his fees were small, and he seldom made more than $2,000 a year. Five years passed and again Mr. Lincoln entered public life. Through the influence of Mr. Douglas a law had been passed admitting Kansas and Nebraska as slave states if they should adopt a constitution favoring it. The whole country was wild with excitement. Of course Abraham Lincoln opposed the bill with all his strength. He went before the people of Illinois, and pleaded with them to send a senator to congress who was opposed to the further extension of slavery.

Stephen A. Douglas was a candidate for reelection to the senate, and was defending himself for having used his influence to permit Kansas to become a slave state.

In one of his speeches he said, "I do not care whether slavery is voted into or out of the territories. The question of slavery is one of climate. Wherever it is to the interest of the inhabitants of a territory to have slave property, there a slave law will be enacted."

Mr. Lincoln understood the fallacy of this argument, but he appreciated the shrewdness of his opponent. He knew that only truth could convince the people; that nothing either of them could say, personally, unless it carried with it the force of truth, would long have weight. He felt, however, that truth and right were on his side.

He replied, "The men who signed the Declaration of

Independence said that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I beseech you, do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity, the Declaration of Independence."

In May, 1856, a convention was held at Bloomington, Illinois, to form a new political party. At this convention Mr. Lincoln made a speech which will never be forgotten by those who heard it, and which history says was one of the greatest speeches ever made. "Again and again, during its delivery, the audience sprang to their feet, and, by long continued cheers, showed how deeply the speaker had moved them." When the new party was formed and given the name of Republican Party, it was natural that Mr. Lincoln should become its leader in Illinois.

The two great political parties of the United States were then, as now, known as Democratic and Republican. In the following election the Democratic candidate, Mr. Buchanan, was victorious.

During his administration, one of the most interesting senatorial contests ever known in Illinois took place. The choice of the Republican party was Mr. Lincoln; his opponent, the Democratic candidate, was Mr. Douglas.

It was decided that Lincoln and Douglas should meet in joint debate at different points in the state. Seven towns were selected, so distributed as to accommodate all the people. The Little Giant, as Douglas was called, was enthusiastically followed by his friends from city to city. Music, banners, fireworks, dinners, receptions accompanied every engagement.

Lincoln conducted a splendid campaign. He again pleaded for justice, liberty, and peace. Douglas expected to be a candidate for the presidency in 1860, and made the effort of his life in these speeches. Lincoln made the stronger impression upon the people, but the Democratic party being in the majority, won the victory.

CHAPTER 17
His Nomination for President

Before the Republican convention, held in 1860 to nominate a president for the United States, there were a number of political meetings held throughout the state of Illinois. At one of these in Decatur, John Hanks entered carrying two rails that had been made by Lincoln many years before. These he solemnly presented to the assembly. The present was received with roars of laughter and shouts of applause. The same rails were carried to the Chicago convention. The ladies decorated them with flowers and lighted them with tapers. They were the chief ornaments of the Illinois headquarters during that exciting week. From that time Mr. Lincoln was called the "Illinois Rail Splitter."

On May 16, 1860, the Republican convention to nominate a candidate for president was held in Chicago. That was just how many years ago? At that time the city had only one hundred thousand inhabitants.

There was not a hall in the city large enough to hold the convention. An enormous structure called "The Wigwam" was built. On the third day, Mr. Lincoln's name was presented with the names of other candidates. It was a day of intense excitement in the convention and throughout the country.

After two ballots everybody became quiet.

The delegates footed up their own columns as the roll was called.

They found Abraham Lincoln needed only one and one-half votes to nominate him. Suddenly all became so still that the pencil scratches could be easily heard; not a fan waved,

not a voice was audible. Everybody leaned forward to see and hear what would happen next. In a moment David K. Carter sprang upon his chair and shouted that Ohio would give Lincoln four more votes.

"Only a pause of a second, and the teller waved his tally sheet toward the skylight and shouted a name. The boom of a cannon on the roof told the people the nomination was made. Abraham Lincoln's name was carried with the speed of lightning to every part of the great Union. The delegates who left Chicago that night soon learned that the people were pleased with the work they had done. At every station there were tar barrels burning, drums beating, boys carrying rails, and guns, great and small, banging away." Throughout the entire campaign rails were destined to play a conspicuous part.

CHAPTER 18
His Election

The period following the nomination was a very exciting one; Stephen A. Douglas was Mr. Lincoln's opponent, and many of the ministers in Springfield, Mr. Lincoln's own city, were reported as favoring Mr. Douglas, because they thought Mr. Lincoln was not a Christian. When he heard this he uttered these noble sentiments:

"I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery; I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me — and I think he has — I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right, because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is the son of God. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and reason say the same; and they will find it so. Douglas does not care whether slavery is voted up or voted down, but God cares, and humanity cares, and I care; and with God's help I cannot fail. I may not see the end; but it will come, and I shall be vindicated; and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright."

Mr. Lincoln was elected in November, and inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1861. He left his home in Springfield on the11th of February.

To his friends and neighbors who accompanied him to the station he said good-bye in the following words:

"My friends, no one not in my position can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. To this people I owe all that I am. Here I have 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. A duty devolves upon me which is perhaps greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He would never have succeeded except by the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him. On the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support, and I hope you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive that Divine assistance without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain. Again I bid you all an affectionate farewell."

Mr. Lincoln spoke in a number of cities on his way to Washington.

Everywhere he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. But there were many people in the United States who bitterly opposed his election, and some had determined that he should never be inaugurated. These bitter thoughts led to the formation of a party to assassinate him in Baltimore as he passed through that city. Happily he was warned of the danger, changed his route, and reached Washington in safety.

CHAPTER 19
Mr. Lincoln as President

His great inaugural address as president of a nation divided in sentiment and purpose, closed with these words:

"If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side of the dispute, there is still no single reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance upon Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulties. In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it. I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

The four distressing years of our civil war followed. We will not dwell upon that conflict. The President made every endeavor to restore peace and preserve the Union, but at length he felt the only way to gain these ends was to free the slaves. Soon afterwards he issued his famous proclamation which liberated them.

In 1862 there was a great battle fought at Gettysburg,

where many soldiers died for the Union. The people of Pennsylvania decided to give the battlefield as a national burying ground. At the dedication on November 19, 1863, Mr. Lincoln spoke these grand words. They will live forever in the hearts of American citizens:

President Lincoln's Gettysburg speech.

"Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon 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 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 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 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 the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

At the close of his first term Mr. Lincoln was reelected.

Those who knew him then, and those who have studied his life since, were not surprised at his reelection. People cannot fail to appreciate him when they know what a pure, generous, noble-hearted patriot he was.

No doubt God had listened to the prayers he had made just before leaving Springfield, and had given him strength and guidance through these four awful years. His second inaugural address was the most perfect state paper ever written. It closed with these words: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, let us finish the work we are engaged in, to bind up the nation's wound, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Although we cannot record half his noble deeds, we wish to give you some of the incidents which show his tenderness and love to all who needed it; and to have you see that he really had "malice toward none and charity for all."

CHAPTER 20
Stories of Mr. Lincoln's Kindness

A poor little drummer boy, pale and delicate, and only thirteen years old, came one day with many others to see the President. The President spied the little fellow in the crowd and kindly said, "Come here, my boy, and tell me what you want." The child went up to him and leaning against his arm-chair said timidly: "I have been a drummer boy two years in one regiment; but my colonel got angry with me and turned me off. I was taken ill, and have been in the hospital a long while. Today is the first time I have been out, and I have come to ask you to do something for me."

The President inquired of the child very kindly where he lived. "I have no home; my father died in the army, and my mother, too, is dead," said the poor boy, bursting into tears. "I have no father, no mother, no brother, no sister, no home, nowhere to go; nobody cares for me," he sobbed in great distress. The President's eyes were full of tears; he said, tenderly, "Can't you sell newspapers, my child?" "No," replied the boy, "I am too weak, and the surgeon says I must leave the hospital, and I have no money." The President was much affected; he did not speak, but he took a card from his pocket and wrote on it special directions to certain officers to care for the poor little drummer boy. The child's pale face lighted up with a joyous and grateful smile when he received the card, and he felt that he had one friend in the world, the good President.

One afternoon, a Washington correspondent went into the President's office and found him counting greenbacks.

"This, sir," said Mr. Lincoln, "is out of my usual line, but

this money belongs to a poor Negro who is a porter in the Treasury Department, at present very bad with the smallpox. He is now in the hospital, and could not draw his pay, because he could not sign his name. I have been at considerable trouble to overcome the difficulty and get it for him, and have at length succeeded in cutting red tape, as you newspaper men say. I am now dividing the money, and putting by a portion in an envelope, according to his wish."

Mr. Lincoln was never forgetful of any of his poor relations. He helped them in every way he could, and always visited them when in their neighborhood. On one occasion, when urged to stay with a party of friends at a fashionable hotel he said, "Why, Aunt's heart would be broken, if she knew I had been so near, and did not come to see her." Off he rode over six miles of dusty road to spend the night with his humble relative.

His stepmother once said of him, "Abe was a good boy, and I can say what scarcely one mother in a thousand can say — Abe never gave me a cross look or word, and never refused, in fact or appearance, to do anything that I requested of him. I never gave him a cross word in all my life. His mind and mine — what little I had — seemed to run together. He was here after he was elected President. He was a dutiful son to me always. I think he loved me truly. I had a son, John, who was raised with Abe. Both were good boys; but I must say, both now being dead, that Abe was the best boy I ever saw, or expect to see."

Miss Kate Roby relates an incident which illustrates alike Lincoln's proficiency in orthography and his natural inclination to help another when in need of help. The word "defied" had been given out by Schoolmaster Crawford, but had been misspelled once or twice when it came Miss Roby's turn. She tells the following story: "Abe stood on the opposite side of the room and was watching me. I began, d-e-f-, and then I stopped, hesitating whether to proceed with an 'i' or a 'y'.

Looking up, I beheld Abe, a smile covering his face, and pointing with his index finger to his eye. I took the hint, spelled the word with an 'i', and went through all right."

One evening soon after his election as President, while Mr. Lincoln was attending a reception in Chicago, he saw a little girl coming timidly toward him.

He at once went to her and asked what she wished. She replied, "I want you to write your name for me." Mr. Lincoln looked back into the room and said: "But here are other little girls; they would feel badly if I should give my name only to you."

The little one replied, "There are eight altogether."

"Then," said Mr. Lincoln, "get me eight sheets of paper, and a pen and ink, and I will see what I can do for you." The little girl went out and quickly returned with the paper. The President sat down in the crowded drawing room, wrote a sentence upon each sheet, and signed his name. Every little girl carried off her souvenir.

Another afternoon during the visit to Chicago, Mr. Lincoln was shaking hands with all the guests, when a little boy entered the room, and to everybody's surprise, took off his hat, and giving it a swing said, "Hurrah for Lincoln!"

Mr. Lincoln wended his way through the crowd to the child, picked him up, tossed him to the ceiling and said, "Hurrah for you!"

The Hon. W. D. Kell tells this pleasant story of Mr. Lincoln's kindness:

"I went to the President and told him that a little lad, whose home was in my town, had served a year on board the gun boat Ottawa, and had been in two important engagements — in the first as a powder-monkey.

"In this engagement he had been so cool and brave that he had been chosen a captain's messenger in the second engagement. I asked the President if he did not have it in his power to appoint to the naval school the boys who had served

a year in the navy. He at once wrote on the back of a letter to the Secretary of the Navy. If the appointments this year have not been made, let this boy be appointed. The appointment had not been made, and I brought it home with me.

"The lad was to report in July, but his father found he was not old enough until the following September. The poor child sat down and wept. He feared that he was not to go to the naval school. He was, however, soon consoled by being told that the President could make it right. It was my fortune to meet him one morning at the door of the executive chamber with his father. Taking by the hand the little fellow —short for his age, dressed in the sailors blue pants and shirt — I led him to the President, who sat in his usual seat, and said: 'Mr. President, my young friend, Willie Bladen, finds a difficulty about his appointment. You have directed him to appear at the school in July; but he is not yet fourteen years of age.' But before I got half of this out, Mr. Lincoln, laying down his spectacles, rose and said: 'Bless me! Is that the boy who did so gallantly in those two great battles? Why, I feel that I should bow to him, and not he to me.' The little fellow had made his graceful bow.

"The President took the papers at once, and as soon as he learned that a postponement until September would suffice, made the order that the lad should report in that month. Then putting his hand on Willie's head he said: 'Now, my boy, go home and have some fun during the two months, for they are about the last holidays you will get.'

"The little fellow bowed himself out, feeling that the President of the United States, though a very great man, was one with whom he would, nevertheless, like to have a romp."

One night during the war the President had retired, after a day of overwork. The sentinel was not to admit any one.

A congressman came, and after a long parley was told where he could find the President. The congressman was an old friend of Mr. Lincoln's, and went straight to his bedside.

In an excited manner he told Mr. Lincoln he had just received a dispatch announcing the hour of execution of a young neighbor boy of his.

"This man must not be shot, Mr. President," said he. "I can't help what he may have done. Why, he is an old neighbor of mine. I can't allow him to be shot!" Mr. Lincoln had remained in bed, quietly listening to the vehement protesting of his old friend (they had been in congress together). He at length said: "Well, I don't believe shooting him will do any good. Give me that pen." And so saying "red tape" was unceremoniously cut, and another poor fellow's lease of life was indefinitely extended.

Both the steward and the cook had remonstrated with "Master Tad" upon bringing into the kitchen of the White House such squads of poor, dirty, hungry street urchins to be fed, and at last Peter said that Mrs. Lincoln must be told.

Tad flew into a rage, ran upstairs to see his mother, and not finding her searched the place for his busy father.

Meanwhile, the small objects of his charity waited at the lower door — for Peter had absolutely refused to let them "step inside."

The indignant boy spied his father just crossing the yard, with head bowed, eyes to the ground, talking earnestly with Mr. Seward as they walked to the Department of State together.

He cried out to him at once: "Father! father! can't I bring those poor, cold, hungry boys home with me whenever I want to? Isn't it our kitchen? Can't I give them a good warm dinner today, say? They're just as hungry as bears, and two of them are the boys of a soldier, too! And, father, I'm going to discharge Peter this minute if he don't get out the meat, and chicken, and pies, and all the good things we had left yesterday! Say, mayn't I? Isn't it our kitchen, father?"

Secretary Seward was shaking with laughter.

Mr. Lincoln turned to him with a twinkle:

"Seward, advise with me. This case requires diplomacy." Mr. Seward patted Tad on the head, and said he must be careful not to run the government in debt; and the President took Tad's little brown hands in his own big ones, and with a very droll smile, bade him "run along home and feed the boys," and added: "Tell Peter that you are really required to obey the Bible by getting in the maimed and the blind, and that he must be a better Christian than he is."

"In less than an hour," Mr. Seward said, "we passed through the yard on our way to the cabinet meeting, and no less than ten small boys were sitting on the lower steps, cracking nuts, and having a State Dinner." Mr. Lincoln remarked "the kitchen is ours."

CHAPTER 21
Death of Mr. Lincoln

The close of the war was near. In April, the President received the news that General Lee, commander of the Confederate armies, had surrendered. When the glorious tidings that the Union was preserved flashed over the wires, the country became wild with joy. Flags were hoisted everywhere. Bells were rung, cannons fired, bonfires were built, and prayers of thanksgiving were offered.

On the night after Lee's surrender there was a great celebration in Washington.

The White House and all the public buildings were brilliantly illuminated and decorated with flags. An immense throng gathered about the Capitol to hear what the President would say.

Those who listened and cheered little thought that these would be the last words they would ever hear from the lips of the great man whom they loved.

Let us always remember that his last public speech contained this noble sentiment: "He from whom all blessing flow must not be forgotten." All his utterances that night were full of his great unselfish spirit. What a grand scene that was! The handsome building, the happy multitudes, the noble face of their great chief beaming upon them! What a contrast to the terrible picture of the following night! For then the city was plunged into mourning over the most tragic death our nation has ever known.

On the morning following, the President breakfasted with his son, Robert Lincoln, a member of Grant's staff. He listened

with deep interest to his son's description of Lee's surrender. After this he attended a cabinet meeting, and in the afternoon went for a long ride with Mrs. Lincoln. His heart was full of happiness, and the sad look usually on his face, gave way to smiles. That night they went to Ford's Theater. The manager had advertised that Mr. Lincoln would occupy a box. Every seat in the building was taken, as thousands were eager to see the President.

Between two of the acts, John Wilkes Booth, an actor, who considered Mr. Lincoln a tyrant, and whose heart was full of bitterness, entered the President's box and shot him. At first the audience did not know what had happened, but only a few minutes elapsed before they heard the fatal words, "The President has been shot, and the wound is mortal."

Never has our nation been so stricken by the death of a citizen and leader. Captain Lincoln and little Tad did not grieve alone. The whole nation was fatherless.

He had given his life to the service of his people, and they realized that the nation had lost its grandest hero. The beautiful life was ended, but its influence is with us today, and the name of Lincoln will be ever linked with that of Washington.

The following poem, written by William Cullen Bryant, is a fitting close to our story:

O, slow to smite and swift to spare,
    Gentle and merciful and just!
Who, in the fear of God, didst bear
    The sword of power — a nation's trust.

In sorrow by thy bier we stand
    Amid the awe that hushes all.
And speak the anguish of a land
    That shook with horror at thy fall.

Thy task is done — the bond is free;
    We bear thee to an honored grave.
Whose noblest monument shall be

The broken fetters of the slave.

Pure was thy life; its bloody close
Hath placed thee with the sons of light
Among the noble host of those
Who perished in the cause of right.

Abraham Lincoln: A True Life

James Baldwin

To the Schoolboys of America

This book is dedicated to you. It is the story of a hero greater than any of the heroes of fairy tale or romance. For while these latter were for the most part ideal and imaginary, the man of whom I shall tell you was a real person who lived a true life and did truly noble things.

Concerning no other American has so much been written. Of books about Lincoln there are already scores, even hundreds. Why, then, should I presume to write another? Why, when it is plainly impossible to relate any new facts regarding our hero, should I venture to add this volume to the multitude of existing biographies?

My answer and apology is this: While I cannot tell anything that has not already been told, yet I may be able to repeat some well-known facts in a manner particularly agreeable and understandable to boys and girls, thus producing a book adapted to school reading, free from wearisome details as well as from political bias or sectional prejudice. Then, again, it is my aim in this book to trace, as briefly as may be, the progress of our government from the time of its organization to the end of the great civil war; and more particularly to make plain the causes and motives which brought about the tremendous crisis in which Abraham Lincoln bore so conspicuous a part. For to you, the schoolboys of America, the political history that centers around the life of our hero should have more than a passing interest. Although the chief issues then at stake have ceased to exist, yet the lessons of that history remain as beacon lights to guide and warn you, the future rulers and lawmakers of our country. Other issues may arise, other jealousies may cause discord, other mistaken theories

may threaten the peace of the nation — the salvation of this great republic will depend upon your unselfish patriotism. It is with the hope that this book may help to inspire you with such patriotism that I dedicate it to you.

JAMES BALDWIN

Prelude

THE Fourth of July in America is a time of national rejoicing. It is also a time of national remembrance. On that day we are reminded, in one way or another, that we are Americans, and that we have a country to which we should be loyal and true. We are reminded, also, that this is the land of freedom and that it was made so by the toils and sufferings of brave and wise men who lived and died amid scenes and circumstances to which we are strangers. It is fitting that we should think of all these things on the Fourth of July, for that day is the birthday of our nation.

There was once a time, however, when the people living in America could not boast that they had a country of their own; for they were ruled by the king and parliament of Great Britain who made laws for their government without asking their consent. The American colonists, as the people were then called, could not say that this was a land of freedom; for they were made to pay taxes to the king, and were denied many of the rights which free men hold dear. Then the 4th of July came and went without more notice than any other day: no flags were raised, no great guns were fired, no glad bells were rung; for the nation had not yet been born.

But at length there came a day when the people would no longer be deprived of their rights. Then certain wise and brave men declared: "The king of England is a tyrant, and he is unfit to rule this land. The people shall make their own laws and choose their own rulers, for this is their right. These states, in which we live, are and ought to be free and independent."

The day on which that declaration was made was the 4th of July, 1776; and since that time, as the years go by, it is

remembered with great rejoicing as the day when the American nation had its beginning. But real independence was not won merely by a declaration. There followed a long war with England — the war of the Revolution — which lasted till the British king and parliament were forced to say that the country might be free. In this way the people won the right to be their own rulers and to make their own laws; in this way they gained for themselves and for us the freedom which all men so dearly prize.

It must not be thought that when our nation began its life it was rich and great as it now is. It was small and weak. Its possessions did not reach from ocean to ocean, as they do now, but only from the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi River. There were but thirteen states, and they were thinly settled. Nearly all the people lived in that part of the country which is east of the Allegheny Mountains, and the different sections had but little to do with one another. The largest and richest of the states was Virginia, which claimed the land westward as far as to the Mississippi.

The broad region between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi was, for the most part, an unknown land. It was covered for hundreds of miles by a dense, wild forest, where savage beasts lurked and warlike Indians roamed. There was no way of getting into it except by pushing through the tangled woods, or by floating in small boats down the Ohio River, or by coasting along the shores of the Great Lakes which bordered it on the north. The only roads were the water courses or the winding paths made through the forests and prairies by wild deer and wandering herds of bisons.

Here and there, on the bank of some river, hidden far away in the forest, there was a little fort or a trading post, scarcely known or even heard of by the rest of the world. Now and then, a hunter, after months of roving in these wilds, would go back to his friends in the East, and tell wonderful stories of the fertility and beauty of that Western country.

Now and then, some traders would return from the Ohio region with loads of skins and furs and with many a tale of danger and escape in the savage wilderness.

No person could have dreamed that within less than a century, this unknown region would become, as it is today, covered with countless farms and dotted with busy towns — the home of millions of happy people. Indeed, there were thoughtful men who said that, for ages to come, there would be plenty of room in the states east of the Allegheny Mountains for all the inhabitants of our country, and that the territory to the west would remain a wild, unsettled hunting ground, perhaps forever.

But there were a few men who believed otherwise. They had listened to the stories that were told of the extent and the hidden wealth of the lands in the Ohio Valley, and they believed that new states would soon be formed there. A year or more before the declaration of independence two companies of settlers, from Virginia and North Carolina, established themselves in the beautiful region south of the Ohio. One, composed at first of men alone, built a stockade at the place now called Harrodsburg. The other, among which were women and children, was led by the hunter, Daniel Boone, and the settlement which he founded was named Boonesborough.

The country in which these daring pioneers made their homes was an uninhabited land and was known by its Indian name, Kentucky. It was in the very heart of the untraveled wilderness – two hundred miles from the nearest settlement in Virginia. But it was one of the fairest regions in the world. Eastward, back to the crest of the mountains, the forest stretched unbroken; but westward, there were grassy openings between groves of woodland, and treeless meadows covered with rank herbage. Here were the hunting grounds of the Indians. Herds of bisons, or buffaloes, grazed on the wild meadows or roamed among the trees. Huge elks, with branching

horns, browsed in the forest openings; and timid deer nipped the herbage in secluded places and sought shelter from the sun and rain in the shady woods. And there were other animals less harmless than these — bears in great plenty, packs of wolves, prowling panthers, not a few, and many smaller and more timid beasts. Thousands of squirrels played unscared among the branches of the trees; and the forests and meadows seemed alive with birds of every kind.

No Indians had their dwellings there. But the tribes beyond the Ohio, as well as those to the east, the south, and the west, sent their brave men there every year. It was common ground for them all — to hunt in, but not to live in — and many and fierce were the battles that were fought when the paths of hostile parties crossed each other.

It was a daring thing for Boone and his friends to settle in that country, for every red man would be their foe. But they had come to stay, and stay they did. They built at Boonesborough a fort of round logs; and under its shadow they raised their log cabins, one for each family. Then around all they erected a stout stockade — a high fence made of heavy squared timbers, set upright in the ground and very close together. This being done, they felt themselves safe from any attacks the Indians might make; and they began to clear away the forest trees and to make fields and plant corn.

Very soon other people in Virginia and North Carolina heard of their success and ventured to follow them. Other settlements were made and other forts were built; and before the war of the Revolution was quite ended many eyes were turned toward Kentucky as the new land of promise in the far, far West. But it was like a fair island in the midst of a dangerous sea. The way to it was beset with perils; and notwithstanding all the beauty and the richness of its land, it had little to promise its settlers but labor and privation. And so the most of those who ventured to go thither in search of homes were men careless of danger and used to all kinds of

hardship.

At about this time there was living in Virginia a farmer whose name was Abraham Lincoln. He was a friend of Daniel Boone's, and had heard often of the wonderful country in the heart of the Western woods. He longed to go there himself, for he was something of a hunter as well as farmer; and Boone had sent him glowing accounts of the abundance of game and the richness of the soil. The state of Virginia, to which Kentucky then belonged, was selling land in the new territory very cheap. There would never be a better time to buy.

And so, while the great war for independence was still going on, he sold his farm in Virginia and went to Kentucky to look for a new home. On Floyd's Fork, near where the city of Louisville now stands, he bought four hundred acres of rich bottom land. In another place he bought eight hundred acres of woodland, and in another five hundred. Then he returned to Virginia for his family.

The next year, with his wife and children, he was safely settled on the land near Floyd's Fork, and was clearing a farm in the midst of the woods.

The Indians had begun to be troublesome, and were very dangerous. They were angry because their hunting grounds had been invaded, and because the wild game was being driven away. They had made up their minds to drive the white people out of Kentucky. And so, as a matter of precaution, Mr. Lincoln built his cabin within half a mile of a fort — Fort Beargrass, near the falls of the Ohio River. He did not believe that the Indians would dare to trouble him there.

Thus three years passed. In the meanwhile, peace had been made with England, and it had been agreed that the Mississippi River should be the western boundary of the United States. Great numbers of people began at once to cross the Allegheny Mountains to seek new fortunes in the fertile valley of the Ohio. Several settlements were made in the Kentucky country. Men were busy cutting down the trees, making

roads through the woods, clearing farms, building for themselves homes in the new land. Soon there were more than six hundred people in the town of Louisville; and other towns had sprung up, as if by magic, in places where lately the buffalo and the deer had roamed unharmed.

One morning in summer, Farmer Lincoln went out into a cornfield near his cabin to do some work. His little son Thomas, who was only six years old, went with him. The two big boys, Mordecai and Josiah, were burning logs in another field close by. There were still so many dead trees and blackened stumps in the clearing that the corn had scarcely room to grow among them. On one side there was an open space through which one could see Fort Beargrass and the houses of other settlers nearly a mile away; on the other side were green woods with dense thickets of briers and underbrush where birds sang and squirrels played and fierce beasts found lurking places.

As the two big boys were busy with their smoking log heaps, they were suddenly alarmed by the sound of a gun. They looked across the clearing. They saw that their father had fallen to the ground. Their little brother was standing over him and screaming with fright. A faint cloud of smoke was rising from the bushes at the edge of the woods.

"Indians!" cried Josiah; and he was off with a bound, running like a wild deer toward the fort.

Mordecai ran to the house, calling to little Thomas to follow him. But the child stood by his father's side, crying pitifully and not knowing what to do. A minute later the painted face of an Indian peered out from among the bushes. The child screamed louder than before, and turned to run. But the Indian was after him. Little Thomas heard the savage leaping over the fallen trees; he heard his swift feet; he ran very fast, but his pursuer ran much faster. At the top of a little hill the child fell. The house was in plain sight, and Mordecai and his mother and sisters were safe inside. Thomas

scrambled to his feet; but as he did so, the Indian's arm was about him. Then he heard the sharp crack of a rifle from the house, and the Indian, letting go of him, tumbled to the ground.

The child did not stop to see more, but ran faster than ever. In another minute he was safe inside the cabin and in his mother's arms.

Mordecai was standing guard by the window, with one rifle in his hands and two others leaning near him against the wall. Now and then he would take aim and fire; and savage yells could be heard from the Indians who were lurking in the edge of the woods. Then quite soon another kind of shout was heard in the clearing, on the farther side of the cabin. Josiah had come with a number of men from the fort.

"They have killed father," said Mordecai, opening the door, "but the fellow who was trying to catch Thomas is lying dead in the field. Let us after them, and not leave one of them alive!"

But the Indians were already skulking away through the thick woods, and there was no use trying to overtake them. I will have vengeance upon them," said Mordecai; and from that time till the end of his life, he was a bitter foe to all Indians.

Thus the pioneer, Abraham Lincoln, like many another brave settler in the wilderness, found an untimely grave in the land where he had hoped to make a home for himself and his children.

After the death of his father, hard times were in store for Thomas Lincoln; but they were perhaps no harder than those that came to other pioneer children in Kentucky. His mother thought it would be better to live in a more thickly settled neighborhood; and so the family soon moved some forty miles southeastward, and settled upon a large tract of land which their father had owned there.

It was the law in Kentucky that when a man died, his

eldest son should be heir to his whole estate. And so, when Mordecai Lincoln grew to be of age, he became the owner of all the property; and Josiah and the two sisters and young Thomas were left without anything. But Josiah was steady and industrious and found plenty of work, so that he was soon well-to-do in the world; the girls were already married and settled in homes of their own; and the only one who really felt the pinch of poverty was little Thomas.

He was allowed to grow up in a careless way, without much knowledge of the world in which he lived. There were no schools near his home, and so he never learned to read. He became very skillful in using a gun, and liked much better to be hunting in the woods than doing any kind of useful work at home. He was kind-hearted and gentle, slow to anger, and a pleasant companion. He was strong and brave, also, and no one dared impose too far upon his good nature.

While Thomas Lincoln was thus growing up, unheard of and unknown, many great things were being done in the world of which he knew so little. From the states on the east side of the mountains settlers were still pouring into the new country. They came in wagons over a road which Daniel Boone had marked out years before; they came in boats down the Ohio River. Wealthy families from Virginia came with their slaves and their cattle and their fine manners to build up great estates in the Ohio Valley. So many people settled in Kentucky that, when Thomas was fourteen years old, it was separated from Virginia and became a state. It was the fifteenth state in the Union; for the thirteen which had won independence had been joined by Vermont just the year before.

Many pioneers from the Carolinas made their homes in the country south of Kentucky, and there, in 1796, the sixteenth state, Tennessee, was formed. The great territory north of the Ohio River, which had been claimed by Virginia and other states, had finally been ceded to the United States, and was being rapidly settled by people from all parts of the

East. But it was still the home of powerful tribes of Indians who were not willing to be deprived of their lands and who were determined to defend their hunting grounds; and so for many years a cruel war was waged between the red men and the white. The backwoods settlements were often the scenes of terrible deeds. Battles were fought and treaties were made, and at last the Indians, knowing themselves beaten, sold their lands and went farther west. In 1802 the easternmost part of the territory north of the Ohio River became a state and was called Ohio. All the rest of that vast region of woodland and prairie was called Indiana Territory.

It is not to be supposed that young Thomas Lincoln, growing up in the backwoods of Kentucky, knew very much about any of these things. I doubt whether at that time he had ever seen a newspaper; and, indeed, of what use would a newspaper have been to one who could not read? He probably did not know that about the time he was passing his tenth birthday, George Washington was elected the first President of the United States. In 1796, when John Adams was chosen to be the second President, the boy was eighteen, and it is likely that he heard some talk concerning the election, but without understanding or caring much about it. But in 1800, when Thomas Jefferson was elected, the young Kentuckian was of age and might have voted; and yet we must believe that he cared far more for deer hunting in the woods than he did for election day or for politics.

In 1803 a great change took place in the boundaries of our country. Until then, as has already been told, the United States reached only to the Mississippi River, and Kentucky was spoken of as being in the far, far West. But in that year President Jefferson bought from France all the country that lies between the great river and the Rocky Mountains. Look at a map of the United States, and you will see that more than half of our country lies there. Count the states that have since been formed out of the Louisiana Territory, as it was then

called, and they are more than equal to the original thirteen that fought for independence.

At that time, however, all that region was a wild land where few white men had ever dared to go. Just how wide it was, or how long, or where it ended, or what it contained, no one knew. By the purchase of this territory, however, the Mississippi River became all our own, and the people living in the West had now a free outlet by water to the Gulf of Mexico. They could send whatever they had to sell down the river to New Orleans, and this was of much advantage to them. Within a very few years the Mississippi became the great highway of trade between the settlements in the West and the rest of the world. For you must know that there were no railroads at that time, nor until many years later. Indeed there were scarcely any roads of any kind; and for the Western settlers to carry grain or goods of whatever sort to or from the states east of the mountains was a thing so difficult and costly that it was hardly to be thought of.

Thomas Lincoln was now twenty-five years old. Since early boyhood he had been obliged to make his own way in the world. Easy-going though he was, everybody liked him; and so he was never without a home or something to do. He had been careful of his small savings, and was at last able to buy a piece of wild land in Hardin County not far from Elizabethtown.

In Elizabethtown there lived a carpenter whose name was Joseph Hanks. He had known Thomas Lincoln for a long time, and he now asked him to come and live with him and help him at his trade. Young Lincoln was known to be very skillful with an ax or a froe, and that was about all the skill that a good carpenter needed in those days. For the building of a house was a very simple matter. The walls were made of round logs, and the roof and floor of boards split from a tree. Wooden pegs were used instead of nails, and often there was not a piece of iron or a pane of glass in any part of the house.

Being always careful to do his work well, Thomas Lincoln soon became known as a first-rate carpenter. But the habits of his boyhood still clung to him. He was contented with earning simply his food and clothing; he loved his rifle better than his ax; and he would rather hunt deer than build houses.

It was while living thus in Elizabethtown that he first met Nancy Hanks, the niece of his employer. She was a fair and delicate girl; but like young Lincoln she had been used to hardships all her life. Her parents had been neighbors and friends of old Abraham Lincoln years before, when all lived in Virginia. They had also been friends of Daniel Boone and had been drawn to Kentucky by the glowing accounts that were given of the richness of its soil and the plentifulness of everything necessary to support life.

There were few girls in that neighborhood who were the equals of Nancy Hanks. She could read and write, and they could not. She had learned that somewhere outside of the Western country there was a great, busy world where people lived and thought in ways quite different from those of the folk whom she knew; and she had a vague longing for something better in life than what the rude settlements in the backwoods could ever give her. But her companions were content with the little world which they could see around them, and did not feel the hardships which were a part of their lives.

In the midst of rudeness and coarseness, Nancy Hanks was always gentle and refined. We cannot wonder that when Thomas Lincoln came to live in the same town with her, he lost his heart. And we must believe that when she at last promised to be his wife, she had been won by his kindly nature and his jovial manners rather than by any energy of character which he possessed.

It was in June, 1806, that the wedding took place. The bride was twenty-three years old, and the groom was five years older. For a year and more they lived in Elizabethtown, and

Thomas Lincoln went hunting often and tinkered occasionally at his trade, thus contriving to find food for both himself and his wife. There were not many houses to be built, and there were other carpenters more energetic than he; and so there was but little work to be done, and no prospect of more. A little daughter was born to the young couple; and then it was decided to move out to the land which Thomas owned on Nolin Creek; for game was still plentiful in the woods, and corn could be raised in the clearings, and life would be easier in a home which they could call their own.

And now while Thomas Lincoln is building his cabin, and before we begin the story of the great man who was born there, let us take a brief view of the condition of our country at that time.

Thirty-two years have passed since that 4th of July when independence was declared. Great changes have taken place, some of which we already know. The country is no longer bounded on the west by the Mississippi River, but reaches all the way to the Rocky Mountains. Yet it does not include Florida or Texas, or New Mexico, or California: for these are still held by Spain. The region between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi is dotted in many places with little settlements; the forests are being rapidly cut away to give place to fields and orchards and roads. Instead of thirteen states, there are seventeen; and three of these lie west of the mountains.

The Indians still live in the territory north of the Ohio; but they have sold a large part of their land and many of them have moved across the Mississippi; they are still feared in the Northwest, but in Kentucky they are no longer the dreaded foes that they once were. James Madison has been elected the fourth President of the United States, and on the 4th of March, 1809, he will take his seat. In the Eastern states men are excited and troubled, for they fear that another war with England is at hand. But in the West, people hear little news of what is going on; and they are so busy, clearing the woods

and fencing their farms and building homes that they have little time to think about other matters.

BOOK THE FIRST—PREPARATION

CHAPTER 1
A Humble Home

Nearly a hundred years ago in what was then Hardin County, Kentucky, a child was born who was destined to become one of the greatest of men. The day was the 12th of February; the year was One Thousand Eight Hundred Nine. The parents of the child were very poor, and the house in which they lived was poorer than any you have ever seen. Humble and unknown, they little dreamed that through the birth of that child they would be remembered and honored by millions of people and for unnumbered years thereafter.

"What shall we name this baby boy of ours?" asked the gentle mother.

"Let us call him Abraham," said the father. "The Lincoln family has always had an Abraham in it."

The child was not at all pretty, but he was strong and grew fast. The poor log cabin where he first saw the light was not an unpleasant place to him. True, it was dark and cold, doorless and floorless, and the chilling wind whistled through the crevices in the rough walls; but, safe from harm, the child lay in his mother's arms and was as happy as any little prince could be in the marble chambers of a king's palace.

When the boy became old enough to walk and run, he spent much of the time playing with his sister Sarah, who was two years older than himself. The children had no toys — they did not know what toys were — but they were happy without them. On warm, fair days they were allowed to run

among the trees in the grove close by the house; and Abraham learned very early to love the birds, the squirrels, and all the timid, pretty things that make their homes in the woods. Sometimes, clinging to his mother's gown, he would trudge with her across the fields to a neighbor's house, or to the spring for a pail of water, or to the meadow to see her milk the cow. Often of an evening he would run down the woodland path to meet his father coming home with an ax or a gun, or perhaps with a deer on his shoulder.

The child had no shoes for his feet; and his clothing was scanty and poor. His father had no money to buy flannel or calico or cloth of any kind; and so the little that Abraham had to wear was made by his mother at home. She made him trousers of deerskin, and a shirt and jacket of coarse tow cloth. He had no hat; but when he grew larger she made him a coonskin cap which he wore with the ringed tail of the animal hanging down his back. And he was well pleased with his clothing; for his father was dressed no better, and his little sister hardly as well.

There was only one room in the log cabin. It served as parlor, sitting room, bedroom, and kitchen, all at the same time. There was no floor, but only the bare ground, made very hard and smooth. Sometimes in cold weather the mother would spread a bearskin before the fire for the children to sit upon; and this was the only carpet they ever knew. There was no door, but only some rough boards leaned up in the doorway at night, or perhaps the bearskin was hung over it to keep out the snow and sleet.

There was no ceiling overhead, but only the smoky joists and the rough boards of the roof; and on clear nights the children could look up from their bed and see the stars peeping down through the cracks between. There was no glass in the one little window, and no way to close it but by hanging the skin of a deer or some smaller animal before it, thus shutting out not only the cold but the light also.

At one corner of the room there was a rude bedstead made of rough poles from the woods. On it was a pile of furry skins, and, for aught I know, a thin feather bed; and covering all was a quilt of rare patchwork, made by the mother when she was a light-hearted girl and her name was Nancy Hanks. There were no chairs, but only some rough wooden blocks to sit upon; and the table was merely a broad shelf, made by driving two long pegs into the wall and then laying a smooth board upon them.

At the end of the room farthest from the bed there was a huge fireplace made of stones and clay. It was so large that logs as big as a man's body were rolled into it and heaped one upon another for the winter fire; and although these logs would crackle and blaze at a great rate, and the flames would roar in the chimney, and the firelight would fill the room with its brightness, the cabin in winter was often a very cold and comfortless place.

It was by this fireplace that the mother did all her cooking. But she had not many things to cook. For meat there was usually plenty of venison. It was boiled in a pot hung over the fire, or sometimes broiled on the live coals. The bread was made by mixing corn meal with water or sour milk, so as to form cakes of thick dough, which were then covered with the hot ashes in the fireplace. Sometimes the dough was put into a Dutch oven, the oven was set upon the hearth, and red-hot coals were kept beneath and upon it until the bread was baked. Wheat bread was a luxury which only the richest people could afford; the Lincolns scarcely knew how it tasted.

In one corner by the chimney were the dishes, ranged upon a shelf: a few pewter plates, a tin cup or two, some treasured pieces of earthenware, and a wooden trencher — and that was all. In the other corner, resting on two pegs, was the father's rifle; and hanging from one of the pegs were his powderhorn, his bullet pouch, and his hunter's belt. Over the fireplace were some bunches of dried herbs to be used for tea

in case of sickness; and perhaps also a few simple trinkets and keepsakes were hung there, as ornaments and as reminders of absent friends. And on the hearth were ranged the cooking utensils — the Dutch oven, a pot or two, and a skillet or frying pan.

If you had visited that poor cabin, you would hardly have seen more than I have told you about. To you it would have seemed a wretched place with none of the comforts of home. But to those who lived in it, it did not seem so; for it was as good a home as many of their neighbors had, and their minds were cheered day by day with the hope that better times were coming. To the children who had never known any other home, little else seemed needed. Here were kind parents, shelter, and food, a bed to sleep in, a fire to warm one's self by — and what more could anybody want?

As soon as Abraham Lincoln was old enough to understand, his mother took great pains to teach him to be dutiful and true. Taking him upon her lap, she would tell him stories which he never forgot of brave and good men, who had lived beautiful lives and done noble deeds. And often in the evenings by the glow of the firelight, while the children nestled at her feet on the warm hearth, she would read to them from a wonderful Book which she kept with great care among her little treasures. The boy could not understand much that he heard; but the sound of his mother's voice pleased him, and he wished that he too could learn to read. And so it was a pleasant task for his mother to teach him the letters of the alphabet, and for him to learn how to spell easy words long before he could go to school.

The father, Thomas Lincoln, could not read; he did not even know the alphabet until his wife taught it to him. But he could tell strange, true stories — stories of things that he had seen or heard, or that had happened to himself. He liked best to tell about hunting, and about wild animals, and wild Indians, and about the brave pioneers who had settled

Kentucky when all the land was covered with woods.

There was one story in particular which he related over and over to his delighted listeners: It was about a bold settler who went out one morning to work in his field. The settler's little boy, six years old, was with him, very glad to help his father pull up the weeds from among the growing corn. All at once, the child was startled by hearing the sharp report of a gun. He looked up and saw his father stagger and fall to the ground. He saw an Indian leap from among some bushes and run toward him. With wild screams he turned and fled across the field as fast as his little legs would carry him; but the Indian was soon upon him — had caught him in his rude arms — was carrying him away to the woods. Then there was another sharp crack of a gun; the Indian tumbled headlong in the dust; and the little boy, thus set free, ran swiftly to the house and to his mother's safe embrace. His brother had saved him by shooting the cruel Indian.

When Thomas Lincoln had finished this story he would look at the children and say: "The poor man whom the savage Indian killed was your own grandfather; his name was the same as yours — Abraham Lincoln; and the little fellow who ran so fast and screamed so loud grew up to be a man — and he is your own father."

And then, as the children crept nearer to him, clinging to his knees, he would tell them that they need not be afraid of Indians, for those people had been driven far away, and now very few of them were ever seen in Kentucky.

CHAPTER 2
Boy Life in the Backwoods

When Abraham Lincoln was four years old his father sold his first farm and bought another which was thought to be much better; and so the family moved over the hills and settled in a new place on the banks of a small stream called Knob Creek. But the cabin which sheltered them was little better than the one they had left, and to the tender mother it never seemed so much like home.

There were three children now; for besides Sarah and Abraham there was a baby brother who was called Thomas, after his father. He was always a feeble little fellow, and with every care that his mother was able to give him he could gather no strength.

One day, with wondering eyes, the brother and sister saw the baby laid tenderly in a rude box which their father had nailed together; and when they had kissed his cold cheeks, a neighbor lifted the box upon his shoulders and carried it out of the cabin; and then with awed footsteps, and holding their weeping mother's hand, they followed the man and his burden far down the winding meadow path, scarcely knowing whither they went or what happened at the end of the journey. The baby never returned to the poor cabin.

After that, so long as the summer lasted, they went daily with their mother to see a little mound of fresh earth that had been made under the trees near the path; and on the way they gathered violets and daisies and red clover blossoms which their mother laid upon the mound and watered with her tears. It was all very strange and sad; and they did not notice at the

time that a light had gone out of their mother's eyes which would nevermore return.

This was the boy's first knowledge of sorrow; but he very soon began to learn much about the hardships and distresses that are the lot of the poor. His father was in constant trouble concerning the ownership of the land, which he had bought in good faith, but which he now found was claimed by other persons; his mother, worn with anxiety and care, grieved for her lost baby and could not be comforted; the poor log cabin at Knob Creek had but few comforts and still fewer pleasures to offer its inmates.

When Abraham was about five years old, a wandering schoolmaster came into the settlement. His name was Zachariah Riney, and he was a Catholic. There was no schoolhouse; but one of the neighbors offered him the use of an old log cabin if he would open a school in it. The poor people could not pay him much for teaching their children; for none of them had any money. But they agreed to give him what they could — some to give him board and lodging, some to wash and mend his clothing, and some to do him other kinds of service — and so he came to stay a little while among them and teach their children as best he could.

I think this must have been the first school that was ever taught in that neighborhood. Most of the scholars were big boys and girls who had grown up without seeing books. Very few of them could read; and there were young men and young women among them who did not so much as know one letter from another.

To this school Abraham Lincoln and his sister Sarah were sent. It was their mother's doing, for the father did not care for book learning. "I never went to school," he said, "and I guess I've got along just as fairly as other people. If a man knows how to chop well and shoot straight, he don't need to be a scholar." But Mrs. Lincoln thought otherwise.

Abraham was the youngest of the pupils; and the big boys

and girls were surprised to find that he could outspell them all. For spelling was the only branch of study taught at that school. No other book was used but a little blue-backed spelling book with a few reading lessons at the end; and it was thought that if any one should learn all the words in that volume he would be very wise indeed. But it was only for a few weeks that the school could be kept up. The boys and girls were needed at home, and the people could not pay the master to stay longer.

The next year another schoolmaster came. His name was Caleb Hazel, and he opened a school in the same old cabin. The same boys and girls, with some of the younger children in the settlement, were his pupils. The master was thought to be very bright; for he was a good speller, and was strong enough to whip the biggest boy in the district. But nobody seemed to know what the school was for.

There was nothing to be learned but the letters of the alphabet and long lists of words. The girls were idle and thoughtless; and the boys cared for nothing but to annoy the master. Little Abraham Lincoln kept his place at the head of his class, and for that reason was admired by some and disliked by others who were much older than himself.

Within less than three months this school also came to an end; but the boy did not stop learning. Young as he was, study had already become a pleasure to him. The Bible, that wonderful old book which his mother loved, was often in his hands.

In the long winter evenings he would sit on the hearth and read by the flickering light of the fire. Sometimes when the flames died down he would gather bits of spicewood brush and throw them, a few at a time, upon the coals so that they might blaze up and serve him as candles. All his studying was aloud, and when he came to a big word which he could not make out, his mother would help him pronounce it.

There were no churches in that part of the country. But

wandering preachers often came and held meetings, sometimes in the cabins of friendly settlers, sometimes under the trees in the open air.

At Little Mound, several miles away, there was a cabin where there was preaching quite often, and the Lincoln family were very fond of going there. Sometimes the meetings would be nearer home, at the house of a neighbor. Sometimes the preacher would visit them in their own cabin, to taste of their venison and corn cake and talk with them on many subjects regarding both this life and the life to come.

Among these preachers there was one for whom the family felt a more than common friendship. His name was David Elkin, and to him, more than any other, they confided the story of their hardships, their griefs, and their hopes. The only way in which he could help them was by giving them his kindly sympathy, for he was even poorer than they.

The young lad found much delight in listening to these preachers. He looked upon them as indeed great men; and his hope was that, some day, he himself might be a public speaker like them. Often when he came home from meeting, he would stand up on the hearth and play the preacher while his mother and sister listened to his noisy shouting; and when the neighbors' children came to visit them, he would mount upon a log or a stump and make queer speeches until they were tired of hearing.

No newspapers were seen in the cabins of the Knob Creek settlers; and it was only through rumors and the talk of neighbors that anything was known of the busy world. It was by listening to such talk and by asking questions of his mother that Abraham got his first knowledge of the great country of which he would one day be the ruler. But his thoughts about it were very crude and simple.

One day when he was playing by the creek, he caught a little fish in his hands. He was much pleased and hurried to carry it home. But as he was running along the road, he met

a man who wore a faded blue cap and had brass buttons on his coat. He had seen a man dressed in a similar fashion once before, and had been told that he was a soldier. And so he stopped and asked, "Are you a soldier?"

"Yes," was the answer. "I was with General Jackson, and I fought through the war."

The boy laid the little fish in the man's hand, and ran home happier than if he had caught a dozen fishes. His mother had taught him that he should always be kind to soldiers, and so he had given to this one the only thing in the world that he could call his own. Had he been a little older he would have understood much more about the war which had just then been ended. But he was only three years old when it began, and now he was barely six.

The War of 1812, as it is called, was caused by England's overbearing acts toward Americans. For months before the beginning of the war, the whole country was in a state of dread and distress. The chief fear of the people in the West had been lest the Indians should unite with the English and again attack the settlements. But American soldiers under General Harrison had met a large band of Indians at Tippecanoe, in Indiana. A great fight had taken place, in which the red men were so badly beaten that they did not dare to give any more trouble in that region for a long time to come. During the war many battles were fought on sea and land, and the distress of the people increased. Finally, the American soldiers under General Jackson gained a wonderful victory over the English in the famous fight at New Orleans.

It was of these things that Abraham Lincoln had heard much talk which he could not understand. But this at least was clear to him, that it was one's duty to stand up for his country and to be kind to the soldiers who risked their lives in its defense.

CHAPTER 3
Restless Thomas Lincoln Goes to Indiana

When Abraham Lincoln was seven years old his father sold the land which he had in the Knob Creek settlement. He had never been sure of his title to it, for there were other men who claimed to have an earlier and better right to it; and so he was glad to be rid of the worry of it, although he had to sell it for very little. He was a dreamy, restless man, fond of the freedom of the backwoods, and caring but little for the comforts of civilized life. Such men are always found pushing on toward the frontier and clearing the way for settlers of a more enterprising class.

He had heard that north of the Ohio River, in Indiana, there was a wild and wonderful region, where the soil was rich and game was plentiful, and where one might soon have everything he needed, and a free title to his land could not be disputed. So he made up his mind to go across the Ohio, and find in that newer country a better home for his family than he had yet been able to give them. Indiana was still a thinly settled territory; but it was to become a state that very year, and people were crowding into it and buying up the land very fast. Thomas Lincoln felt that now was the time to better himself if he ever meant to do so.

With his ax and saw he set to work and built a rude raft which he launched on the waters of a small but deep stream called Rolling Fork — a stream that emptied after a few miles into Salt River, a tributary of the Ohio. On this raft he loaded his kit of carpenter's tools and some barrels of liquor which he had received in part pay for his farm. He thought that in the

new settlements, where many houses were being built, he could make good use of the tools; and he believed that he could also find a market for the liquor.

The two children and their mother watched him with tearful eyes as he pushed off from the shore and floated slowly down the creek toward the unknown land of promise. When he was lost to view in a bend of the stream, they returned to the lonely cabin, which was now no longer their own, but which they would be allowed to occupy until his return.

When the raftsman reached the Ohio River, he found that the eddies and currents were too strong for him. His little raft was driven here and there among the rocks and snags until it was tipped over and the barrels and tools were tumbled off. Happily the water at that spot was not deep, and the shore was close at hand. With the help of a friendly boatman who happened to be near, almost everything was saved; and a few days later, Thomas Lincoln stood on the Indiana shore with all his little property piled up before him. He was told that only a few miles farther north there was plenty of fine land waiting for any one who was willing to buy it at the government price, which was two dollars an acre, payable in small installments. And so having disposed of his barreled goods to his satisfaction, he started on foot through a dense forest, looking for a place to make his home.

He did not go far. Late in the afternoon of the first day, he arrived at a spot which seemed to him to be the best in all that region. Here was a stretch of rich bottom land, with a stream called Pigeon Creek flowing through it, and on either side were gently sloping hills covered with a mighty growth of trees. Settlers were already beginning to buy in the neighborhood, and one of them, whose name was Gentry, was talking of setting up a store and starting a village. Thomas Lincoln lost no time, therefore, in choosing a site for his farm; and there he drove a stake into the ground to show that he had the first claim upon it.

The next day, at dawn, he set out, with his gun on his shoulder, to walk to the land office at Vincennes, seventy miles away.

It was a long and hard journey, and we are not told how many days he spent on the way. Vincennes was then the chief town in Indiana. It had been settled by the French nearly a hundred years before, but it was still a backwoods village. Thomas Lincoln found its streets crowded with hunters and traders and land buyers from all parts of the territory. He made his way directly to the land office, where he laid out every dollar that he had in the world, in part payment for one hundred and sixty acres of land lying near Pigeon Creek in Spencer County, about eighteen miles north of the Ohio River. He then started back to Kentucky, to bring his wife and children to their new home.

CHAPTER 4
A Winter in a Half-Faced Camp

It was late in the fall when the Lincoln family bade goodby to the Kentucky settlement on Knob Creek and began their journey through the wilderness. They had not much to take with them. The few cooking utensils and the little bedding which they owned were strapped on the backs of two borrowed horses. Then all set out on foot, by the nearest road, to the Ohio River. At night they camped in the woods by the roadside. The father with his rifle killed plenty of wild game for their food; and friendly settlers along the road often invited them to share their humble meals.

The distance from the old home to the new, measured upon a straight line, was but little more than forty miles. But they traveled very slowly, and it was a full week before they reached their journey's end. Over a great part of the way there was no road of any kind; and there they had to cut their way through the thick woods. At last, one cold November day, they reached the spot which the father had chosen. It was a desolate outlook: no house, no shelter, no neighbors to welcome them to their firesides. The leaves had fallen from the trees; the air was chill and damp; the sky was hidden behind leaden clouds from which a few snowflakes were slowly falling. Was there ever a home-coming so empty of joy?

And yet Thomas Lincoln and his wife were not downhearted. The thought that this spot was to be their home gave delight to the dreary scene. The father was strong, and easily contented with any lot; but the frail, delicate mother was little able to endure the added discomforts which must now be

theirs.

Soon the father and little Abraham were busy felling trees and clearing a small opening in the woods. It was the work of only a few hours to build what the settlers called a "half-faced camp." This was nothing more than a shed made of poles and covered with broad pieces of bark. The three sides that were most exposed to the winter winds were inclosed; but the greater part of the south side was left open. The cracks between the poles were filled with leaves or sticks and pieces of clay; and a part of the opened side was screened with skins hanging down from the roof pole. At one end of the shed was the bed where the family slept. Opposite the open south side, a fire blazed between two great logs, and there the meals were cooked and eaten. This fire was kept burning night and day, and its warm rays made a part of the shed quite comfortable, even in the chilliest weather.

In this rude shelter the Lincoln family lived all that winter. The father was busy every day with his ax, cutting down trees, hewing logs for a new house, and making a clearing for a cornfield. The patient mother kept things as tidy as she could, and cooked their simple meals. They had meat in plenty; for the woods were full of squirrels and wild turkeys. Deer, too, often came within gunshot range of the camp. The mother knew how to handle the rifle well, and more than one dinner of venison was secured by her skill.

One morning Abraham, hearing the gobble of wild turkeys, peeped out and saw a flock of the big birds marching close by the camp. Their leader was a noble old fellow, as fine a gobbler as was ever seen. The lad ran quickly and took his father's rifle from the pegs where it hung. Then he pushed its muzzle through a crack in the wall, took aim, and fired. When the smoke cleared away, he saw the gobbler stretched dead upon the ground. At first he was proud of having brought down such noble game; and then his pride gave way to pain at the thought of having taken the life of an innocent

creature. It was the first time that he had knowingly harmed any living being. After that he often followed game in the wild woods, but only when the family were in need of meat for food. The gentle-hearted lad, unlike his father, could not see any sport in hunting.

There were many cold days during that lonely winter, when the barefoot boy could not go out to help his father in the clearing. On such days he would stay in the camp with his mother and read. Among the two or three books which they had brought from Kentucky there was a little pamphlet that he liked to read very much. It was a brief true story of a young man named Henry Clay, who by hard labor and perseverance had made himself a leader in the councils of the nation. Like Abraham himself, he had been a poor boy — he had been called "The Mill Boy of the Slashes" — but now he was a very great man whom everybody honored. The lad could not fully understand all the story, but it pleased him and he read it over and over many times.

It was during these days also that he learned to write. His mother was his teacher, and his first copies were probably made with charcoal on smooth pieces of bark. Paper was a precious thing — too precious to be found in that poor camp. Ink there was none, unless it may have been the juice of poke berries or of walnut hulls. But Abraham Lincoln did the best that he could with whatever came to hand, and before the winter was well over he could write fairly well. Had it not been for this early habit of his, of making the best of his small opportunities, it is not likely that, in after years, he would have done anything that you or I would care, today, to read about.

CHAPTER 5
How the Hewed-Log House Was Built

When spring came, all hands were busy burning logs and brush heaps in the clearing, and planting corn in the rich soil among the stumps. It was not till late in the summer that Thomas Lincoln had all the logs ready with which to build their new house. He had promised himself and his wife that this house should be much better than the one they had left in Kentucky, and so he had carefully hewed and squared the logs, and had notched their ends so that they would fit snugly one upon another when they were put in place.

In September all the neighbors for miles around were invited to come to the house raising; and a fine dinner of venison and green corn with stewed pumpkin and a relish of wild plums, was served in the grove near the half-faced camp. When the walls had been raised and the roof of rough clapboards was laid over all, everybody looked with admiration at the new building and said that Thomas Lincoln was certainly a good carpenter and that there was no better house in the Pigeon Creek settlement, if indeed in the whole new state of Indiana.

The family had become so tired of the half-faced camp, that they moved into the new house at once. It was far from being finished; and many a day elapsed before its easy-going builder found time to make it a comfortable place to live in. There was a fireplace and chimney at one end of the single room, just as there was in the old Kentucky cabin. A floor had been promised, but sawed planks were things not plentiful where there were no saw mills, and it would take time and

much hard work to split and hew flat "puncheons" to be used instead. There were places for two windows, but no glass was bought to put into them. There was but one doorway, and yet Thomas Lincoln, the carpenter, would rather hunt deer in the woods than make a door with which to shut out the wind in stormy weather. The logs had been nicely hewn and smoothed, but nothing had yet been done to "chink" the cracks between them.

The walls had been built high, so as to make an upper half-story; but there were only bare joists of round poles to show where the lower room ended and the upper room began. Some time after this, a few clapboards were laid across the joists, and in one corner of the loft thus formed, a bed of leaves and straw was thrown down. This was Abraham's bed-chamber, and the only way of getting into it was by climbing a ladder made by driving long pegs one above another into the wall below.

You would think this unfinished cabin a dreary place indeed; but to the Lincolns it was so much better than the half-faced camp that it seemed as good as a palace. Mrs. Lincoln's aunt, Betty Sparrow, and her husband, Thomas Sparrow, now moved into the camp. They had but lately come from Kentucky, and were even poorer than the Lincolns. They had no children of their own, but they brought with them a young nephew who was a few years older than Abraham, and whose name was Dennis Hanks.

Thomas Lincoln's one great fault was the putting off of things. When the family moved into the unfinished cabin, he fully intended to put everything into perfect shape very soon. But the weather was warm, and everybody was comfortable, and why need he hurry? There was work to be done in the clearing; and the woods were so full of game that he must go hunting. When the weather grew colder, the corn had to be gathered; and when winter came, with its snow and wind, it was not pleasant to do any kind of work, and the family could

live in the house as it was until spring. In the spring the crops had to be planted, and there was so much plowing and grubbing and log-rolling to be done that Mr. Lincoln had no time to think of floors and doors and of chinks in the walls. In the summer the weather was so hot that it would be foolish to close up the windows or hang the door or daub the cracks which let in the welcome breezes. And so time passed, and the fine, comfortable house that had been promised was never finished.

There are people, known to both you and me, who have this habit of putting off things; but they are not people who succeed well in life.

CHAPTER 6
A Great Sorrow

The second summer in Indiana, like the first, was a summer of much hard work and little play. Abraham Lincoln was now in his ninth year, and there were many things that he could do. He could do almost a man's work with an ax; and much of his time was spent in the clearings, chopping down trees, piling brush, and burning logs. Sometimes he helped his mother about the house and garden; and sometimes he went on errands to the neighbors or to the little village of Gentryville which had sprung up two miles away.

If you could see him as he was, you would think him an odd-looking child. He was tall for his age, and very homely. He was dressed much as we saw him in the old Kentucky home, in trousers of tanned deerskin and shirt of homespun tow or linsey-woolsey. During most of the year he wore nothing more. If he had a coat for Sundays, it was made of the coarsest home-made goods, and perhaps had already done service as the garment of another. For shoes he had a pair of moccasins which his mother had made for him, and these he wore only when the weather was very cold. Stockings he had none, nor did he ever wear any until he was a grown-up man. He did not think it a hardship to be thus so poorly clad; for the rest of the family, and other men whom he knew, were dressed in the same poor fashion.

Autumn came again, and with it came trouble and sorrow. A strange disease had broken out among the settlers. It was believed to be caused by some plant which grew in the woods. If cows ate the plant, their milk was made poisonous,

and those who drank of it grew sick and were almost sure to die. On account of this belief the disease was called "milk-sick." Sometimes the cows themselves died but nobody could ever find the strange plant, or describe its appearance or manner of growth. The disease was known only in new settlements among the clearings and the woods; and physicians, even to this day, have been unable to tell what was its true cause.

Thomas Sparrow and his wife were the first to be attacked by this dreadful sickness. The narrow half-faced camp which was their home was a cheerless place at its best, and the disease did its work quickly. Two graves were made side by side, on the sunny slope of a hill, and there the poor people were laid by their sorrowing kinsfolk and neighbors. And then Abraham Lincoln's mother was stricken down. The hardships of the past two years had already taken the flush of health from her cheeks. Exposure to dampness and cold in the camp and the unfinished cabin had robbed her of her strength and made her an easy victim to the disease. Her husband and children nursed her with tender care, and did all they could to help her. There was no doctor for whom they could send; but they gave her such simple remedies as they had, and were always at her bedside, watching her with loving eyes.

One morning very early, when the gray daylight was beginning to struggle through the chinks of the cabin, she reached out her arms and drew the lad Abraham toward her. "My boy, I am going away, and you will not see me again. Be good — I know you will. Help your father. Take good care of your sister. Live as I have taught you, and love God always." And then the end came.

With his own hands Thomas Lincoln made a rude coffin of boards for his wife; for there was no one in all the settlement whom they could ask to do this sad service. Then, one quiet afternoon, when the nuts were falling in the woods and the trees were dropping their brown and yellow leaves, they

bore her to her last resting place. Under the spreading branches of a sycamore tree, on the side of a hillock some distance from the cabin, they buried her silently and with much sorrow. The grave had been made in the place which she herself had chosen when still in health.

In all that backwoods country there was as yet no place of public worship. There was no preacher who could be invited to come to the funeral and speak words of comfort and hope to the mourners. The few neighbors who had come in kindness to do what they could returned sadly to their homes, each having his own griefs and burdens to bear. And with hearts bowed down with their great sorrow, the lad Abraham and his sister Sarah slowly followed their father back to their desolate cabin.

CHAPTER 7
"My Angel Mother"

To the sorrowing child, not yet ten years old, it seemed a terrible thing that his mother should be laid in the ground and no religious services be held above her. "If only some good man were here," he thought — "if only some traveling preacher would come into the settlement!"

Then he thought of good David Elkin, whom they had known in the old Kentucky home. If he could be told of their loss, perhaps he would come even now and preach a sermon by her grave. But how could he be told?

Sitting by the lonely hearth at home, Abraham thought of a plan. He would write a letter to his mother's old friend. He would tell him of their sorrow, and ask him to come. But this was no easy task. Where could he find paper and pen and ink? Who would carry the letter after it was written? And where, indeed, was David Elkin, the wandering preacher, to be found?

In the backwoods people learn to do much with but little. They are not daunted by difficulties. In the thumb-worn spelling book which the lad had studied at Caleb Hazel's school there was a blank fly leaf, and this was paper enough. Poke berries were hanging ripe on their stalks by many a charred stump in the clearing, and their blood-red juice would serve very well for ink. In the wings of the wild turkey which the father had killed in the woods there were plenty of quills, and of one of these a pen could be made.

The letter was written, and folded, and addressed to David Elkin in Kentucky. But there was no post office, and

there were no carriers of mail in that part of the country. How was it to be sent to its destination?

One of the neighbors was about to start on some sort of business to a point on the Ohio River. He would carry the letter as far as he went, and then give it to some other person who was going still farther in the right direction. This second person would hand it to another, and he, perhaps, to still another, until at last, if no mischance happened, it would reach the hands of the one to whom it was directed. To Abraham Lincoln there was nothing strange about this way of sending a letter — it was the only way that he knew; it was the common custom in that early day among the people of the West.

The dreary winter came, the dreariest that the boy had ever known. The wind whistled through the open chinks in the walls, the snow and sleet beat in at the unprotected door. The comfortless cabin was more comfortless than ever before, for she who had been the light of the home was no longer there. Little Sarah, eleven years old, was the housekeeper. The father, still putting off the things that needed most to be done, sat by the fire at home, or wandered about the clearings with his ax or his gun. Dennis Hanks, since the death of his aunt, Betty Sparrow, had come to live with the Lincolns; for he had no other kinsfolk or friends to give him food or shelter. He was older than Abraham, and made himself useful, chopping wood and feeding the stock and hunting game in the woods.

At last the days grew longer and cheerier. Spring came, and the woods were gay with wild flowers, and full of the melody of singing birds; and then, one day, David Elkin, the preacher, rode up to the cabin door. He had received Abraham's letter. In response to it he had ridden a hundred miles through the wild, new country, often without so much as a path to guide him; he had swum rivers which the spring rains had swollen into torrents; he had slept in the woods while wolves howled in the thickets about him; he had braved all

sorts of danger, suffered weariness, endured hunger — and for what? Merely to stand by the closed grave of a poor woman, to tell about her goodness and gentleness, and to speak encouragement to those who had loved her. For this he expected no reward, neither gifts nor gold, nor the praise of men, but only the satisfying thought that he had done his duty. Certainly, when the roll of the world's heroes is made up, the name of humble David Elkin will stand far higher than those of many men who have done greater deeds but done them selfishly.

Word was sent to the neighbors that a preacher had come to preach Nancy Lincoln's funeral sermon. Neighbors carried the news to neighbors, and when the next Sabbath came, the settlers quietly met together on the hillside near the spreading sycamore. Many of them had walked long distances, some had come on horseback, some in wagons. This preaching of a funeral sermon was a great event, and men, women, and children were anxious to hear it. More than two hundred persons were there. It was a greater company than had ever before been gathered together in that scattering settlement.

When the sun had almost reached the place of noon, the preacher gave out a hymn, line by line — for there were no hymn books for the worshipers — and, line by line, the women and girls, with their sweet, but untrained voices, joined him in singing it. A short prayer was offered; and then the preacher began his sermon. It was not a scholarly sermon, but it was full of earnestness and feeling, and was just the kind of speech which the unlearned listeners could understand. Its subject was, of course, the gentle woman whose memory was so dear to all who had known her. And the preacher spoke most feelingly of her patience and faith, and of her high ideals of life — ideals which she had, with loving care, taught and imparted to her children.

At length the sermon was ended; another hymn was sung; the benediction was pronounced; and then the people slowly

separated, and went thoughtfully homeward. As for the lad, Abraham Lincoln, he felt that now one great duty to his mother had been performed, and he was happier than he had been since she went away. But a still greater duty remained: to shape his life from that day forward in accordance with her teachings, and to make his character such as he knew she would like it to be. He went home with noble thoughts in his heart. Although but ten years old, he was no longer a child. He was resolved to be a man of the type which his mother would admire and commend.

Long years afterward, when he had won honor and fame, and was assured of a place among the great men of the world, he said, "All that I am, and all that I hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

CHAPTER 8
Lonely Days at Pigeon Creek

There was much hard work to be done on the farm, and the two boys, Abraham Lincoln and Dennis Hanks, were busy early and late. Between the planting and hoeing, the grubbing and logrolling, the splitting of rails and the building of fences, there was little time for play. Dennis Hanks and the neighbors' boys took much pleasure in trapping possums and wild turkeys, and sometimes on moonlit nights they went out coon hunting with their dogs, and had grand fun. Sometimes they would persuade Abraham to go with them; but in the heat of the chase he was sure to lag far behind, for it pained him to see any creature tortured or put to death.

He was far better pleased when he could sit at home in the chimney corner and pore over his books. He had only two or three, but he read them again and again. It was his habit to read aloud — the thoughts seemed so much more vivid to him when he could hear the words as well as see them. This habit I suppose began with his first reading, when his mother was his teacher and most delighted listener. It was a habit which he retained to the end of his life.

About this time two new books came into his hands, but where he got them I cannot tell. One was an arithmetic; and many were the evenings which he spent, studying the rules, and ciphering by the dim light of the fire. He had no slate — perhaps had never seen one; but he made his figures on a smooth clapboard or wooden shovel, using a piece of charcoal for a pencil. The other book was a worn and torn copy of "Aesop's Fables." It was a delightful book. Its queer conceits

tickled the boy's fancy, and he liked to repeat to the other lads its quaint anecdotes about talking beasts and birds. In this way he began to acquire that pleasant art for which he was always noted — the art of telling entertaining stories.

One day in the late fall Thomas Lincoln put on his best suit of homespun, shouldered his gun, and left home. He did not tell any one where he was going, but said that it might be a few days before he would come back. The three children thus left alone, were not much troubled by his absence, for they were used to taking care of themselves.

In the woods were squirrels and turkeys and deer; and Dennis Hanks, with his traps and gun, would supply them with meat. There was plenty of corn in the cabin loft; and Abraham Lincoln, with the tin "gritter," would grit as much meal as they wanted for bread. There was a cow in the field, and milk to be had for the milking; and Sarah Lincoln, twelve years old, knew how to broil venison on the coals and bake corn dodgers in the Dutch oven. Although there was no danger of starving, yet the poor children were in a sad plight for clothes. Since their mother had gone from them, more than a year before, they had had no one to care for them. They were in rags. The boys had outgrown their deerskin trousers. Winter was coming, and they had not clothing enough to keep them warm.

Days and weeks passed, and the father did not come home. The house of the nearest neighbor was so far away that the children seldom saw any one but themselves. The unfinished log house seemed drearier and lonelier than ever before.

CHAPTER 9
Improved Conditions

Early one December morning before the sun was above the trees, the children in the house heard some one halloo from the edge of the woods. They ran out, and were surprised to see a wagon with four horses coming down the lane toward the house. A stranger was driving; and on the seat beside him was their father; and peeping out from beneath the white wagon cover were the faces of a woman and three children. Abraham and Sarah Lincoln could hardly believe their eyes, as they waited in silent wonder by the door, not knowing what change of fortune was at hand.

The wagon drew up before the house, and their father leaped to the ground. Then the woman and the children climbed out over the wheels.

"Abraham and Sarah," said their father, "this is your new mother. And I have brought you a new brother and two new sisters, too."

They saw that the woman had a kind, good face, and that the children, who were about their own age, were dressed in warm, neat clothes. The new mother greeted them very pleasantly, making them feel at once as though they had found a friend. And when she went into the cabin, it seemed already a cheerier place than it had been for many a month.

Soon the wagon was unloaded, and Abraham and Sarah were surprised to see the many fine and wonderful things that the new mother had brought with her. There were chairs, and a feather bed, and a bureau with drawers, and a wooden chest, and many other things such as their poor house had never

known. And from the wooden chest the kind woman lifted such a supply of clothing as they had not seen before; and soon the children had put off their rags and tatters, and were dressed in neat homespun which made them feel so awkward, and yet so warm, that they scarcely knew themselves.

Thomas Lincoln, when he left home, had gone back to Elizabethtown in Kentucky, where in his younger days he had learned the trade of carpenter. He went for the purpose of calling upon Mrs. Sarah Johnston, a widow lady who lived there with her three children, John, Sarah, and Matilda. He had known Mrs. Johnston when she was a young girl and her name was Sarah Bush; and now it was quite easy to persuade her to become his wife, and be a second mother to his children.

In Elizabethtown there lived a man whose name was Ralph Crume, and whose wife was Thomas Lincoln's sister. He owned a good four-horse team, and a stout wagon that had been built for Kentucky roads. He was glad of an excuse to see the new country beyond the Ohio; and so he readily agreed to take Mr. Lincoln, with his bride and his stepchildren and some household goods, back to the home in Indiana. This Ralph Crume was the stranger whom Abraham and Sarah first saw when they ran to the door in answer to their father's shout. To them he seemed to be a very great man with his four horses and his big wagon.

The coming of the new mother wrought many changes. Thomas Lincoln was soon partly cured of his habit of putting off things. I suppose that he must have been anxious to show his wife how good a carpenter he could be when he chose to try. For he set to work at once, with ax and broad-ax, to hew smooth "puncheons," or slabs, for the floor of his cabin. When these were laid in their places and fastened down with wooden pegs, the house began to look much more habitable. Then, with the help of the boys, the cracks in the wall were chinked with clay, and a sufficient number of rough clapboards were

rived to make a good floor for the loft.

The crowning piece of work was the door, which was made of sawed planks, battened together, and was hung on wooden hinges. When closed it was fastened with a wooden latch which could be lifted with a string. During the day, the end of this string was passed through a hole and hung on the outside of the door. Then "the latch-string was out" to all comers, and any person could open the door and enter. But at night the string was drawn inside, and then no one could come in without first knocking for admission. As for the windows, there was no use thinking of glass; and so Mr. Lincoln fitted wooden frames into the openings, and Mrs. Lincoln hung neat curtains before them which could be closed when the weather was rough, and drawn when it was fine. And thus, after more than two years of putting off, the cabin was finished. It was a pleasanter place than you would imagine; and it had been made so by the good management of the new mother.

There were now six children in the family — three boys and three girls — and every one was old enough to lend a hand and be useful. There were merry times in the cabin and in the fields and clearings, and plenty of drudging work had to be done. In the clearings trees were to be cut down, logs piled and burned, roots grubbed up, and fences built. In the fields there was an endless round of plowing, and planting, and sowing, and reaping, and gathering. And in all this labor Abraham bore a part. He did not like to work, and never found pleasure in it; but he always did his best, and did it without complaining. He was already old enough to see that labor was the only means of bettering his life, and he had made up his mind to rise in the world as high as he could.

In and about the house the mother and daughters found no end of duties. They carded the wool and hackled the flax; they spun and wove these into cloth, which they dyed and made up into clothing; they milked the cows, and cared for

the chickens; they churned butter and boiled soap and knit themselves stockings; and in time of corn planting or harvesting, they thought nothing of putting on sunbonnets, and helping the "men folks" in the fields. With the new mother's bureau and chairs, the house was more elegantly furnished than any other in the neighborhood; and although the brooms were made of buckeye splints rudely tied together, the floor was always a model of cleanliness. The cooking was done on the hearth, or over the blazing fire. The family ate from pewter plates, and without forks; and they drank from tin cups or from the shells of gourds. And thus with hard work and homely fare the days went by unnumbered.

CHAPTER 10
Not Much Schooling, and Yet a Little

When Abraham was thirteen years old, the people in the Pigeon Creek settlement decided to build a schoolhouse. It would not do, they said, to let their children grow up in ignorance. One morning in autumn, when the crops had been "laid by," and there was a lull in the work on the farms, all the men met together at the crossroads, where a plot of ground had been given for school purposes. Axes rang in the woods, trees crashed to the ground, logs were cut in proper lengths and laid one above another — and before nightfall the schoolhouse was finished.

It was much like any other log cabin. The door was at one end; and on either side there was a small square window. Nearly the whole of the other end was taken up by the fireplace — a huge affair, built of blue clay and flat stones. Benches made of logs split in halves were placed around the inside of the room for seats. A rude shelf was put up near the door to serve as a desk, before which the few pupils who wished to study writing could stand by turns and trace their copies. Of course there was no floor. There was no glass in the windows, but it was expected that when the weather grew cold the master would paste a sheet of greased paper over each opening — and this would serve just as well.

The first master was Azel Dorsey; and the boys and girls from the Lincoln cabin were among the pupils. School began at sunrise and was not dismissed until the sun was setting. It was scarcely daylight when the children started to school, for the house was three or four miles away, and often the stars

were shining before all were back at the home fireside. The master had agreed to teach spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic "to the rule of three"; but only a few of the scholars studied anything but spelling.

Of course, Abraham Lincoln stood at the head of his classes, not because he could learn more easily than his schoolmates, but because he studied harder. He was the only one who saw that the way to rise in the world is by hard labor and by getting knowledge. The other boys cared for nothing so much as being good wrestlers and fast runners, hard hitters and straight throwers. They looked with scorn upon book-learning, and would have made things very unpleasant for Abraham if he had not shown them that, with all his love for books, he could wrestle and run and strike and throw as well as the best of them. On the fly leaf of an arithmetic which he used at about this time, one may still read these lines written by himself: —

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

Azel Dorsey's school soon came to an end, and it was two years before another master was employed to teach in the little log schoolhouse. But all this while, Abraham was quietly teaching himself at home; and it is not likely that any back-woods schoolmaster could have taught him better. His father thought that it was folly for him to learn anything more, and that so much reading of books was a great waste of time. But when Andrew Crawford at last opened another school in the little cabin, Mrs. Lincoln declared that the six children should attend it — and so they did.

It was at this school that Abraham wrote his first composition of which we have any account. Its subject was "Cruelty to Animals," and knowing how gentle-hearted he was toward

all living creatures, we can easily guess some of the things he said.

The second school was even shorter than the first. The settlers seemed to think that a very little learning was sufficient, and so it was a long time before the log schoolhouse again echoed with the voices of children conning their spelling books.

When Abraham was nearly seventeen years old, a wandering schoolmaster whose name was Swaney, opened a school in a deserted cabin four and a half miles from the Lincoln home. Of course young Lincoln was one of the scholars. He was so anxious to learn, that he thought nothing of walking nine miles every day to gain what little he could from a man who knew far less than himself. But his father soon came forward and declared that the boy had already had more schooling than was good for him, and that he must stop all such nonsense and go to work. And so Abraham Lincoln's school days were at an end. If all had been put together, they would not have made a twelvemonth.

CHAPTER 11
Conning Books by the Firelight

During all this time Abraham Lincoln's love of books continued. He read everything that he could get hold of. If he heard of a book anywhere in the settlement, he could not rest until he had borrowed it. Once he walked bare-footed twelve miles to borrow a book containing the laws of Indiana. When he was plowing in the fields, he would almost always have a book with him to read while he gave the horse a few moments' rest at the end of the row.

His father was not in favor of so much reading. He thought that it unfitted the boy for his work and made him lazy, but the good mother pleaded in his behalf, and begged that he should be allowed to have his own way. "He was always a dutiful son to me," she afterward said, "and we took pains when he was reading not to disturb him. We would let him read on and on till he quit of his own accord."

He would sit by the fireplace at night and read as long as the fire lasted. Often he would have a pile of hickory bark at his side which he would throw in, piece by piece, as the flames died down. In the Pigeon Creek settlement a candle was a luxury which common people could not think of using save on special occasions.

Whenever Abraham found anything in his reading which seemed to be too good to be forgotten, he would take note of it in whatever way he could. If he had no paper, he would write with charcoal, or with a piece of red "keel," on the side of a smooth board. The logs in the chimney corner were covered with his rude notes. When he had learned his notes by

heart, he would rub them out to give place for others.

Paper was a rare article, and every piece that he could get was kept with great care. He made ink from poke berries, or walnut hulls, or the sap of brier roots. His pens were of goose quills and turkey quills, and no one in those times had better. Some pages of his exercise books, filled with figures and examples in arithmetic, have been found and may still be seen.

One autumn he heard that a settler whose name was Josiah Crawford owned a book about the first President of the United States. He set out at once to borrow it. Mr. Crawford very kindly allowed him to take it, telling him to be careful not to soil it. The lad no sooner turned his face homeward than he opened the book and began to read. It was Weems' "Life of Washington," and to him it seemed a wonderful story, filling his heart with noble thoughts and with aspirations higher than he had ever felt before.

Walking slowly homeward, he read until darkness overtook him. After supper, in his corner by the fire, he read until the last log of wood had been burned to ashes and there was no longer the slightest flame flickering upon the hearth. It must have been past midnight when he crept up the ladder to his bed in the loft. He carried the book with him, and laid it in a crack between two logs so that, at the earliest peep of day, he could take it and resume his reading while still lying in bed.

In the morning he was awakened by the sound of rain pattering on the roof over his head. He reached out and took the book, but was dismayed to find that it was soaked with the rain. The back was ready to drop off, and the leaves were stuck together. He hurried down, built a fire, and dried the volume so that he could finish the reading of it — but, do whatever he could, it would never look like the same book.

After breakfast he carried it back to its owner and explained what had happened.

"I am very sorry," he said, "and I am willing to do anything that I can to make it right with you."

Mr. Crawford said that the book was worth about seventy-five cents, and that if Abraham would work three days for him he would be satisfied.

"Do you mean that the three days' work will pay you for the book," asked the boy, "or will it only pay for the damage done to it?"

"I mean that you may have the book," said Mr. Crawford. "It will be of no further use to me."

And so, for three days, Abraham husked corn and stripped fodder, and then proudly carried the book home again. It was his own — the first thing he had ever bought directly with his own labor. He read the volume again and again.

In the clearings and the fields he thought of the wonderful career of Washington — "the greatest of American heroes" — and he was strengthened in his resolution to live a manly life and to do his best at all times. Might not he too be a patriot and hero? Although he might never be President, he certainly could make himself worthy of that great honor.

CHAPTER 12
Oratory at a Country Court

Young Lincoln was now more than ever determined to gain for himself a good education. It was hard for him to learn; he could not go to school; he had but few books; there was no person who could help him: but in spite of all such difficulties, he kept steadily on, doing his best every day, and learning whatever he could. He studied hard and did everything thoroughly; and so you need not wonder if he learned more than some boys do nowadays who have every opportunity and yet are lazy and careless.

About the time that his father took him from Master Swaney's school, a book on elementary surveying came into his hands. He at once set himself to learn the principles of the science, and — perhaps because he knew that George Washington had once measured land — Abraham Lincoln dreamed of becoming a surveyor.

I have already told you how, when he was but a little child, he delighted to imitate the wandering preachers who came into the Knob Creek settlement. As he grew older he still cherished the ambition to become a public speaker. Few things pleased him better than to stand on a stump or a log and, with the other five children as listeners, deliver a funny speech on some subject of common interest. As he was always greeted with applause, he became bolder and would sometimes practice speaking before a crowd of country people at the village store. In harvest time his father forbade his speech-making in the fields, "for when Abe begins to speak," he said, "all the hands stop work and listen."

He was nearly eighteen years old when he walked barefooted to Booneville, fifteen miles away, to attend a murder trial that was being held there. It was his first visit to any court of justice, and the first time that he saw lawyers at their work. He was filled with admiration for the judge, who seemed to him the greatest and wisest of living men. He listened with intense interest to all that was going on; and when one of the lawyers arose and made a speech in defense of the prisoner, he was delighted beyond measure.

The lawyer's name was Breckenridge, and he was from Kentucky. When he had finished speaking, Abraham Lincoln could no longer hold himself. He rose from his seat, pushed his way across the courtroom, and held out his hand to the astonished lawyer. "That was the best speech I ever heard," he said.

It was a strange scene. The gawky youth, nearly six feet four inches in height, stood with outstretched hand, forgetful of everything but the wonderful speech. Dressed in a suit of buckskin, with no shoes on his feet, and a coon-skin cap on his head, he never thought of the inequality between himself and the young lawyer in broadcloth and fine linen. But Mr. Breckenridge, with a sneer on his face, turned away and took no further notice of his admirer. Young Lincoln, unused as he was to the ways of the world, felt this rebuff keenly. It was his first experience of the inequalities of society. It was the first time that he had met any one who looked down upon him as an inferior. I doubt not that he then and there resolved to win his way to such a position that some day even Mr. Breckenridge would be glad to take his hand. Many years afterward the two men met again; and Mr. Lincoln, who was then the greatest man in our country, reminded Mr. Breckenridge of this scene in the courtroom — a scene which the proud Kentuckian had forgotten, but which the humble backwoodsman could not forget.

After this visit to Booneville, Abraham's mind was wholly

bent upon being a lawyer. He did not expect to become a lawyer at once, or indeed without much study and labor. He would do whatever came to his hand, and he would do it well; he would be anything that it was necessary for him to be, and he would not give way to impatience or despair; but the end which he kept steadily in view was a career of honor and usefulness in the practice of law. Although he could not help but dislike the hard work on the farm, yet he took pains to learn how to do everything there in the best possible way.

He had grown to be very tall, and his strength was something wonderful. He could outlift, outchop, and outwrestle any man in the settlement. And best of all, he was known among his acquaintances as being kind-hearted, brave, and honest to a degree that was not common among boys in any community.

CHAPTER 13
Lincoln, the Boatman

Thomas Lincoln thought that a boy who was so big and active ought to be earning some money. And so in the fall, when the crops had been cared for and there was not much to be done on the farm, he sent Abraham down to the Ohio River, and hired him out as ferry boy to a man whose name was James Taylor. The lad was put in charge of a flat-bottomed rowboat, and it was his duty to carry passengers across the river, between the Indiana and Kentucky shores. For this work it was agreed that he should have his board, and his father should receive two dollars and fifty cents a week.

Abraham Lincoln now gained much knowledge of the world that was new to him. He had never studied geography, and his ideas about the extent of our country were not very clear. He saw the steamboats passing up the river to Cincinnati or Pittsburgh, and down toward St. Louis or New Orleans. But he had never seen a city, and the accounts which he heard of these places seemed to him like fairy tales.

There were but few travelers to be ferried across the river, and so, on some days there was not much to be done. At such times it was pleasant, in the warm autumn weather, to lie on the bank and watch the flatboats and other craft go floating down the stream. But young Lincoln was not satisfied to waste his time in idleness. Judge Pitcher, who lived near the landing, was the owner of a shelfful of books. While waiting for passengers, the ferry boy often ran into the judge's office to look at these books; and the judge, seeing how fond he was of reading, kindly allowed him to take down and peruse as many as

he chose.

Sometimes the boy would amuse himself by writing on paper his thoughts about certain subjects. One of the compositions thus written was on temperance. When Judge Pitcher read it, he was so pleased with the good sense of it all that he handed it to a preacher who sent it to Ohio, where it was published in a paper. Another of young Lincoln's essays was on "National Politics." It is not likely that at this time he had ever seen a newspaper, and so it seems strange that he could know anything about politics. But the essay was so well written and displayed so much knowledge of the subject that a lawyer to whom it was shown declared "the world couldn't beat it."

Abraham's service as a ferry boy did not continue long. Winter came, ice formed in the river, and there were so few travelers that the boat was hauled up on the shore and the ferry stopped business. The lad went cheerfully back to Pigeon Creek, carrying to his father the money which he had earned. The world seemed a great deal larger to him now than ever before, and he longed for the time to come when he could go out and see what was taking place in its busy marts.

These thoughts led him to form a project for building a flatboat and taking the farm produce to the river where it might be sold for a good price. All that winter he was busy thinking and working, cutting timber for his boat and putting the pieces together. His father was easily persuaded that something might be made out of the venture; but his mother shook her head, and was unwilling to let the lad leave home. When the spring rains finally came, and Little Pigeon Creek was overflowing its banks, Abraham launched his boat upon the stream and, having at last gotten his mother's leave, made a trial trip to the Ohio.

The little craft was stanch enough so long as it was floating in the narrow channel of the creek; but when it came out upon the rolling waters of the great river it seemed very frail

indeed. Young Lincoln dared not venture far into the stream. He moored his boat to the shore, and began to study whether there was any way by which to make it stronger and safer. Two strangers with their trunks were on the landing, waiting for a steamboat that was coming down the river. The steamboat would not come to the shore, for there was no wharf. But if there were any passengers to be taken on, she would stop in midstream and wait for them to be rowed out to her.

The two strangers looked at the different boats that were moored by the landing, and at last came to young Lincoln's. They seemed to like the stout new vessel, for they said, "Will you take us and our trunks out to the steamer?"

"Certainly," said Lincoln; for he knew that with his great strength he could manage the boat during that short trip, and he hoped that the men would pay him at least a "fip" for his trouble.

The trunks were put into the boat, the men seated themselves, and the tall, brawny young man soon sculled them out to the steamer. He knew how to handle his boat, even in the strong current. The men climbed into the steamer, and their trunks were lifted upon the deck. The pilot rang the bell; the engineer began to put on steam; "You have forgotten to pay me!" shouted Lincoln. Then each of the men took a silver half-dollar and tossed it into the little vessel. The engine puffed, the paddle wheels went round, and the steamer pushed on down the rolling stream. The young man could scarcely believe his senses when he picked up the two pieces of silver. It was the first money that he had ever earned for himself, and it seemed to him a very great sum indeed. That he, a poor lad from the backwoods, could earn so much in so short a time, was almost too wonderful to believe.

CHAPTER 14
New Orleans and the Mississippi

What became of Abraham Lincoln's little flatboat, and why he gave up his intended voyage, we do not know. But when next we hear of him he is engaged by Mr. Gentry, the storekeeper at Gentryville, to pilot a much larger vessel down the river to the markets of New Orleans. This vessel was of the kind called by the river people a "broadhorn." It was wide and flat-bottomed, with a little caboose or shelter in the middle where the men could sleep. Close by the caboose there was a hearth of clay where they could build a fire and cook their meals. The boat was loaded with pork and corn and other products of the new country; and young Lincoln, who was the captain, worked the front oars. He was promised that if he made the trip safely, he should receive money enough to pay his passage back on a steamboat, and his father should have two dollars for every week he was absent. His only companion and helper was Allan Gentry, his employer's son.

You must know that at this time there were no railroads in the world. In the Western country there were but few roads of any kind, and these were mostly mere wagon tracks through the woods. To bring goods over the mountains from the East was a difficult and expensive undertaking. To send the corn and wheat and pork of the fertile West over the same mountains to the market cities of New York or Philadelphia was a thing impossible because of the great cost.

It was only by means of the water courses that the settlers could find any market for their surplus produce. And as all the great streams of that region flow into the Ohio or the

Mississippi, these two rivers became the chief highways of traffic. New Orleans, near the mouth of the latter stream, was the center of trade for the West and South, and the busiest city in the United States.

As Abraham Lincoln guided Mr. Gentry's broadhorn down the great waterway to New Orleans, he saw many sights that were wholly new and strange to him. There was much busy life on the river. Boats of every kind were floating down — flatboats, barges, house boats, timber rafts — nearly all bound for the same place. Steamboats with loads of freight and passengers went paddling by, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in the other. To the young men whose lives had been passed in the quiet of the backwoods this bustle and movement must have seemed very wonderful indeed.

For hundreds of miles along the river there were no towns. Now and then a lonely clearing might be seen on the higher ground back from the stream. Now and then they passed in sight of some bold settler's cabin half hidden by the underwoods which lined the banks. On their left, near where Memphis now stands, they saw the long stretch of woodland where the Cherokee Indians still had their hunting ground. Thousands of wild ducks and other swimming birds flocked in the creeks and coves, and now and then the boatmen caught sight of timid deer running among the trees or seeking to hide themselves in the thick underwoods.

Every day the weather grew a little warmer. Every day the shores became a little greener. Trees and flowers of kinds which the young men had never seen began to appear. Floating onward, they came, little by little, into what seemed to be a new world. They passed now and then a plantation of cotton or of sugar cane, and saw gangs of slaves working in the fields. Alligators basked in the sun, or paddled lazily about in the creeks and inlets. Strange birds wheeled and screamed above them. Spreading trees, with long moss pendent from their branches, lined some parts of the shore. They passed an

old town called Natchez, where all the people talked French — for it must be remembered that Louisiana was first settled by pioneers from France. At last, after many adventures they reached the busy wharves of New Orleans, and were at the end of their voyage.

It would be interesting to follow young Lincoln about the streets of the city and to know what he thought of the strange sights that were everywhere presented. Here were people of all classes and of many nations: merchants, sailors, planters, slaves; backwoodsmen like himself; hunters and trappers from the far Northwest; and ship captains from beyond the sea. Here, too, were all kinds of merchandise. The wharves were lined with steamboats and other river craft. Sailing vessels from ocean ports were anchored in the stream. Indeed, it seemed as if the whole wonderful world had been brought together in this great market place.

But the two young men did not stay long among these interesting scenes. They had come to New Orleans on business and not for pleasure. It took only a few hours to sell their little cargo of pork and corn. Then they disposed of their flatboat, which had been made to float only with the stream, and was now good for nothing but firewood; and, without losing more time than necessary, they embarked on an up-river steamboat and were soon voyaging homeward at a rate which was then thought to be very rapid indeed.

When, at last, the young men again set foot in Indiana, they had many wonderful stories to tell of their adventures; and when they paid to Mr. Gentry the money which they had gotten for his goods, they were made happy by his saying that no man could have managed the business better.

Abraham Lincoln was now nineteen years old. After having seen so much of the world, he began to tire of the dull round of life at Pigeon Creek. He had done a great deal of hard work, for a boy of his age, and yet his father had claimed all his earnings. He had never had but one dollar that he

could call his own. Was it not time that he should be doing something for himself? The captain of an Ohio steamboat offered to hire him as a deck hand. The money would be his own. He would see still more of the world and its busy people. Why not go?

He did not speak to any one at home about this matter; but went down to the landing where he had worked as ferry boy to see a friend whom he trusted.

"William Wood," said he, "what ought I to do? Ought I to strike out for myself, or ought I to stay with my father and serve him, as I have been doing, for nothing?"

"Abraham," said William Wood, "you are only nineteen years old. Your time until you are twenty-one belongs by right to your father. Help your father."

And then the young man remembered that these were the last words of his angel mother: "Help your father. Live as I have taught you, and love God always." He at once put aside all thoughts of leaving home. He made up his mind that he would manfully do his duty, and trust in God for what might follow. He went cheerfully back to his home, and without a word took up his accustomed work on the farm.

CHAPTER 15
A Trial of New Fortunes

In February, 1830, Abraham Lincoln was twenty-one years old. He was now his own master and might go where he chose. But another great change was about to take place in the life of the family, and he made up his mind to help his father a little longer.

All that winter letters had been coming to Thomas Lincoln. They were written by Abraham's cousin, John Hanks, who was living near Decatur in Illinois. They were full of glowing accounts of that new country in the valley of the Sangamon River; they told wonderful stories of the great prairies and of the wooded bottom lands; and they ended always with words of persuasion: "Sell your Indiana farm and come. Come, while you can have your choice of government land at only one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre." At last, a letter more urgent still was received. John Hanks had chosen a tract of one hundred and sixty acres, the best in all that region, and would hold it for Thomas Lincoln if he would be sure to come in the spring. More than that, he would have logs cut and hauled for a cabin, so that the Lincolns might find a new home ready for them as soon as they came.

Thomas Lincoln did not need so much persuasion. He was always ready to move. If his more cautious wife had been as willing as he to leave their old home for a new, he would have moved long before. It was now more than thirteen years since he had settled on Pigeon Creek, and he was still a poor man. Life in Illinois could not be harder than life in Indiana: it might be a great deal easier. At any rate, where land was so

rich and so plentiful and cheap, there would be a better chance for the younger people who were just beginning life.

And so at last, the members of the Lincoln family agreed to try their fortunes in the new country of the "Illinois." The farm, which was not yet paid for, was bargained away, the stock and crops were sold, and at the time of Abraham's twenty-first birthday everybody was busy getting ready for the long, hard journey.

It was in March when they started. All the household goods had been packed into a long, covered wagon drawn by four yoke of oxen. There were eight persons in the company: Thomas Lincoln and his wife; the two step-daughters and their husbands, Dennis Hanks and Levi Hall; Mrs. Lincoln's son, John Johnston; and Abraham Lincoln. The sister, Sarah Lincoln, had married Aaron Grigsby some years before, and was now dead.

Of course it was not possible for everybody to ride — for the wagon was already crowded with the beds and cooking utensils and farming tools; and, so the five men trudged along on foot, and sometimes the women also found it better to walk than to add their weight to the heavy load. Abraham was the driver, and through slush and mire, with whip in hand, he strode by the side of the slow-moving team, encouraging the oxen, sometimes by a word and sometimes by a sharp touch of the lash.

The ground had not yet fully thawed after the winter's freezing. The brooks were overflowing, for the spring freshets had set in. The rivers were full of floating ice. The air was damp and chilly. Sometimes the wagon sank to the hubs in the oozy mire, and then all hands had to lay hold and help the team lift it out. At night a camp fire was built in the woods or by the roadside, and while some slept in the wagon the others lay on the ground with their feet toward the blaze. One can hardly think of a harder or more disagreeable journey. From Pigeon Creek to Decatur, the distance is less than two

hundred miles; and yet the family were two whole weeks on the road.

John Hanks gave them a hearty welcome. The logs for the new cabin had been cut and hauled according to promise. For six sturdy men, accustomed to such work, it was the task of only a few days to roll these logs into place, and put a roof over them. And so, long before the end of April, the Lincolns were snugly housed in their new home near the north fork of the Sangamon River.

At this time Illinois had been a state for nearly twelve years, for it had come into the Union only two years later than Indiana. But people had been slow in going there, and thousands of fertile acres still lay unclaimed — the property of the United States government. The first settlers, strange to say, had shunned the prairies and made their homes in the woods and groves which bordered the larger streams. They thought that the treeless plains were, for some reason, unsuited for farming, and that for ages to come they would be used only for the pasturage of herds and flocks.

And so, when Abraham Lincoln first went to Illinois, the state was but thinly settled, nearly all the inhabitants living in the wooded portions, or near the rivers. Most of those who occupied the southern and central parts had come from Kentucky and the neighboring states of the South. Those who lived farther north were chiefly from the New England states or New York. Among all these pioneers, life was much as we have already seen it to be in Indiana. There were but few schools and fewer churches. The people were, as a rule, rude and uncouth in manners, and yet kind-hearted and obliging. They seldom saw any money, and almost all their buying and selling was by barter. Each family had to raise its own food and, generally, to make its own clothing. Everybody was poor; and so the Lincolns, humble though they were, found themselves no worse off than their neighbors. They began life in their new home with much hopefulness, and yet without any

great expectations; for they had long ago learned to be content with little.

CHAPTER 16
The Winter of the Deep Snow

Before leaving home to begin life for himself Abraham Lincoln thought it his duty to see his father well started on his new farm. For many days the grove near the cabin rang with the sound of his ax and maul. He was cutting down trees and splitting the logs into rails. "And how he would chop!" said Dennis Hanks, long afterward. "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."

With the rails he helped his father build a fence around ten acres of prairie land. Then he yoked the oxen to a plow and helped him turn the sod and make the field ready for the corn planting. Everything seemed now to be fairly under way, and the young man began to think of looking for work somewhere else.

He still wore the buckskin trousers that had been made for him before he was grown, and they were much too short for him. He had no clothing that was fit to be worn away from home. He had not a dollar with which to buy what he needed.

A few miles from his father's cabin there lived a woman whose name was Nancy Miller. She had a flock of sheep, and a spinning wheel, and a loom. She was a very busy woman and wove more jeans and linsey-woolsey than her own family could use. Abraham heard that she wanted some rails split with which to build a fence around a part of her pasture land. Here was a chance for new clothing. He went to see her, and a bargain was soon made. She agreed to make him a pair of

trousers "of brown jeans dyed with white walnut bark"; and he, in return, engaged to split four hundred rails, each ten feet in length and of convenient size, for each yard of jeans so used — or fourteen hundred rails in all.

And so, what with helping his father and what with doing odd jobs for the neighbors, the summer passed and another winter came. It was a winter long remembered in Illinois — the "winter of the deep snow." The snow began falling on Christmas day, and in a short time it was three feet deep. Then there came a drizzling rain which froze as fast as it fell; the air grew very cold; and the whole great expanse of snow became a thick sheet of ice. Many of the settlers perished in the storm. To those who lived through it, the days that followed were full of distress and discomfort. The deer and other wild animals that had hitherto been plentiful, died of starvation; or venturing too near the homes of men they were easily captured in the treacherous snow.

At about the time of the final thawing of the deep snow, Abraham Lincoln made the acquaintance of an adventurous young man whose name was Denton Offutt. Mr. Offutt was buying produce to send to New Orleans on a flatboat, and when he learned that young Lincoln had already made one trip down the river, he was anxious to engage him as a helper. As Abraham had nothing else to do, a bargain was soon made. The crew consisted of Lincoln, his cousin John Hanks, and his stepbrother John Johnston, while Offutt himself went along as captain. Each of the young men was to receive fifty cents a day, and if the venture proved to be a profitable one, he was in the end to be given a bonus of twenty dollars.

Of that second voyage down the Mississippi River little need be said. Everything seems to have prospered with the little company; they reached New Orleans in safety, and the produce was sold at a good profit. While waiting for the steamboat which was to carry them homeward, the young men had time to see a good deal of the great Southern city.

They visited the French quarters and also the section that had been settled by the Spanish. They spent many hours among the shipping and in the great markets. They saw Negro slaves at work everywhere.

One day they attended a slave auction where a number of Negroes were offered for sale, like so many cattle or other dumb beasts. The sight made a strong impression upon the kind-hearted Lincoln. To see men and women chained in gangs, whipped, and otherwise cruelly treated, touched his tender heart. John Hanks long afterward said: "It was on this trip that Lincoln formed his opinion of slavery. It run its iron in him then and there, May, 1831. I have heard him say so often."

The young men did not stay long in New Orleans. They took passage on the first steamboat that was bound up the river, and in a few days landed in St. Louis. Here Abraham Lincoln and his stepbrother took their leave of Mr. Offutt and started homeward across the wild prairie lands of Illinois. They walked all the way to Coles County where Thomas Lincoln was then living. For the uneasy man had not been pleased with the land which John Hanks had chosen for him in the valley of the Sangamon, and so, before a year had passed, had left it and moved again.

CHAPTER 17
Running a Village Store

Toward the end of that same summer, Mr. Offutt set up a little store in the town of New Salem, and sent for young Lincoln to come and be his salesman. New Salem was a very small place. It stood near the Sangamon River, about twelve miles below Springfield. If you should look for it on the maps in your school geography, you would not find it; for its life as a town was very brief, and there is now not a single house to show that it ever had existence. In place of streets and dwellings, one sees an open field and the sloping river bank overgrown with weeds and bushes. In 1831, however, a mill was there, and near it was a cluster of small houses. People were moving in and building, and everybody thought it was just the place for a thriving town. Indeed, being close to the river where water power could be had, it had more natural advantages than Springfield which was then in the open prairie with only a small stream called Spring Creek flowing through it. New Salem was thought to be a good place for a store, and Mr. Offutt perhaps never showed better judgment than when he placed his business there in charge of young Abraham Lincoln.

The store soon became a place of much interest to everybody in the neighborhood. The men, while waiting for their corn to be ground at the mill, gathered there to talk about cattle and crops and the weather. The women came to buy needles and thread and cheap calico. They seldom had any money, and so they paid for their goods with the butter and eggs that were not needed for the table at home.

The tall, ungainly "clerk" who had charge of the store did not have many of the graces of a gentleman, as they are commonly thought to be; for in the backwoods the ordinary forms of politeness were but little known. But, awkward as he was, the kindness of his heart was shown in his pleasant manners to all, and he soon had many friends. He was so truthful and trustworthy that the rough settlers gave him the nickname of "Honest Abe" — a title which he kept until the end of his life.

Many stories are told of the way in which he distinguished himself during that year in the little town of Salem. He was the peacemaker of the neighborhood. Quarrels very often arose among the rude fellows who were in the habit of gathering at the store; and these would sometimes have ended in bloodshed had it not been for young Lincoln's friendly interference. He was brave and strong, and everybody respected him because he was always on the side of right and justice. And so he could stop a fight and make old enemies forget their anger when no other man would have been listened to for a moment. Twice, at least, he was forced to defend himself against young bullies who were anxious to try his mettle. But when he had punished them as they deserved, he at once made friends with them and showed them that he bore them no ill-will. He had none of the bad habits that were so common among the young men in the new settlements. He did not use tobacco, or drink strong liquor, or bet on cards, or impose upon the weak and helpless, or quarrel with those who tried to wrong him. But he was in every way a manly young man, and withall so just and true that both the rude and the gentle respected and loved him.

I have said that there was not much money in the West at that time. There were households where hardly so much as a dollar was seen in a whole year. When anything was bought at the store, it was paid for in some kind of produce — it might be in corn, or wool, or goose feathers, or butter, or eggs, or live fowls, or smoked meat, or any other of the many things

that could be spared from the farm. The little money that passed from hand to hand was not much like that which we see nowadays. Nearly all the silver pieces were of Spanish coinage. One of the most common of these was the Spanish half real which the settlers called a "fip,"[1] and which was worth about six cents. Another piece, worth twice as much, was called a "levy."[2]

One day a customer came into Mr. Offutt's store and bought some goods for which he paid cash. After he had gone home, young Lincoln noticed that a mistake had been made and that the customer had given him a fip too much. All day long that little silver piece was in his thoughts; and as soon as he could close the store in the evening, he started off on a walk of several miles across the prairie, to restore the coin to its rightful owner. At another time when he was just closing the store for the night a woman came in to buy a half pound of tea. He had already blown out the candle, and rather than relight it, he felt around in the darkness and weighed the tea without seeing it. The next morning when he came to the store he saw by the weight which was still in the scale that he had given the woman only half enough. He could not rest until he had weighed out the remaining quarter of a pound and carried it to her.

While working for Mr. Offutt he did not neglect the studies which he felt would sometime be of use to him. He had heard that in order to speak and write correctly, one should understand the rules of grammar. He had never seen a textbook on English grammar, and he asked the schoolmaster at New Salem if he knew where such a book could be obtained.

"There is a man halfway between here and Springfield who used to teach school down East," was the answer. "He has an old copy of Kirkham's Grammar, and I am sure that he

[1] Short for "fippenny bit," or fivepence.

[2] Short for eleven pence, "eleven penny bit."

would lend it to you."

"But do you think that I could understand it without the help of a teacher?"

"I am quite sure that you can. With hard study and a good memory any one can learn all the rules in it."

"Well, I think I have a good memory, and I guess I can study pretty hard," said Lincoln; "and so I will see what I can do."

That very night he set out to borrow the book, and after a walk of twelve miles returned with it under his arm. For several days he kept it close by him, and whenever there was a leisure moment he was studying from its pages. In a short time he had learned all the rules by heart, but he found that he still made mistakes in the use of language. It was only by taking great pains with his speech, and by trying very hard all the time, that he was at last able to avoid most of these errors and to use really good English both in talking and in writing.

Mr. Offutt did not prove to be a successful business man. He undertook too many ventures, and lost money. In a few months the store at New Salem had to be closed, and Abraham Lincoln was again looking for employment.

CHAPTER 18
Up in Black Hawk's Country

In the valley of the Rock River in northern Illinois there once lived a tribe of Indians called the Sacs. Their neighbors and kinsfolk were the Fox Indians; and all had lived so long in that beautiful region that they had come to love it just as we, who think ourselves more civilized, love the land of our birth. But there were white people who saw that the hunting grounds and cornfields of these Indians included some of the richest farming lands in the world. "What a pity," they said, "that such fine lands should remain in the possession of savages!"

The Indians did not want to part with their lands, but they were so hard pressed by the white men that they could not long resist. Finally some of the braves, while half-drunk with strong liquor, were persuaded to make a treaty with the United States, agreeing to give up their old hunting grounds in exchange for a reservation on the western side of the Mississippi. Many of the people were unwilling to leave their homes, and it was not until force was threatened, that all were persuaded to remove across the river.

One of the leading men among the Sacs was a brave warrior called Black Hawk. He was then more than sixty years old, and he had always been opposed to selling the lands. He said that the braves did not know what they were doing when they made the treaty, and that it was not right for the whites to take advantage of them. He was much dissatisfied with the new home to which his people had been removed, and his heart was filled with bitterness because of the wrongs they had

suffered. After remaining quiet for some months, he put himself at the head of a band of Sacs and Foxes, and recrossed the Mississippi. When asked what he meant to do, he answered, "We are going into the Rock River valley to plant corn in the fields that are still our own." Some of his followers were hard to control. They scattered here and there, burning farmhouses and killing the white people that came in their way. There was a company of United States troops at Rock Island, but they were too few to fight against so large a force of savages. The whole state was alarmed, and the governor hastened to call for volunteers to help drive the Indians back to their own place.

It was only a few days after the closing of Mr. Offutt's store that the governor's call was made public; and Abraham Lincoln, having nothing else to do, enlisted at once. Several other young men in the neighborhood also volunteered, and a company was formed.

One of the first things to do, after they had come together, was to elect officers. There were two candidates for captain, Abraham Lincoln and an older man whose name was Kirkpatrick. The word was passed round: :Let all who want Lincoln for captain follow him to the left hand side of the road; and let all who would rather have Kirkpatrick stand on the right hand side of the road."

It was an odd kind of election; but when all had taken their stand it was found that there were twice as many men on Lincoln's side as on Kirkpatrick's. This was Abraham Lincoln's first success in public life. Thirty years later, when he was President of the United States, he was heard to say that no other victory of his life had ever brought with it so much satisfaction.

Captain Lincoln and his company marched across the state toward the place where the Indians were making trouble. They were ordered into camp on the banks of the Mississippi, and there they remained, waiting for a boat that

was to carry them up the river. The young men who had thus come together from the groves and prairie farms were an uncouth set of fellows, very rough and rude and hard to control; and Captain Lincoln had enough to do to keep them in any kind of order. He took part in their games, and won their respect by being the hardest hitter and with one exception the best wrestler in the company.

One day a poor, half-starved Indian came into the camp. He had with him a letter from General Cass, saying that he was friendly to the whites and could be trusted. But he did not show the letter at first. The soldiers ran toward him.

"Kill the Indian!" they cried. "He is a spy."

Then the Indian held up his letter; and some one, snatching it from him, read it aloud.

"It's a forgery," shouted some of the rude fellows. "General Cass didn't write it."

"Shoot him!" cried still others. "He is like all the savages, and who ever heard of one that could be trusted?"

"Yes!" said a burly Kentuckian. "Think of the women and children the dog has murdered."

"Shoot him we will!" answered many rough voices; and a dozen muskets were leveled toward him.

"No, you won't shoot him!" said Captain Lincoln, stepping between the Indian and his angry foes. "He is under my protection, and the first man that touches him dies!"

One by one the weapons were lowered, and the grumbling soldiers walked sullenly away. A man who was present said long afterward that never in his life had he seen Lincoln "so roused over anything."

Days passed, and the boat did not arrive. Finally the time for which the company had enlisted expired. Most of the men had had enough of soldiering and were glad to make excuses and hurry home. But the Indians were still on the war path, and Lincoln was no sooner mustered out than he reenlisted as a private in another company. This new company was

known as the "Independent Spy Battalion of Mounted Rangers," and it soon went into camp on the banks of Rock River not far from where the city of Dixon, Illinois, now stands. To this camp came other soldiers, some of whom, then unknown, were destined to become famous in the history of their country. Among these were Zachary Taylor, a lieutenant colonel who seventeen years later was to be President of the United States. With him was Jefferson Davis, a lieutenant, who thirty years later was to be President of the Confederate States of America. It is not at all likely that Abraham Lincoln, the raw-boned recruit from the Sangamon, ever received so much as a passing glance from these fine officers whose birth and station were so much above his own. But among the volunteers he was well known for his courage and good humor; and he was long afterward remembered as the best story-teller, and on all accounts the best soldier, in the Spy Battalion.

But he was to have no chance to show his bravery on the field of battle. Before the Spy Battalion had reached the place where the enemy was supposed to be, and before Abraham Lincoln had seen a single hostile Indian, the war was ended. In July a part of the army had fallen upon Black Hawk's camp on the bluffs of the Wisconsin, and defeated his warriors with great slaughter. Those who escaped fled toward the Mississippi, anxious now above all things to cross it, and return to their reservation. But they were overtaken at Bad Axe on the eastern shore of the great river, and in the bloody scene which followed, nearly all of them were barbarously slain.

Black Hawk escaped with his life, but was captured a few days later. He was taken to Washington, and on the way was exhibited in many of the Northern cities. When at last the fearless old man stood before President Jackson, he made a little speech which will never be forgotten.

"I am a man," he said, "and you are another. I did not expect to conquer the white people. I took up the hatchet to avenge injuries which could no longer be borne. Had I borne

them longer, my people would have said: 'Black Hawk is a squaw; he is too old to be a chief; he is no Sac.' This caused me to raise the war whoop. I say no more of it; all is known to you."

Thus ended the last Indian war in that part of our country between the Mississippi and the Alleghenies. Step by step the red men had disputed the westward march of civilization; step by step the white men had driven them from their hunting grounds and taken possession of their lands. And now in all that region there remained scarcely a spot which the Indian could truthfully claim as his own.

The war being over, the volunteer soldiers were of course discharged. The Independent Spy Battalion was mustered out by a young officer of the United States army, Lieutenant Robert Anderson — famous twenty-nine years later as the commander of Fort Sumter when the first shot was fired in the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln, with one companion, set out for home, walking most of the way from the Rock River valley to New Salem.

CHAPTER 19
Election—But Not of Abraham Lincoln

When Lincoln arrived at the little town on the Sangamon, everybody was glad to see him and anxious to shake hands with him. In ten days an election was to be held, and the people of the district were to choose a man to represent them in the legislature. Young Lincoln had already announced that he would be a candidate; and now all his old neighbors joined in urging others to vote for him.

It was the custom for all the candidates to make speeches at different places in the district, and to explain what they would do for the people in case they should be elected. The election being so close at hand, there was but little time for Abraham Lincoln to prepare for speech-making; but he entered into the contest with great energy and spirit.

On the very next day after his return, there was a public sale of pigs and cattle at a crossroad, twelve miles from Springfield, and at its close there was to be a great political meeting. All the farmers and stock raisers for miles around were there, and the talk of the day was divided between cattle and politics. A platform had been built for the speakers, and on it was placed a long bench for the candidates to sit upon. Lawyers were there from Springfield, and smart young men from other towns. The crowd was a rude and boisterous one; few of the men wore coats, and many were barefooted. They were not likely to look with favor upon a candidate dressed in broadcloth and fine linen.

Abraham Lincoln was the last to make a speech. He stood up on the platform, and his appearance at once gained the

respect of the farmers. He was a gawky, rough-looking fellow, six feet and four inches tall. He wore a loose coat made of coarse blue jeans, a pair of home-made trousers that were at least six inches too short, and cowhide boots that had seen much tramping through the black mud of the prairies. Looking straight at his audience, he began: —

"Gentlemen and Fellow-citizens: I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet. I am in favor of a national bank; 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."

This was Abraham Lincoln's first political speech. During the week which followed he spoke at Springfield and perhaps at other places, but there is no record of what he said. The district was a very large one, and as it was impossible for him to see every voter, he sent out a handbill to tell the people what they might expect from him if he should be elected. In this handbill he said: —

"I am young, and unknown to many of you. I was born and have ever remained in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or powerful relations or friends to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the county; and, if elected, they will have conferred a favor upon me for which I shall be unremitting in my labors to compensate. But if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined."

Election day came, and every man in New Salem, whether Democrat or Whig, voted for Abraham Lincoln. But when the ballots in Springfield and the remote townships were counted, it was found that he had been defeated. Since this

was the first time that his name had been put before the people, he had not hoped for much, and so he was not "very much chagrined." Indeed, he was only twenty-three years old, and what need had he to feel discouraged?

During the next few months he was busy in many ways. He thought of becoming a blacksmith, and was casting about for a place to set up his shop, when he was persuaded to buy the half of a little store in New Salem. He had not a dollar with which to pay for it, but his honesty was so well known that his notes were believed to be as good as money. This venture was, however, an unlucky one. His partner proved to be a worthless fellow, who mismanaged the business and spent everything for liquor. In a very short time the store was closed, and Lincoln was left responsible for the notes which he had given. It was six years before this debt was entirely settled, and within that time he had many a hard struggle; but in the end every cent was paid.

CHAPTER 20
"Law, Sir, Law!"

Ever since he had attended that famous trial in Indiana, Abraham Lincoln had cherished an ambition to become a lawyer. Whether he was poling a flatboat down the Mississippi, or splitting rails in the woods, or selling pins and calico to the farmers' wives, or leading his little company of Illinois volunteers, he had always this thing in mind. About the time he was trying to be a storekeeper he happened to visit Springfield, and there he bought a second-hand copy of Blackstone's "Commentaries." This work, as you may know, has been for more than a century the standard authority on English common law, and it is one of the first books that a young law student is expected to master. The copy which Lincoln bought was old and worn, but it was complete, and he carried it home as he would a precious treasure. Every moment that he could snatch from other duties was now given to the study of this volume, and within a few weeks he had mastered all that was in it. But the knowledge thus gained only made him eager for more. If he only had the necessary books, how much he might learn! If he only had money, how soon would the books be forthcoming!

He was thinking of this one day when he remembered that, in the soldiers' camp on Rock River, he had met and become acquainted with a young lawyer whose name was John T. Stuart. This Mr. Stuart lived in Springfield, and was said to have a very good library. Perhaps he would lend a volume now and then. No sooner had this thought come into Lincoln's mind than he put on his hat and started to walk to

Springfield to see his friend.

Mr. Stuart was very kind. "Certainly," he said. "You are welcome not only to a volume, but to every volume in my library;" and then he gave some very sensible advice about the best books to be read and the order in which they should be studied. When young Lincoln began his long walk homeward that evening he held an open book in his hand; and before he had reached New Salem he had mastered thirty or forty pages of it.

After the failure of the store he supported himself by doing any odd jobs that he could find. Sometimes he shouldered his ax and went out to the woods to chop down trees for fuel; sometimes he helped a busy neighbor gather his crops; but there was never a leisure moment when he was not studying. One day Farmer Godby hired him to do some work in a distant field. Going out in the afternoon to see how matters were progressing, the farmer was surprised to find the young man sitting on a stump with a book in his hand.

"Hello, Abe!" he cried; "what are you reading?"

"I am not reading," answered Lincoln, "I am studying."

"Well, well! then tell me what you are studying."

"Law, sir, law!" was the reply.

The farmer was so much astonished that he had not words to express himself; and he was still more astonished when he saw that his hired man had wasted no time over the book, but had already done a full day's work.

Everywhere he went, Lincoln was pretty sure to carry a book with him. While walking along the road he would often be so deep in study that his best friends might pass him without being noticed. On hot summer days it was common to see him lying in the shade of a tree and poring over some dry treatise on law. People said that he was going crazy over books.

But soon he began to make use of his knowledge. The neighbors, having great confidence in his wisdom, came to him for legal advice. They sought his help in drawing up deeds

and mortgages and other written contracts; and now and then he was given the management of some case at law that was being tried before a justice of the peace.

CHAPTER 21
In the Postal Service

About this time young Lincoln was appointed postmaster at New Salem. Once a week a postman, riding on horseback, with a pair of saddlebags beneath him, brought the mail to the town. It was not a large mail — perhaps a dozen letters and three or four newspapers. Postmaster Lincoln was always ready to receive it when it came. It was not worth while to rent a room for a post office; but he put the letters in his hat and kept them there until called for; or, if he had the time to do so, he would kindly carry them to the people for whom they were intended.

Of course there was not much salary attached to a post office that was carried in one's hat. There were no postage stamps at that time, and there were no envelopes. When any one wished to mail a letter, it was brought to the postmaster, who kept it until the mail carrier made his next weekly visit. Sometimes the sender paid the postage, and then the postmaster would write, in big, plain characters on the face of it, the word Paid. But the rates of postage were very high, and it generally happened that the sender did not pay any part of it, but left the whole to be collected from the person to whom it was addressed. It was, therefore, not always a pleasant thing to receive a letter. The postmaster collected the money that was due for postage and kept it until an agent from the general post office called for it.

Mr. Lincoln was the last postmaster that New Salem ever had. People were already moving away from the village and finding better homes in the more promising settlements above

and below. The amount of mail sent out and received became less with each passing month, and in a little over two years the office was discontinued. At this time the young postmaster had on hand about seventeen dollars which had been paid to him for postage. For some reason the agent failed to come after this money, and several years passed before it was called for. In the meanwhile Mr. Lincoln had removed to Springfield; he was in debt, and so poor that he was often in need of the common comforts of life. At last one day, when he least expected it, the agent of the government called at his little law office and presented the long-neglected account.

"Sit down and wait a minute," said Mr. Lincoln; and leaving the office, he strode rapidly down the street. Had he gone out to borrow the money of some of his friends?

In a few moments he returned with an old blue stocking in his hand.

"Here is the money," he said. "It has been waiting for you a long time;" and he poured from the stocking a great number of copper cents and little pieces of silver, such as the country people had used in paying postage. "I believe it is all here," he said. And when the agent counted it, he found it to be exactly the sum that was due. Notwithstanding his great poverty and his frequent need, Mr. Lincoln had not touched a cent of the money that he was holding in trust for the government. "I never use any man's money but my own," he said.

CHAPTER 22
Following the Surveyor's Chain

Abraham Lincoln was now nearly twenty-five years of age. Never for a day had he given up the idea of becoming a lawyer; and every spare moment was spent in study. But he must have food to eat, and a place to sleep; and to earn money to pay for these, he still had to work hard with his hands. One day when he was splitting rails in the woods, word came to him that Mr. Calhoun, the county surveyor, was at his boarding place and wished to see him. He shouldered his ax and maul, and with long strides made his way back to the village, wondering what the surveyor could want with him.

"Abe, do you know anything about surveying?" asked Mr. Calhoun.

Young Lincoln was obliged to confess that although he had once read a book on that subject, he did not know much about it. Then Mr. Calhoun told him that he was overcrowded with work and must have help. If Lincoln would take the little book which he had, and study it until he had mastered the principal rules, he would make him assistant surveyor and pay him good wages. Lincoln looked at the book and thought that he had mastered many things more difficult.

"I will do my best," he said; "and when I am ready I will report to you."

The schoolmaster, Menton Graham, offered to help him with the knotty problems; and after six weeks of hard study, Lincoln was ready for the work of a surveyor. With the money which he had saved he bought a horse and a pair of saddlebags, a compass and chain, and other things needful in his

business. The county was a large one, and there was much to be done, first in this part, then in that. A new village called Petersburg had been laid out two miles below New Salem, and Lincoln was sent down to survey and mark off the lots and streets. The boundary lines of many farms were to be determined and the corner stones set in place. New roads were to be marked out, and old ones were to be improved. And in work of this kind the young surveyor found plenty to do.

This business brought him into contact with all kinds of people, and he made many acquaintances in every part of the county. Although it took him away from his law studies for a while, it was the best possible preparation for the career that was now beginning to open before him.

Every one who knew him soon became his fast friend; for to the settlers on the prairie he seemed to have all the virtues and accomplishments that were desirable in any man. He not only knew much about books, but he understood woodcraft better than any hunter or back-woodsman in that region. He was a good judge of horses, and as the umpire of a horse race he had no equal. His strength was a thing to be wondered at even in that country of strong men. It was said that at the mill in New Salem he once lifted a box of stones weighing more than a thousand pounds; and in wrestling, leaping, and other feats of strength in which the people of a newly settled region delight, he was the admiration of all.

Although during the greater part of his life he had been in constant contact with rudeness and vulgarity, yet his manners were free from coarseness, and his language from uncleanness and profanity. Any other person thus standing aloof from the bad habits so common to the backwoods would have been treated with scorn and abuse, as one trying to appear better than his fellows. But with Lincoln the matter was quite otherwise. He never did anything in a boastful way, and neither in manner nor in word did he claim for himself superiority over others. Yet the uncultured people with whom he

was cast knew that he was their superior, and while they themselves did not practice virtue, they were proud and pleased to see it practiced by him.

CHAPTER 23
Entering Politics in Earnest

While busy surveying farms and making new acquaintances, Abraham Lincoln still kept thinking of the future. Hardly a day passed that he did not do something to increase his knowledge and improve his mind. He was almost the only man in New Salem who was a regular subscriber to a newspaper; and among all his acquaintances there was no one who knew as much about politics as he.

The name of Henry Clay had always a strange charm for him. We have seen how, when a mere child in the wretched half-faced camp at Pigeon Creek, he read the story of the poor "Mill Boy of the Slashes." He had then and there adopted Henry Clay as his ideal of pluck and perseverance. When he grew up to manhood, he chose the same person as his political leader. At New Salem he was the constant reader of Henry Clay's newspaper, the Louisville Journal.

It was a great pleasure to him on Saturday afternoons to sit on an empty goods box in front of the village store and read the news to a group of listening farmers; and then he would explain the editorials in the Journal, and cause great mirth by quoting the bright, witty sayings which were then a prominent feature of that able paper. He took much pains to keep abreast of the public questions of the day, and he was the oracle to whom all his neighbors went for information. "If you want to learn anything about politics," they would say, "go and ask Abe Lincoln. He'll tell you all that's worth knowing."

What were some of the things that he talked about and explained to his little Saturday audience at the village store?

Let us see.

There were then, as there are now, two great political parties; and nearly every man in the country "belonged" to one or the other of these parties. They were known as the Democratic party and the Whig party. The Democratic party had been in existence many years; people said that it was founded (although under a slightly different name) by the great Thomas Jefferson. The Whig party, on the other hand, was very new; indeed, it had just been formed, and the foremost man in its ranks was Henry Clay.

The leader of the Democratic party at that time was Andrew Jackson, the President of the United States. He had already served one term as President, and was now near the middle of his second term. In order to understand the great questions of the time, young Lincoln sometimes found it necessary to refer to some of the events of Jackson's first term. In order to understand the influences which shaped the political life of Abraham Lincoln, it will be well for us to follow a similar course.

At Jackson's first election — which took place in 1828 — there were no Whigs, but those who opposed him called themselves National Republicans. The leaders of the National Republicans were Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. Their candidate for the presidency was John Quincy Adams.

The chief question between the parties at that time, as at several times since, was the tariff, or tax on goods brought into this country from foreign lands. Did a high tariff promote national prosperity, or did it not? The answer to this question was given quite differently by different persons: it depended upon the place in which one lived and the business in which he was employed; it was dictated by personal interest rather than by patriotism.

In the North — particularly in the New England states — a great many people were engaged in manufacturing; and they believed that a high tariff would prevent many foreign goods

from being brought to our country, and thus make a better market and more general demand for American goods. The result of this would be more work and better wages for the workingmen.

But in the South there were no manufactories and but few mills of any kind. Nearly all the labor was done by slaves, and the chief products were sugar, cotton, and tobacco. The people of that section believed that a high protective tariff would be an injury to them; it would increase the price of such goods as they did not make, but were obliged to buy; it would make no better market for the things they had to sell.

Just before the election of Jackson, Congress had passed an act increasing the tariff on woolen manufactures, iron goods, and many other articles. The act was intended most of all to benefit the woolen industry in the North; and it was favored by great numbers of people who thought that it would also benefit the country at large. In the South, and especially in South Carolina, the feeling against it was very bitter. When Andrew Jackson became President, it was supposed that his influence would cause the law to be repealed; but its friends were numerous and powerful, and it remained in force.

Toward the end of Jackson's first term the dissatisfaction became greater. The people of South Carolina met in convention and adopted what has since been known as the Nullification Ordinance. This was a resolution asserting that the tariff act was null and void in South Carolina, and declaring that if the United States government attempted to enforce it there, the state would secede from the Union.

It was believed that the President, who was a Southern man and opposed to a high tariff, would quietly permit the South Carolinians to have their own way. People were surprised, therefore, when on the 10th of December he issued a proclamation against the nullifiers.

"The Constitution of the United States," he said, "forms a government, not a league. Our Constitution does not

contain the absurdity of giving power to make laws, and another power to resist them. To say that any state may at pleasure secede from the Union is to say that the United States are not a nation."

Throughout the North, this action of President Jackson was heartily approved, even by many who were not Democrats and had voted against him. But the South Carolinians held their ground. John C. Calhoun, the Vice President of the United States, was a South Carolinian and the leader of the nullifiers. He at once resigned his position in order that he might do greater service to his state.

Troublesome times seemed to be at hand. Congress passed a law instructing the President to force the state of South Carolina to obey the laws of the United States. If he should attempt to do this, civil war would certainly follow.

But at this perilous moment Henry Clay of Kentucky came forward with a compromise bill. Henry Clay was noted for doing such things. More than once, when sectional feeling had threatened to destroy the very life of our nation, he had found a way to please both parties and restore harmony and peace. "Come, my friends," he would say, "we cannot all have what we want. But we can meet on middle ground, and each one, by giving up only a little to the other, may gain more than can possibly be gotten by strife." And it was by such friendly services as this that the Union was preserved through more than one crisis, and Clay became known in history as the Great Pacificator.

The compromise which he suggested at this time provided that South Carolina should give up her nullification scheme and stay peaceably in the Union, while, on the other hand, the odious tariff should be reduced little by little for ten years, or until every section of the country should be satisfied with it.

This was a simple and easy way of settling an ugly dispute, and everybody was glad to agree to it. South Carolina showed

her loyalty by obeying a law which she thought harmful to the interests of her people. The friends of high tariff showed their loyalty by bending to the wishes of their fellow-citizens whose circumstances were not the same as their own.

We shall find, however, that it was many years before the South Carolinians were ready to give up the idea that their state might withdraw from the Union whenever she chose to do so. In the earlier history of our country, loyalty to one's state was held to be more praiseworthy than loyalty to the Union. This was true in the North as well as in the South, and it gave rise to the doctrine of States' Rights, which regarded the United States as a league and not as a nation. "The state first, the United States second" — that was the original idea of patriotism, and it was the idea which John C. Calhoun and his followers believed to be the true one. But it was not the doctrine of Andrew Jackson; it was not the doctrine of Henry Clay.

We may imagine Abraham Lincoln discussing these matters with his farmer friends at New Salem, and supporting his arguments by reading extracts from the Louisville Journal. They were important issues at that time, and every voter in the country had his opinion about them.

Andrew Jackson — "Old Hickory" as his friends liked to call him — was a great favorite in the West; and in Illinois most of the people were Democrats. His second election (in 1832) was a famous victory. The National Republican party, with Henry Clay as its candidate, had made a strong fight against him; but it was beaten so badly that its leaders found it necessary to disband in order that a new party might be formed under another name.

Two years later, therefore, the Whig party was organized. It was intended to attract to its ranks all who, for any reason, disliked the policy of President Jackson. It included not only those who had formerly called themselves National Republicans, but also the nullifiers and states'-rights men of the

South, and many dissatisfied Democrats. The leaders of this new party were Henry Clay of Kentucky, Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. These three men were the political giants of that time; and they are to be remembered as probably the ablest statesmen that our country has ever known. On many important questions they held the most widely differing opinions; and it was only in their opposition to the high-handed measures of Andrew Jackson that they were ever really in agreement.

It was with this new party, as represented by his political ideal, Henry Clay, that Abraham Lincoln, at the age of twenty-five, allied himself.

BOOK THE SECOND—PROBATION

CHAPTER 1
A Member of the Legislature

IN 1834 there was another state election in Illinois, and Abraham Lincoln again announced himself as a candidate for the legislature.

At that time it was not customary for parties to hold political conventions, as they do now, to make up the ticket which is to be voted for at the coming election. If a man wanted an office, he informed the public that he was a candidate, and he declared that if he should be elected he would support or oppose certain measures. This plan made it possible for a great many candidates to present themselves for the same office, and the votes were sometimes very scattering. But the convention system was beginning to be adopted in some states. It not only avoided the inconvenience of too many candidates, but it drew a more distinct line between the parties. It was favored especially by the Jackson Democrats; but the Whigs — and among them Abraham Lincoln — were slow to approve of it.

Mr. Lincoln had made so many acquaintances within the past year that there was now little need for him to tell the people who he was or what were his principles. Almost every man who knew him was eager to vote for him; and he was elected by a large majority.

He was only twenty-five years old — a homely, awkward fellow who knew little of the ways of the world; but by reason of his true worth and his untiring perseverance, he had at this

early age reached one of the most honorable positions in his state. He had now come to the first dividing line in his life: the years that were past had been his period of preparation; the years that were to come would be periods of probation and achievement.

The capital of Illinois at that time was Vandalia, a small town sixty or seventy miles southeast of Springfield. When the time came for Mr. Lincoln to start to the legislature, he found himself without money; and his thread-bare coat and ill-fitting trousers were not such as a lawmaker might wear with credit. But his friends were ready and eager to help him; and so, one day early in winter, feeling very strange in a brand new suit of jeans, he set out for the capital.

He did not distinguish himself at that session of the legislature. He made no speeches, he proposed no new laws. But he was a listener and learner, and was ready with his vote in favor of whatever measure he thought would be best for the people of the state. He became acquainted with men of culture and intelligence; he learned some of the ways of refined society; and he impressed everybody with the fact that he was a quiet and sensible young man who was determined to make the best of everything that came in his way.

The session was a short one, and in a few weeks Mr. Lincoln was back among his old friends at New Salem.

Between studying law and surveying farms and roads, the summer months seemed very short to Mr. Lincoln, and another autumn passed unmarked by any unusual happening. At the beginning of winter, he was again among the lawmakers at Vandalia.

It was at this second session of the legislature that Mr. Lincoln first met the man who was to be for many years his most powerful political rival. That man was Stephen A. Douglas, a young lawyer from Morgan County, who had lately been appointed circuit attorney.

Mr. Douglas was at that time only twenty-two years old.

Like Lincoln, he was poor; but he had had opportunities of a kind which Mr. Lincoln had never known.

Douglas was born at Brandon, Vermont, and when a mere babe had lost his father. His mother, who was a woman of culture, did all that she could to give him a good education. She taught him at home. When he was older she sent him to a small country school through the winter months; but during the rest of the year he had to work on the farm.

He soon learned all that the district schoolmaster could teach him, and was anxious to know more; but his mother was too poor to send him to college. At the age of fifteen he learned cabinet-making; and by the practice of this trade he earned money enough to pay his tuition at an academy for nearly a year.

Soon after this young Douglas's mother married again, and when he was seventeen, he went to live with her near Canandaigua, New York, whither she had removed with her husband. There Douglas taught a short term of school, after which he attended an academy a few weeks, and then began the study of law. Having learned some of the first principles of his profession, he made up his mind to seek his fortune in the West.

Late in the autumn of 1833, he arrived at the village of Winchester, in Illinois, with no money in his pockets save three silver "levies" (37 ½ cents), and no friend to whom he could apply for help. Like Abraham Lincoln, however, he was not the man to be cast down by trifles. He braced himself manfully, and went right forward. Within three days he had made himself so well known to the people of Winchester that they chose him to teach their village school.

At the end of the year he went to Jacksonville; and in the very month that he was twenty-one, he was licensed to practice law in the courts of Illinois. Two weeks thereafter he made a public speech in defense of President Jackson which so wrought upon his hearers that he at once became the most

popular man in that part of the country.

That speech won for him the office of circuit attorney.

CHAPTER 2
Between Vandalia and New Salem

The second session of the legislature of 1835-1836 was but little longer than the first, for it ended about the middle of January. Mr. Lincoln made but little progress toward winning distinction. Nevertheless he delivered one or two short speeches which were listened to with attention; and he talked so well on matters of public interest that everybody admired his sound judgment and the courage with which he defended his convictions.

With the ending of the session the term for which he was elected expired. He returned to New Salem and announced himself as a candidate for reelection.

This was the year also for the presidential election, when some one must be chosen to succeed Andrew Jackson, whose second term would expire on the 4th of the following March. The campaign in Sangamon County was carried on with much vigor, and Mr. Lincoln distinguished himself as a strong opponent of the Jackson democracy.

"I go," he said, "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). … Whether elected or not, I go for distributing the proceeds of the sales of the public lands to the several states, to enable our state, in common with others, to dig canals and construct railroads without borrowing money and paying interest on it."

It is well to remember that there were at that time no railroads in Illinois. The state was yet in its infancy. The great

prairies were for the most part still unoccupied; and in the northern section of the state there were wide stretches of unclaimed lands, broken only here and there by straggling, feeble settlements. But immigrants from the older states were coming in rapidly, and great changes were beginning to be made. It was just the time for an energetic young man to step to the front and make his influence felt; and in Illinois there were two such men, Lincoln and Douglas.

Abraham Lincoln spent more than half of the summer in traveling from one part of his district to another and making speeches — "stumping it," as people in the West would say. Sometimes he walked from town to town; sometimes he rode astride of a farm horse which he described as being "plainly marked with harness" and as "having lost some of its shoes."

His speeches were so interesting and convincing, and they were delivered with such force and ease, that he soon became known as one of the foremost orators of the state.

CHAPTER 3
Rag Barons vs. Sons of Toil

It was a favorite plea of the Democrats that theirs was the party of the common people — that it was the party of the sons of toil, the plain farmer and the humble laborer; and they ridiculed the Whigs as being the party of the kid-gloved gentry — of the rich speculator and the bloated aristocrat. All this had much weight among the hard-handed pioneers of the West; and it gained many votes for Andrew Jackson and his friends.

Among the Democratic speakers in Sangamon County there was a certain busy, bustling little dandy known as Colonel Dick Taylor. When in town he took great pride in appearing well dressed. His clothing was of the most fashionable cut. He wore kid gloves and patent leather boots, and delighted in a gaudy display of diamond shirt studs and a gold watch chain with costly seals and charms. But when he went into the country to address the plain farmers and warn them against the Whigs, he cunningly put on a long linen "duster" to conceal all this finery of which he was so fond. He could then make his hearers believe that he too was a humble workingman, earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, and therefore in hearty sympathy with the "common people."

On a certain day Colonel Taylor and Mr. Lincoln were to speak at the same political meeting. A great many farmers were there, eager to hear the questions of the day discussed. A few of them were Whigs; but most were Democrats, and "Old Hickory" was their idol.

Mr. Lincoln was dressed in a suit of coarse jeans; his coat

was too large, his trousers were too short, his blue "hickory" shirt had neither collar nor cuffs, his cowhide boots were strangers to polish. Colonel Taylor, with his linen duster buttoned closely around him, also appeared to be a very plain man indeed.

The colonel spoke first. He began by praising the wisdom of President Jackson. Then he spoke briefly of the tariff and of the internal improvements and of the great things which the Democratic party had done for the state of Illinois. As he enlarged upon this, he informed the listening farmers that the Democrats — of whom he was one of the humblest — were the very "bone and sinew of the land"; that they were the laborers, the producers; that they were the plain people, the "hard-handed sons of toil," the despisers of luxury; and, further, that they were the sole promoters of national prosperity. On the other hand, he described the Whigs as the "silk-stockinged gentry," the bloated aristocrats with "lily-white hands" unused to labor, the "rag barons" who fare sumptuously at the expense of the poor. He saw that his words were having an effect upon his hearers. He waxed very eloquent, and in his wild enthusiasm made the most violent gestures, pacing the platform and sawing the air with his arms.

At the very climax of his speech a sudden movement loosed the buttons from his worn duster. A gust of wind blew the long tails apart and exposed to view the faultless attire of the elegant dandy — his ruffled shirt front, his diamond studs, and his gold watch chain with sparkling pendants. Taylor was so taken aback that he paused in his harangue, and before he could say another word, Lincoln arose and stepped forward. Pointing to the finely dressed colonel, he cried out: "Behold the hard-handed son of toil! Look, my friends, at this specimen of bone and sinew." Then, standing where all could see him, he laid his great bony hands upon his own breast and said: "But here is your rag baron with the lily-white hands! Here, at your service, is one of your silk-stockinged gentry!

Yes, I suppose that I am even a bloated aristocrat!"

He needed to say no more. The crowd burst into shouts of laughter and applause. He had won the day.

The colonel, in great confusion, retired from the platform; and it was many a day before he heard the last of the "rag barons" and the "hard-handed sons of toil."

The Democratic candidate for the presidency that year was Martin Van Buren, who had been Vice President during Jackson's second term. His supporters were assured of his fitness for the office by his declaration that he would "follow in the footsteps of his predecessor." The Whigs very foolishly divided their votes among four candidates, and of course were badly beaten. The election again placed the power in the hands of the Democrats, and it was settled that "Old Hickory's" policy would control the government for at least four years longer.

In some of the state and local elections, however, the Democrats suffered great losses, and this encouraged the Whigs to persevere in their opposition.

Sangamon County, Illinois, was entitled to send nine delegates to the state legislature — two senators and seven representatives. When the election came off, it was found that the nine chosen were all Whigs; and of these, Mr. Lincoln received a higher number of votes than any other candidate. A very odd thing about this delegation was that each man was more than six feet in height. They were nicknamed the "Long Nine"; and Lincoln, because he was the tallest of all, was called the "Sangamon Chief."

CHAPTER 4
An Attorney at Law

When winter came and the legislature met again at Vandalia, Mr. Lincoln was in his old seat. He was looked upon now as one of the leaders among the Whigs, and there were few more active members in the lower house of lawmakers. If all the laws which he advocated had been passed, the state would soon have been bankrupt.

The people of his county had said, "Vote for a general system of public improvements," and he took them at their word. He voted for railroads where there could be neither freight nor passengers, and for public highways where there was no one to travel them; and he suggested the digging of a ship canal between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi along the same route that is now traversed by the great Drainage Canal of Chicago. His object in supporting these measures was to increase and develop the trade of the state, and thus bring capital into it and tempt enterprising men to become its citizens.

It had been provided by law that the legislature should, at the proper time, select some permanent place for the seat of government — a place as convenient as might be to all of the inhabitants of the state. This duty devolved upon the legislature of 1837-1838. Vandalia was but a little village, not easy of access, and far from the center of the state. Everybody knew that it could not remain the capital. The Long Nine of Sangamon proposed that Springfield should be the favored place. They chose Mr. Lincoln to manage the project in the legislature; and such was his influence with the other members

that the measure was carried.

The people of Sangamon County were delighted with what had been done. Many other towns had aspired to become the capital; and but for Mr. Lincoln's energy and good management, Springfield would hardly have won the prize. When the Long Nine returned home at the close of the legislature, the citizens of Springfield gave them a public welcome and entertained them at a banquet.

Among the toasts given at this banquet was one in honor of Abraham Lincoln: "He has fulfilled the expectations of his friends, and disappointed the hopes of his enemies." This was no doubt pleasing to him, but it was not just what he wanted at that time. It did not answer a question that was causing him great uneasiness.

That question was, What should he do next?

He was now twenty-eight years old. He had not yet begun, except in a very small way, the practice of the profession for which he had been so long trying to prepare himself. He was in debt. He was discouraged, and felt that he had not yet made any real start in life. Should he return to the dead village of New Salem, and again earn his support by surveying farms and doing odd jobs for his neighbors?

William Butler, one of the citizens who had been most anxious to have the capital removed to Springfield, noticed the young man's dejection.

"Lincoln," he said, "now that the legislature has adjourned, what are you going to do for a living?"

"I really don't know," was the answer. "If I could afford it, I should like to make my home in Springfield and begin the practice of law."

"And why not afford it?" said Mr. Butler. "You shall come to my house, and make your home with me as long as you please."

That was indeed a generous offer on the part of Mr. Butler. Abraham Lincoln knew that it was sincere, and he

accepted it, feeling more grateful than words could express.

In the same year, therefore, that Springfield was chosen as the permanent capital of the state, it was honored by becoming the home of the man that was finally to be its most illustrious citizen.

During the next three or four years, Mr. Lincoln took his meals at the house of Mr. Butler; but he lodged in a very plain little room which he shared with a young Kentucky merchant named Joshua Speed.

Springfield was at that time a mere village of straggling wooden houses, most of which were only one story in height. The streets were wastes of black dust in dry weather, and sloughs of blacker mud in wet weather. There were no sidewalks, and the only crossings were those made by throwing blocks of wood into the roadway.

In the big county of Sangamon, from which several other counties have since been carved, there were about eighteen thousand people; and of these, not one tenth were residents of the new state capital. Many of the people had come from Kentucky, and among the better class much attention was paid to social matters and to dress, and (as Lincoln himself quaintly said) there was "a good deal of flourishing about in carriages."

The rude customs of pioneer days, however, had not entirely disappeared. It was still not uncommon to see men on the street clad in buckskin breeches and shirts of linsey-woolsey, with deerskin moccasins on their feet and carrying hunting knives in their belts. The women on the farms dressed very simply in homespun frocks; they wore calico sunbonnets to church; and they thought nothing of going barefooted during the warm seasons of the year. Throughout the country there was a lingering prejudice against the finery of the "city folks," and many an honest farmer thought that he saw in the growing luxury of the times the causes that would in time bring dire disaster to the state and nation. It is very

possible that the rough clothing which Mr. Lincoln wore, his toil-hardened hands, and his simple country manners, had much to do with his early popularity in Sangamon County. But it was his sterling good sense, his inborn kindness of heart, and his native qualities as a leader that won for him the esteem of the intelligent people of Illinois.

He had scarcely become settled in Springfield before Major John T. Stuart, the lawyer who had lent him books and helped him in his studies, asked him to become his partner. And so, in a cramped and dusty little office overlooking the main street of the village, he established himself as the junior member of the firm of STUART & LINCOLN Attorneys-at-Law.

CHAPTER 5
How Lincoln Rode the Circuit

Mr. Stuart was at that time very deeply engaged in politics, for it was the ambition of his life to be elected to Congress. He had been a candidate at the last election, and had been defeated. He was now laying his wires for the next election, and did not take much interest in the practice of law. It followed, therefore, that most of the business of the firm was done by Abraham Lincoln.

But there was not a great deal to be done, and so there was plenty of time for study — which was just what Mr. Lincoln needed. There were also many occasions for discussing the political questions of the day, and much leisure for the telling of droll stories and the entertainment of idle friends. To all these duties and opportunities, Lincoln applied himself with the same honest energy that had made him a good rail splitter and a successful surveyor.

It must not be thought that he had retired from the legislature. He was reelected in 1838 and again in 1840, thus serving eight years in that body. But the sessions each year were short, and Mr. Lincoln managed to attend them without neglecting his work as an attorney.

Sometimes this work required his attendance at court in another county; and it often became necessary to follow the judge to several places in his judicial district. This was called "riding the circuit," and in those early times it was a regular part of every lawyer's business.

The courthouses were rude affairs, often built of logs and almost as comfortless as barns. But whenever court was in

session at any one of them, the people flocked to it from all the country round; and the courtroom was crowded with interested listeners. Thus it was, that even the most illiterate farmers came to have a fair knowledge of the foundation principles of law. The county courts were, in one sense of the word, schools where good citizenship was taught.

For twenty-one years Mr. Lincoln, in his capacity of attorney, attended these courts;[3] and within that time he had the management of many important cases. He was by no means a learned lawyer. How could he be, having had no teachers and none of the usual opportunities? But he was well liked by his fellow-lawyers; he was respected by the judges on the bench; and he knew very well how to win the sympathies of juries. In that new country the cases that came before the courts were, for the most part, of a very simple character; they required no fine scholarship to discover all their points. There were no vast, intricate problems to be solved, such as now require legal talent of the highest order. And Mr. Lincoln was seldom on the wrong side of a case. His conscience would not permit him to support a cause which he believed to be unjust, or to defend a person whom he knew to be guilty.

Those were great times for the lawyers in that Western country. While following the judge on his circuit, they were often obliged to go long distances in all sorts of weather. Sometimes they rode on horseback, with saddle-bags dangling on either side. Sometimes, when fees had not been plentiful, they trudged on foot along grassy bypaths or through the black mud of the prairie roads. Usually, when going from county seat to county seat, several lawyers would travel in

[3] His partnership with Mr. Stuart continued only two or three years. He then formed a connection with Judge Stephen T. Logan, which lasted scarcely as long. In 1843 he entered into partnership with a young lawyer, William H. Herndon, and the two remained together until Mr. Lincoln was elected President.

company. No matter how bitterly they might oppose one another in the courts, they were always kind, jovial companions on the road.

There were no bridges over the prairie streams, and these, although dry in summer, were often foaming torrents in the spring. The only way to cross them at such times, was by finding the shallowest places and fording. The lawyers of Sangamon County when "riding the circuit," often found their way impeded by one of these streams. Then Abraham Lincoln, having the longest legs, was sent forward to find how deep the water was. He would take off his boots, roll up his trousers, and wade boldly in, looking for a good fording place. When he had found it, he would kindly help the rest of the party across — showing them where to step, and sometimes giving the smaller ones a generous lift with his strong arms.

One summer day several lawyers were returning to Springfield from a neighboring county seat, where they had been attending court. They were riding on horseback, along a narrow wagon way that was bordered on either side by a growth of underwoods, such as hawthorn bushes and wild plum trees. When nearly through the thicket, they came to a brook, where they stopped to let their horses drink. Then it was noticed that one of their number was missing.

"Where is Lincoln?" they asked.

The man who had been riding with him said that he had stopped at some distance back in order to pick up some young birds that the wind had blown from their nest. No doubt he was hunting the nest, to put them into it again.

They rode on slowly, and by and by Lincoln overtook them.

"Well, Abe, did you find that bird's nest?"

"I did," he answered; "although it was no easy thing to get at. I could not have slept tonight if I had left those poor creatures on the ground and not restored them to their mother."

Think of his great, sturdy frame, and then of his gentle-

ness of heart — of his tenderness for all things weak and helpless. It was this very tenderness and sympathy that made him the noble man that he was. It was his gentleness that afterward endeared him to multitudes of his fellow-beings.

CHAPTER 6
A Stirring Campaign

The years passed swiftly now, and the time soon came for another presidential election. The Democrats, as a matter of course, renominated Martin Van Buren. The Whigs nominated William Henry Harrison of Ohio for President, and John Tyler of Virginia for Vice President.

The Democrats declared themselves opposed to any system that would favor the industries of one section of the country at the expense of another section; and they asserted that Congress had no power to interfere with the practice of slaveholding in any of the states. The Whigs made no declaration of principles. They aimed only at the overthrow of the Democratic party and the defeat of Martin Van Buren.

The campaign was the most remarkable that had ever been known. Somebody had ridiculed General Harrison by saying that he lived in a log cabin and that all he wanted was a small pension from the government and a barrel of hard cider. The Whigs made the most of this. They built small log cabins and hauled them around the country to give point to the fact that Harrison was a man of the people. At the door of each of these cabins was a barrel of cider, with a long-handled drinking gourd above it, and everybody was welcome to help himself to a draught of the sparkling liquor. There were flag raisings and barbecues, "stump speakings" and noisy rallies with brass bands and cannon and blustering speeches. Songs were composed and sung, telling about Harrison's humble life and simple habits. Never before had all classes of people entered so heartily into the business of choosing a

President. The "log-cabin campaign," as it was called, was long remembered as a time of intense excitement, especially in the West.

All summer long Abraham Lincoln was busy making speeches for the Whig party, for General Harrison, and for himself — for he was again a candidate for the legislature. General Harrison had once defeated the Indians in a fierce battle near Tippecanoe in Indiana. He was therefore often called "Old Tippecanoe," and the rallying cry of his party was "Tippecanoe, and Tyler, too!"

Election day came, and Harrison was chosen President by a very large majority. The Whigs were almost everywhere victorious. Abraham Lincoln was elected to the legislature for the fourth time. Jacksonian democracy became, for the time being, a thing of the past.[4]

The contest between the two great parties had been so full of interest that many people did not even hear of a third party which came into notice for the first time during the campaign of 1840. It was a party which boldly took up as an issue the very question which the other parties were anxious to say nothing about — the question of slavery. Both Whigs and Democrats claimed that any discussion of that subject was unwise and should be avoided.

There were a few determined persons, however, who believed that slavery was not only a great moral evil but that it

[4] On the 4th of March, 1841, President Harrison was inaugurated, and the Whigs looked forward to at least four years of supremacy in the government of the United States. But their hopes were soon dashed to the ground. Just one month after his inauguration the President died. The Vice President, John Tyler, who succeeded him, was a Southern Whig — a follower of John C. Calhoun — who had but little sympathy with the majority of the party. He was soon in open disagreement with the men who had elected him. The Whig leaders deserted him; and before a year had passed he found himself obliged to lean upon the Democrats for support.

was also a constant menace to the free institutions of our country. Hated as fanatics both in the North and in the South, these people grew stronger in numbers and at length determined to organize themselves into a political party. They called their organization the Liberty party — although others called them by the despised name of Abolitionists — and they nominated James G. Birney as their candidate for President. Of course Mr. Birney did not carry a single state nor get a single electoral vote— nobody expected it. But his mere nomination hastened the day when the question of slavery would become the foremost of all political issues.

We know what young Lincoln thought of slavery when at the auction in New Orleans he saw men and women sold to the highest bidder. But he was not an Abolitionist: he was opposed to any interference with slavery, for he believed that that would make matters worse instead of better. Thousands of the most earnest friends of the Negro believed the same. Slavery, in their opinion, was an incurable evil; and they said, "Since it must be endured, let us endure it patiently."

And now, to understand clearly the great work that lay before Mr. Lincoln — all undreamed of as yet — let us take a more careful view of this subject. While Abraham Lincoln is entertaining clients in his dingy office, or riding the circuit with his brother attorneys, or making stump speeches in support of his chosen party, let us leave him awhile and learn something of the history of the so-called institution of slavery. Let us find out, if we can, how it happened that human bondage existed so long in a nation which, to use Mr. Lincoln's words, "was conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

CHAPTER 7
Master and Slave

The earliest people of whom we have any account kept slaves. All the great nations that we read about in ancient history were slaveholding nations. Even at the present time in barbarous and half-civilized countries there are many slaves. It was not until within the memory of men now living that the majority of enlightened people began to think of human bondage as unwise and unjust.

Our forefathers for many generations regarded Negroes and Indians as inferior beings having no rights, and therefore fit only to serve those who had the mastery over them.

The first Negro slaves in this country were brought to Virginia by a Dutch sailing vessel in 1619. There were only twenty of them. They were black savages, but lately from Africa — half-naked, brutish, repulsive. The planters on the James River were not eager to buy them — they doubted if such fellows would be profitable; but the Dutch traders offered them cheap — threatened to throw them overboard if not bought — and they were taken.

From this small beginning, Negro slavery gradually spread into all the colonies in the North as well as in the South. It was only in Georgia that human bondage was forbidden by law. "This colony," said its founder, "is established for the benefit of free white laboring men. Free labor can never prosper where there are slaves." But the early settlers in that colony believed it would be much pleasanter to have Negroes do their work than do it themselves. They openly defied the law and went into the business of slave trading and slaveholding

as though it had never been forbidden. Within less than twenty years the law was repealed.

While but few of the American colonists saw any harm in slavery, there were many who thought that no more Negroes should be brought from Africa. In Virginia an effort was made to stop the bringing in of more slaves; but many Englishmen were growing rich through the trade in Negroes, and the king and parliament declared that the colonists should not meddle in the matter.

In most of the Northern colonies slavery proved to be unprofitable. Little by little the people ceased to care for an institution which was plainly a hindrance to general prosperity. And yet it was not until after the beginning of the Revolutionary War that any steps were taken to do away with Negro bondage.

Soon after our country had gained its independence from Great Britain, however, the Northern states began to make an end of the unprofitable and troublesome institution. New Hampshire led the way. It was followed by Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Jersey. Soon in all the states north of Delaware the Negroes had been given their freedom. This was not because the people had come to look upon slavery as a great wrong, but because it was harmful to the interests of the large class of white persons who were obliged to work for their living.

In the South things were different. In the tobacco fields and in the regions where rice and indigo were cultivated, slavery was profitable. In the stifling climate among the lowlands of the Carolinas, the savage blacks worked and flourished where white laborers would have perished. In Virginia and Maryland there were large plantations that could not exist without the labor of slaves. In these states slavery seemed to be a necessity.

And yet there were many men in the South who saw the dangers into which the country was surely being led.

Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Patrick Henry — great Virginians all — were slaveholders, and yet they would gladly have seen slavery abolished. Jefferson wrote and spoke against it.

Very soon after the states had become independent of Great Britain, it became necessary for Congress to make laws for the new wild territory between the Ohio River and the Great Lakes. From this region, then a wilderness of woods and prairies, the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin have since been formed.

But its great resources were then unknown. Thomas Jefferson and some other far-sighted statesmen believed that when it was opened for settlement, people would flock thither and great commonwealths would be formed equal in importance to any on the Atlantic coast. Should these new states be slave states?

Congress answered this question. In an ordinance for the government of the territory it declared that slavery should be forever excluded from that portion of our country. Men from the South united with men from the North in drafting and passing this law — a law that was to have far greater influence upon the history of the nation than any one could then foresee.

South of the Ohio another course was taken. Kentucky was set off from Virginia, and slaves were held there without question or dispute. North Carolina gave up her claims to Tennessee with the express agreement that slavery therein should not be forbidden or meddled with. Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana — all were settled by slaveholders, who of course carried their slaves with them to their new homes.

Thus, from the very first, the Ohio River formed the dividing line between freedom and slavery in the West.

The people of the South had always been accustomed to slavery. Some saw its dangers and tried to avoid them by dealing wisely and kindly with the Negroes, hoping to postpone

the evil day as long as possible. But the greater number accepted things as they found them, and did not trouble themselves with the question at all.

When the cotton gin was invented, and the cultivation of cotton became the chief industry of the South, there was a general demand for more slaves. Many ships, owned in large part by Northern traders, were engaged in bringing black savages from Africa to be sold to the Southern planters. In 1808 this trade was forbidden by law; but the call for laborers in the great cotton fields increased. With each passing year the South became more and more dependent upon the labor of slaves; with each passing year the interests of the slaveholders became greater and greater, and the condition of the blacks in bondage became more and more hopeless.

Thus the South grew rich through the labor of its slaves; and the North looked on approvingly and also grew rich. And everything might have gone on peaceably enough had it not been for the growing jealousy between the two sections.

At the time when our present government began there were seven Northern states and six Southern states. Thus the power of the two sections was quite evenly divided in Congress. From that time it was the policy of our statesmen to prevent either section from becoming much stronger than the other. To do this there came to be a sort of silent understanding that whenever new states were admitted to the Union, a slave state should be balanced against a free state. At first, Vermont, a free state, was offset by Kentucky, a slave state. Then the admission of Tennessee was followed by that of Ohio; Louisiana preceded Indiana; and Mississippi was paired with Illinois.

The first trouble occurred when Missouri applied for admission into the Union. There were at that time no states west of the Mississippi. The greater part of the vast region drained by the Missouri River was unsettled and unknown. Should slavery be permitted in Missouri and the other states

afterward to be formed there?

There were men in the North who wished Congress to restrict slavery to the eastern side of the Mississippi. There were others who claimed that Congress had no voice in the matter, and that the people of Missouri must decide the question for themselves. But Maine was about to be admitted as a free state, and the South demanded that the next state must belong to the side of slavery.

The dispute in Congress became very bitter, and there were open threats, even in New England, of breaking up the Union. At last, however, through the efforts of Henry Clay, a compromise was agreed upon. Maine was to be admitted as a free state, and Missouri as a slave state; and slavery should not be permitted in any other part of the country west of the Mississippi except in such states and territories as might be formed south of the parallel of latitude known as 36°30'.

The adoption of this compromise was really a great victory for the South. It not only brought another slave state into the Union, but it settled all disputes as to whether slavery might not be carried west of the Mississippi and also whether Congress might not determine the question of its extension. In the North, even those who did not believe in slavery were quite well satisfied; for this compromise seemed to assure freedom to much the larger part of the great West from which future states might be formed.

Thus the dispute was ended, to the gratification of both parties. The slavery question disappeared from politics, and both Democrats and Whigs carefully shunned all discussion of it. The slaveholding power controlled the government. For many years every official, from the President down to the humblest village postmaster, was pledged to the support of that power. The churches were dominated by it. The newspapers dared not oppose it. Even the schools felt its influence, and no text-book could be used that contained selections condemning human bondage.

In December, 1833, a few men from ten different states met in Philadelphia and organized the American Anti-slavery Society. The members of this society were united in the determination to do away with an institution which they believed was wrong and a menace to the best interests of the country. Only a few of the most unreasoning were in favor of any kind of violence. All urged the use of moral influences. They made speeches, they wrote books, they published pamphlets — all for the purpose of keeping the question before the people. Prominent among their leaders were Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and John G. Whittier.

The doings of this society alarmed the slaveholders of the South. They said that the anti-slavery people told falsehoods and made it appear that slavery was a much greater evil than it really was. They believed that it was the purpose of the society to persuade the slaves to rise against their masters and win their freedom by bloodshed and war.

The members of the society were called Abolitionists. They were hated by the people of the South and persecuted by the friends of slavery in the North. They were mobbed even in Boston, "the cradle of American liberty." The halls in which they were advertised to speak were burned. The presses on which their pamphlets were printed were destroyed. Their books, papers, and letters were not permitted to be carried in the United States mails.

But the society went on with its work. New members were added to it every year; and every year the slavery question became more serious. Finally, as we have seen, a political party — the Liberty Party — was formed for the purpose of agitating that question. Nevertheless, by far the greater number of thoughtful men in every community held back and remained quiet. They said: "This agitation will only make matters worse. Since slavery is with us, let us make the best of it. All this talk about doing away with it only stirs up ill feeling. It is both foolish and harmful." This was what Abraham

Lincoln thought. When the matter was brought up for discussion in the legislature at Vandalia, a resolution was passed denouncing the "Abolitionists" in the severest terms. Mr. Lincoln and one other of the Long Nine took pains to put their opinions in writing. They said that they believed "the institution of slavery to be founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tended rather to increase than abate its evils."

Such was Lincoln's first public utterance on the great subject which was fast becoming uppermost in the minds of all thoughtful Americans.

CHAPTER 8
Love and Poverty

For several years Mr. Lincoln's life in Springfield was very much like that of any other successful Western lawyer. He attended quietly to the business of his office, "rode the circuit" now and then, took an active part in politics, and did but very little that distinguished him from the common plodder in his profession.

At the age of thirty-three he was married to Miss Mary Todd, a young lady from Kentucky who was staying with friends in Springfield. For some time after their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln lived in a little old-fashioned hotel called the "Globe Tavern," paying four dollars a week for room and board. Two or three years later Mr. Lincoln built a small but comfortable frame house, and this was their home during the rest of their life in Springfield.

From the humblest of conditions Mr. Lincoln had raised himself to an honorable place among his fellow-men. He had won moderate success as a lawyer; he was known as an able politician; and yet he was what the world calls a poor man. But Mrs. Lincoln said, "I would rather have a good man, with bright prospects for success and power and fame, than marry one with all the horses and houses and gold in the world."

CHAPTER 9
In Relation to Texas

Another presidential campaign was approaching, and a question of the utmost importance was to be decided. It was this: "Shall Texas be annexed to the United States?" The Democrats said, "Yes"; the Whigs said, "No"; the result of the election would be the answer of the country at large.

Texas, as a part of Mexico, had belonged to Spain. In 1822 Mexico had freed herself from Spanish control and become an independent nation. Texas was then a Mexican territory, wild, uncultivated, and for the most part unexplored. It contained one old Spanish village — San Antonio de Bexar — and perhaps two or three other feeble settlements.

The Mexicans did not seem to think it worth colonizing. But so fertile a region could not long remain hidden from American eyes. Moses Austin, a Connecticut Yankee, was one of the first to call attention to it. He believed that the neglected territory east of the Rio Grande would some time become the seat of wealth and power. He was so sure of it that he secured from the Mexican government a grant of large tracts of land in the valley of the Colorado. Before he could do more, however, he died, and his son Stephen took up the enterprise.

Stephen Austin founded several colonies of Americans on the lands which his father had secured. Other Americans came and settled at different places in the territory. Southern slaveholders came with their Negroes. Cotton plantations were started. Cornfields and orchards were planted. From the very beginning it was the feeling of the pioneers that they

were founding, not a Mexican province, but an American state.

In 1836, under the leadership of Sam Houston of Tennessee, the Texans rebelled against Mexico. They set up a government of their own; and they showed themselves to be so earnest and able, that both England and the United States recognized Texas as an independent republic.

The Texans, however, did not wish to remain independent. They wanted their country to become a part of the United States. But President Van Buren was a cautious man, and not in favor of adding more territory to our domain. "This country," said the thoughtful statesmen of the time, "is already large enough. She is much better off without Texas than with her."

And so the question of annexation was put off from year to year. The slaveholders of the South became more and more anxious to bring Texas into the Union: for they would gain thereby not only a great cotton state with slavery in it, but two senators and at least one representative in Congress. It would offset some of the gains which the North had lately made. At length rumors were set afloat that the English were planning to get possession of Texas and make it a part of the British Empire. This aroused the war spirit of the West, and the cry was heard on every hand, "We must have Texas at any cost!"

CHAPTER 10
National Politics in 1844

It was well understood, therefore, that the election of 1844 would settle the whole question. The Democrats nominated for the presidency James K. Polk of Tennessee. The Whigs nominated Henry Clay of Kentucky. Polk was a man without any reputation save that he was in favor of annexing Texas, no matter what might follow. Clay had been known for half a lifetime as one of the wisest of American statesmen; but now, very unwisely, he failed to speak out boldly either one way or the other.

No man worked harder during that campaign than did Abraham Lincoln. For was not his political idol the candidate of his party? He was named as one of the presidential electors in Illinois. He traveled over the state, making speeches in behalf of his favorite statesman and against Texan annexation. He visited his boyhood home at Pigeon Creek in Indiana, and spoke before many of his old neighbors, who remembered how, in his youth, he harangued them from stumps and wood piles.

In the meanwhile, Stephen A. Douglas was also making speeches in the Illinois counties and doing all that he could to insure his own election to Congress and the election of Mr. Polk to the presidency. In some places speeches were made by both Lincoln and Douglas; and it was hard to say which won the most applause or was considered the more eloquent and persuasive.

The result of the election might have been foreseen, but it was most unexpected to the friends of Henry Clay; to

Abraham Lincoln it seemed a bitter personal disappointment. James K. Polk was elected by a large majority.

The people had spoken their minds about Texas. Congress was free to act; and without waiting for Mr. Polk to take his seat, a resolution was passed providing for annexation. One of the last acts of President Tyler was to sign that resolution. Before the end of another year, Texas was admitted to the Union as a slave state.

CHAPTER 11
Contention with Mexico

The United States claimed that the western boundary of Texas was the Rio Grande. Mexico contended that it was the Nueces River, several miles farther east. The country between the two rivers was for the most part wild and barren. It had no inhabitants; and it was thought to be so poor and worthless that nobody would ever wish to live there. But still it was worth fighting for, said President Polk.

General Zachary Taylor was in Texas with a part of the United States army. A small body of Mexicans were encamped in the disputed territory on this side of the Rio Grande. It was expected that General Taylor would move forward and drive the intruders out. But he knew that by so doing he would hasten the beginning of war; and he hesitated. He was too good a soldier to wish for war; and he did all that he could to keep peace with his Mexican neighbors.

Nevertheless, President Polk, in his office at Washington, had already determined upon war. He commanded General Taylor to march across the disputed territory and take possession of the east bank of the Rio Grande. General Taylor had no choice but to obey. A large force of Mexicans crossed the Rio Grande to drive him back. A battle was fought on the field of Palo Alto. The Mexicans were defeated, and with great loss fled back into their own country.

The war had actually begun. General Taylor went into it now with a determination and rude energy which won for him the nickname of "Rough and Ready." He saw that it was the quickest way to bring the conflict to an end. He followed the

Mexicans across the river and fought them on their own ground. Battle after battle followed, but victory was always with the Americans.

There were many men, both in the North and in the South, who believed that the war was unjust — that President Polk had forced it upon Mexico, and that its object was the conquest of territory from our weaker neighbor. The Whigs as a party had voted against it. But now that it was actually going on, all joined in supporting it. To aid the soldiers in the field, to vote supplies for the army, to pray for the victory of American arms, were acts of patriotism; and the Whigs were just as patriotic as the Democrats.

It is no part of our purpose to try to follow the war through its long succession of bloody battles and American triumphs. It ended, as had been foreseen, in the humiliation and defeat of Mexico. The ownership of the land between the Rio Grande and the Nueces was forever settled. Much more, the vast region now comprising New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California, and a part of Colorado was transferred to the United States.

The war had been brought about chiefly by the politicians of the South in their efforts to strengthen the slave power. They hoped now to secure the extension of slavery into all the new territories that had been acquired by it. Mexico, when obliged to give these territories up, had asked our government to promise that no slaves should be held within their limits. But the United States minister, who acted as the government's agent, refused. "If these territories were covered with gold a foot thick," he said, "and if they were then offered to us upon the single condition that slavery should be excluded therefrom, I would not entertain the idea."

CHAPTER 12
One Term in Congress

While the American armies were marching to victory in Mexico, the time was drawing near for the election of a new Congress. Of the several Congressional districts in Illinois there was only one in which the Whigs had anything like a majority. That one was the Springfield district, and Abraham Lincoln was nominated there as the Whig candidate. The Democrats nominated Peter Cartwright, a pioneer Methodist preacher who had been well known in the district since its earliest settlement.

Mr. Lincoln was still a poor man. To pay his expenses while he was making speeches throughout the country his Whig friends gave him a purse of $200. The election came off in August, and he was successful, having the largest majority ever given to a Whig candidate in that district. A few days afterward his friends were surprised to receive a letter from him in which was enclosed $199.25. In the letter he said: "I have ridden my own horse. My friends have entertained me at night. My only outlay has been seventy-five cents, for some cider which I bought for some farm hands."

When Mr. Lincoln took his seat in Congress, he found there many men whose names are now famous in the history of our country.

There was John Quincy Adams, eighty years of age, and very near to the close of his life, who had served the nation as its sixth President and had since been in Congress the most distinguished champion of the anti-slavery cause.

There was the scholarly and accomplished Robert C.

Winthrop, the Speaker of the House, who early recognized in Mr. Lincoln a shrewdness and sagacity possessed by few other men of the time.

There was Andrew Johnson, once an unlettered tailor of Tennessee, but now one of her most active politicians, and destined to become the seventeenth President of the United States.

There was Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, the intellectual giant of the South, who in later years would become, against his better judgment, a leader of the foes of the Union, and the Vice President of the Confederate states.

There in the Senate for the first time, was Mr. Lincoln's fellow-citizen and lifelong rival, Stephen A. Douglas, soon to be famous as the "Little Giant" of the democracy, and one of the foremost men in the nation.

There, too, approaching the end of his career, was Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, the man of supreme intellect, the greatest of American orators, the grandest of American statesmen.

There, of about the same age as Webster, was John C. Calhoun, staunchest of patriots as he understood patriotism, a lover of the Union, but loving South Carolina better, the defender of nullification, the first among the champions of the South.

There was John A. Dix, anti-slavery candidate for governor of New York, who, thirteen years later as Secretary of the Treasury under a Democratic President, was to immortalize himself in a telegraphic dispatch: "If any one attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot."

There, on the eve of completing his thirty years in Congress, was Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, duelist, statesman, vigorous advocate of the Mexican War, and stern opposer of the foes of the Union.

There was John P. Hale of New Hampshire, elected to Congress as a Democrat, and yet one of the most fearless

enemies of slavery and of the annexation of Mexican territory.

And there, fresh from the battlefields of Mexico, was Jefferson Davis, soldier, cotton planter, and rising politician, a man hitherto but little known, yet destined soon to be the great standard bearer of the slave power in America.

Seldom in the history of our country, perhaps never, have so many intellectual giants been brought together in the halls of Congress. They represented every shade of political opinion, from the extremest defender of slavery to the most zealous friend of universal freedom. Some had already achieved fame; their work was almost done; they would soon belong to the past. Others were just entering the arena; the race for them was still to be run; they belonged to the future.

Into this company of notables Abraham Lincoln entered with the confidence of one who knew that he was in the right place. His manners, his speech, his clothing, all marked him as a man from the new West. But the older members of Congress were not slow to see that the tall, ungainly young Whig from Illinois was a person of no mean ability.

His voice was heard quite often in the House of Representatives. He was more active than is usual with new members. "I find speaking here and elsewhere about the same thing," he wrote home to his friends. "I was about as badly scared, and no more, than when I speak in court."

One of the most notable things that he did was to introduce a resolution calling upon the President to give an account of the beginning and progress of the Mexican War. He supported the resolution by a speech, which was so pithy and withal so sensible and unanswerable, that it won for him the reputation of being one of the smartest debaters in Congress.

Almost every day during his two winters in Washington things came to his notice that were contrary to his ideas of right and of justice, and made him feel ashamed for his

country. Almost within the shadow of the capitol, he saw gangs of Negroes in chains driven through the streets and spurred on by the whips of merciless slave drivers. He saw men, women, and children sold at auction, and taken by force to the wharves or the railroad station to be shipped to the cotton fields in the far South. To him whose heart was ever stirred with pity for the humblest creatures in distress, these sights were very painful. His pride, also, as an American citizen, was touched; for in the capital of no other civilized country in the world could such scenes, worthy of a barbaric age, be witnessed.

But what could he do? He still believed that any agitation of the slavery question would make matters worse instead of better. No man was more strongly opposed to the slave system than he, and yet he would not join the ranks of the Abolitionists. He argued that slavery should be let alone in the states where it existed and the people wanted it; but that in the capital, which belonged to the entire nation, it ought at least to be restricted. And so, in the end, he introduced into Congress a bill for the gradual doing away of slavery in the District of Columbia.

The bill was a very mild one — so mild that the Abolitionists would have nothing to do with it. The members from the South understood it to be an anti-slavery measure, and refused to listen to it. In the end the whole matter was allowed to drop, and Mr. Lincoln's bill was never even voted upon.

The Mexican War had produced two popular heroes, General Zachary Taylor and General Winfield Scott. Both of these men had been opposed to the manner in which President Polk forced war upon Mexico. They were loyal soldiers, however, and when the conflict was once actually begun, they gave their aid with such courageous spirit that the course of each was an unbroken series of victories.

To the Whigs General Taylor seemed an ideal candidate for the presidency. Among the Whig members of Congress a

club was formed for the purpose of bringing about his nomination and aiding in his election. Of this club there were few more active members than Abraham Lincoln of Illinois and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia. General Taylor was a blunt-spoken, rough-mannered soldier, with but few of the qualities of a great statesman; but he was the military hero of the hour, and the man most likely to win the votes of the people.

The Democratic party nominated Lewis Cass of Michigan. Some of the anti-slavery Democrats of the North formed themselves into a new party, called the Free-soil party, and nominated Martin Van Buren.

The members of the Free-soil party were not all Abolitionists. They did not oppose slavery itself, but they opposed its extension. They held that no more slave states should be added to the Union, and their battle cry was "Free Soil, Free Labor, and Free Speech." In their ranks were men whose names have since become famous in history: Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, renowned as an orator and fearless champion of liberty; William Cullen Bryant of New York, America's first poet and most distinguished journalist; Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, destined to become the Chief Justice of the United States; and many others. The Whig party took no decided stand on the slavery question, although some of its leaders declared that it was the real Free-soil party.

Abraham Lincoln, as usual, entered into the campaign with much earnestness and enthusiasm. He delivered a few speeches in New England and New York, where his hearers came rather to see and be amused by the "backwoods orator from the wild West" than to listen to his arguments. He then returned to Illinois, and spent the remainder of the summer in urging the people of his own state to support the Whig candidates. The result of the election was very pleasing to him, for General Taylor was the successful candidate.

CHAPTER 13
Lincoln Returns to Private Life

It was Mr. Lincoln's hope that the new President would appreciate his services to the party, and would appoint him to a good office. He had set his heart on becoming Commissioner of the General Land Office at Washington. But, when Congress adjourned, and he applied for the place, he was disappointed to find that it had been promised to another.

To General Taylor, the tall, awkward member from Illinois was only a Western politician who served the party in his own state and would be satisfied with almost any reward. "There is the governorship of Oregon Territory," said he to Lincoln; "you shall have the appointment to that place if you wish it."

Mr. Lincoln was not sure that he wished it. Oregon seemed at that time to be almost out of the world. It was reached only by a long journey, in boats and wagons, up the Missouri and across the great plains and over the Rocky Mountains, or by the still longer journey round by the isthmus of Panama. And then there were but very few inhabitants in the territory, and what could an ambitious man do there? He hesitated. He would wait until he had consulted his folks at home.

When he returned to Springfield and announced that he had been offered the governorship of Oregon, the question was answered at once and wisely by Mrs. Lincoln. She was as far west as she wished to be, she said, and as for frontier life, she had had quite enough of it.

Mr. Lincoln, therefore, declined the President's offer,

gave up all thoughts of a government appointment, and returned quietly to the practice of law.

The business in his attorney's office had fallen away while he was at Washington, and he found it necessary to begin almost at the bottom again. But everybody in Springfield knew him, and he was not long in regaining all the practice he had lost. His two years in the capital of the United States had not made him proud. For the next ten years, and indeed until after he had been elected President, he lived in the simplest and most unpretending way.

His law practice was not so heavy as to keep him all the time at his office. He therefore spent many leisure hours at home with his family. Often when the weather was fine he might be seen, without coat or hat, trundling one of his children up and down the board sidewalk in front of his house. Visitors would sometimes surprise him lying flat on the floor in the narrow hallway, reading aloud from some favorite book, or having a "rough-and-tumble" romp with his boys. He always attended to the keeping and feeding of his horse; he drove the cow from the pasture, and milked her; he sawed and split the wood and carried in the kindlings for the household fires; in short, he was his own servant, and was never ashamed to do any kind of labor that seemed necessary to be done.

Strangers seeing the ungainly, plainly clad man — his coat too large, his trousers too short, his shoes unpolished — playing with his children and doing his own chores, would never have guessed that within ten years he would be the first man in our republic. His friends and neighbors, however, knew well enough that there was within him a greatness of mind and a force of character which might at any day put him in the front ranks of American citizens.

CHAPTER 14
New Phases of the Slavery Question

During those quiet years at Springfield Mr. Lincoln did not lose his interest in public affairs. His keen foresight showed him that great changes must soon take place in this country, and he watched the progress of events very closely. The news from Washington was a daily subject of inquiry and study.

For a time this news centered around the question of admitting California into the Union.

California was a part of the territory which had been acquired from Mexico. Soon after the close of the war, gold was discovered there. Men from all parts of the world, but chiefly from the Northern states, hastened thither. They had no slaves; they did not wish to have them. In a few months the territory had a larger population than some of the Atlantic states. The people met in convention, and petitioned Congress to admit California into the Union as a free state.

A part of California was farther south than the line which the Missouri Compromise had indicated as the boundary between freedom and slavery. Of all the lands acquired from Mexico, it was the best adapted to slave labor; and Southern politicians had expected that it would belong to the South. If admitted as a free state, the balance of power in Congress would be disturbed. There was no prospect of a new slave state to restore that balance. The North would be decidedly stronger than the South. For these reasons the Southern members of Congress refused to admit California. The Northern members persisted, and for ten months the question was debated with great bitterness on both sides.

The dispute had gone so far that there seemed to be no peaceable way of settling it. There were threats from some of the Southern states to withdraw from the Union. Nevertheless, to preserve the Union was the chief thought and care of every patriotic statesman as well of the South as of the North.

At the very darkest hour of that trying time Henry Clay, the Great Pacificator, arose in the Senate and proposed a plan for settling this dispute and all other troublesome questions relating to slavery in the United States. He urged a compromise, just as he had urged the Missouri Compromise thirty years before. In order to satisfy the North, this compromise provided for the immediate admission of California as a free state. In order to conciliate the South, it declared that there should be no interference with slavery in the other territories acquired from Mexico. It also provided that Congress should pass a very strict law requiring the citizens of the free states to aid in returning runaway slaves to their masters; and it arranged for the regulation and final abolition of the practice of trading in slaves in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Clay's compromise measure was supported by Daniel Webster in the last great speech of his life. It was opposed by John C. Calhoun in a speech which proved to be his last also. Webster spoke earnestly against the very thought of secession from the Union. "There can be no such thing as a peaceable secession," he said. "Who is so foolish as to expect to see such a thing? To break up this great government! To dismember this glorious country! No, sir! No, sir! There will be no secession. Gentlemen are not serious when they talk of secession."

Calhoun's speech, on the other hand, was full of gloomy forebodings. He was anxious to preserve the Union if at the same time the states of the South should not be deprived of any of the rights that belonged to them. But the South, he said, was every day losing ground; she was excluded from the common territory of the United States; she was overburdened

with taxes; if the balance of power in Congress should be destroyed, her last hope would be taken away. And he declared that the agitation on the subject of slavery, if not soon prevented, would end in disunion.

A bill which embodied Mr. Clay's ideas of compromise was soon afterward presented to Congress in due form. It seemed to provide the only means for putting an end to the vexing questions that were then before the country, and men of both sections united in its support. It was finally passed, and became known in history as the "Compromise of 1850."

"There will be no more agitation," said Daniel Webster. "These measures are a finality, and we shall have peace."

"I have determined never to make another speech upon the slavery question," said Stephen A. Douglas. "So long as our opponents do not agitate for repeal or modification, why should we agitate for any purpose? This compromise is a final settlement."

In Congress the agitation did cease for a time, and senators and representatives turned their minds to other subjects and tried to forget the troublesome topic. But among the people the excitement about slavery did not die away. The compromise failed to please either the North or the South. The North did not like the Fugitive Slave Law which obliged the citizens of free states to become slave hunters. The South was alarmed, because through the admission of California it would lose its old-time control of Congress. Each section distrusted the other more than before; each misunderstood the character and aims of the other. And so, as the months passed by, the gulf between them grew wider and wider, and the question of slavery became more and more serious.

In the meanwhile, death was busy among the leaders in the councils of the nation. John Quincy Adams, with the words "I am content" on his lips, had passed away in 1848, and had not seen the beginning of this new phase of the great question. Calhoun died in 1850, a few days after his speech in

the Senate. Clay and Webster survived but two years longer, statesmen, both, the like of whom this country may never see again. During the sixteen years of its existence the Whig party, with which all these great men were allied, had elected two Presidents. The first had died within a month after his inauguration; the second, General Taylor, after serving through half his term and four months more, had also died.

President Taylor was succeeded by the Vice President, Millard Fillmore of New York. It was Mr. Fillmore who signed and approved the famous Compromise Act of 1850.

When the time came for another presidential election, neither of the two great parties was yet ready to take a decided stand on the question that was dividing the country. The Democrats nominated Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire. The Whigs chose General Winfield Scott, the surviving hero of the Mexican War. Both parties endeavored to say as little about slavery as possible. In the South, however, the Whig party was quite generally distrusted, and the Democrats were regarded as the only safe friends of that section. The Free-soil party, which was pledged to oppose the extension of slavery into the territories, nominated John P. Hale of New Hampshire.

The campaign was a very quiet one; for how could it be otherwise when the leading parties were silent in regard to the only question of importance before the country. Mr. Lincoln was again named as an elector on the Whig ticket in his state. "I am a standing candidate for Whig elector," he said, "but I seldom elect anybody." His heart was not in the campaign, and he made but few speeches. He was in despair. The future of the country seemed to him dark and hopeless. "What is to be done?" he asked. "Is anything to be done? Who can do anything? And how is it to be done? Do you ever think of these things?"

In November, as everybody had expected, Franklin Pierce was elected President of the United States. Among Northern

Democrats the South could not have found a firmer friend. In his first message to Congress he declared that the Compromise of 1850 had settled all disputes growing out of the question of slavery, and that during his administration there should be no further agitation of the subject.

Not twelve months had passed, however, before an agitation began that was not to cease until slavery was abolished.

CHAPTER 15
A Bill that Proved to be a Firebrand

The prairie lands and great plains lying west of Missouri and Iowa were still almost without inhabitants. The region was known as the Missouri territory, but it had no organized government, and was subject merely to the general laws of the United States. In the year 1844 a movement was set on foot by the War Department to form a vast and permanent Indian reservation in the West. It was proposed that the whole of the so-called Missouri territory should be given up to the various tribes then living in the United States, and that the government should pledge itself not to include any portion of it in any state or territory "so long as grass should grow, and water run."

Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois had just then taken his seat for the first time in Congress. The proposal of this plan gave him an opportunity to make himself heard.

"If an Indian country is thus established along the western borders of the states," he said, "all communication with Oregon and the Pacific coast will be forever cut off. Besides this, the growth and expansion of the United States must stop with the western boundary lines of Missouri and Iowa." And, to prevent the carrying out of the scheme, he introduced into Congress a bill to organize a great territory, including all the region in question. The bill was not voted upon, but so long as it was before Congress the War Department could do nothing toward converting that region into an Indian reservation.

At every session of Congress for ten successive years, Mr. Douglas introduced the same or a similar bill for organizing

the Missouri territory. In the meanwhile a few straggling pioneers made themselves homes in the valleys of the Platte and the Kansas rivers. For their own protection they wished to have some sort of government in which they themselves, as American citizens, might take an active part. This fact gave to Mr. Douglas another argument for urging the adoption of his bill.

But the members of Congress did not seem to feel much interest in the matter. All of the territory in question was north of the line named in the Missouri Compromise as the line between freedom and slavery. Why should Southern senators and representatives take an interest in territory from which slavery was excluded? As for the Northern members of Congress, they appeared to be well satisfied to let matters rest as they were.

At length, in 1854, Mr. Douglas introduced a new bill, different in some important features from any that he had proposed before. This bill provided that two territories — Kansas and Nebraska — should be organized; that the Missouri Compromise should be declared of no effect; and that the people of each territory should decide for themselves whether it should become a slave or a free state.

The plan was pleasing to many because it seemed to give to the people the power to manage their own home affairs. It was pleasing to others because it seemed to open a way by which the South might recover her influence in Congress. It was proposed by a free-state senator; it could not be adopted without the votes of several free-state congressmen; and yet it was plainly designed to serve the interests of the slaveholding power. It would open to slavery a region greater in extent than the original thirteen states of the Union combined.

When the bill was passed, the excitement throughout the North was such as had never before been known. Men said that Mr. Douglas wished to be the next Democratic candidate

for the presidency, and that he had caused this law to be made in order to gain the votes of the Southern people. When Congress adjourned and he went home, he found that very many of his old friends had deserted him. The people of his state were against him. He saw the signs of their displeasure on every hand. When he arrived in Chicago, the flags were flying at half mast, and the bells were tolling as at a funeral service. He attempted to speak in his own defense, but his neighbors refused to listen to him. The few people who gathered around the platform on which he stood were defiant. They asked him questions which made him angry; then they denounced him as a Northern man with Southern principles, who had sold himself to the slaveholding power. When he tried to answer them, they made such an uproar that he could not be heard. Finally, he was obliged to go home without having explained his course to any one.

Mr. Douglas had every reason for wishing to regain and hold the friendship of the people of Illinois. His entire future depended upon it. He therefore spent the summer and fall in visiting the most important towns of the state and making speeches on the last phase of the great question. His chief care was to explain his course with reference to the Kansas-Nebraska Act; and by skillful reasoning he persuaded many of his hearers that the act was not so bad a thing as it had been represented.

The Southern states, he said, would never have consented to the settling of those territories, so long as their citizens were not permitted to move there and hold their slaves. They had the power in Congress to oblige the government to make and observe certain treaties with the Indian tribes; and should these treaties result in turning over the whole Missouri region to the Indians, that part of our country would be forever closed against all white settlers. A great many people in the North and in the South were anxious to seek homes in those territories, and were only waiting to be assured that they

would be protected there. The South was willing to give up the idea of making an Indian country of the territories, provided the North would consent to open them for settlement and to give the settlers from the Southern states equal rights with the settlers from the Northern states. The emigrant from Massachusetts might carry all his property into any territory; why might not the emigrant from South Carolina do likewise, even though a great part of his property consisted of slaves?

Mr. Douglas claimed therefore that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was as beneficial to the North as to the South, and that it was an act of justice to all. But the point upon which he laid the greatest stress was this: the Kansas-Nebraska Bill gave to the people of the territories the right to decide for themselves whether they would have slavery or not. The people, and not Congress, were the sovereign power in their own domains. All this reasoning seemed to be very fair and just, and Mr. Douglas succeeded in not only winning back a great number of his old friends, but in securing many new ones. That the people should be their own sovereigns was only another way of saying that the people should have the right to make their own laws — and that was what the patriots in the Revolution had fought for. And so the Douglas Democrats, as they came to be called, adopted "Popular Sovereignty" as their watchword.

In October, the Illinois agricultural fair was held in Springfield, and Mr. Douglas made a great speech to the farmers who had gathered there from different parts of the state. On the following day Abraham Lincoln replied to that speech. He reviewed all of Mr. Douglas's arguments. "He attacked the Nebraska bill with unusual warmth and energy," says a newspaper reporter who was present. "He felt upon his soul the truths burn which he uttered. He quivered with emotion. The whole house was still as death. He exhibited the bill in all its aspects to show its humbuggery and falsehood, and, when it was thus torn to rags, cut into slips, and held up to

the gaze of the vast audience, a kind of scorn was visible upon the face of the crowd and upon the lips of their most eloquent speaker. At the conclusion of the speech every man felt that it was unanswerable — that no human power could overthrow it or trample it under foot."

One passage in this famous speech was often quoted afterward by the friends of freedom to show the shallowness of Douglas's doctrine of Popular Sovereignty. "I admit," said Mr. Lincoln, "that the emigrant to Kansas and Nebraska is competent to govern himself; but [and here the speaker rose to his full height] I deny his right to govern any other person without that person's consent."

Mr. Douglas was present during the whole of the speech. At its close he hastily stepped to the front of the platform, and said that the speaker had abused him, "though in a perfectly courteous manner." Every one could see that he felt himself thoroughly beaten. He tried to reply to some of Lincoln's arguments, but his usual self-confidence and bravado were wanting. He spoke for several minutes in a faltering, rambling way, without touching upon any point of importance, and then announced that he would answer Mr. Lincoln in the evening. But when evening came he failed to appear, and the promised reply was never made.

A few days later, Douglas made a speech at Peoria where he was again answered by Lincoln, each speaking three hours to an immense concourse of people. Douglas seemed to be losing faith in his cause; he spoke with embarrassment, as though conscious of defeat. Lincoln's speech was not so full of feeling as that at Springfield had been, but his arguments were even stronger. At the close of the debate, Douglas said to Lincoln: "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."

He then proposed that both should return home and make no more speeches during that campaign. Lincoln consented to do this; but when he heard, a few days later, that Douglas had broken his agreement and had spoken at a political meeting in another part of the state, he again entered the field.

The election was for members of the state legislature, and this legislature was to choose a United States senator. The majority of the voters in Illinois had always been Democrats; but this year, owing partly to the people's dissatisfaction with Stephen A. Douglas, and partly to the influence of Abraham Lincoln, there was a great change. In the new legislature there were men of three parties — Democrats, Whigs, and Anti-Nebraska Democrats (or Democrats opposed to Mr. Douglas's course). The three parties were nearly equal in strength, and no one had a majority over the other two.

When the time came for choosing a United States senator, the Democrats nominated General Shields, a soldier of the Mexican War; the Anti-Nebraska Democrats nominated Lyman Trumbull; the Whigs nominated Abraham Lincoln. Since the parties were so nearly equal, no candidate could receive a majority of votes unless some who did not belong to his party should vote for him. When the Democrats found that they could not elect Shields, they dropped him and nominated Joel A. Matheson, a gentleman who had never said whether he favored or opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. They did this hoping to win the votes of the Anti-Nebraska Democrats.

Mr. Lincoln would have been glad to receive the nomination; for to be a United States senator was his dearest ambition. But he saw now that, unless the Whigs and the Anti-Nebraskas united, a Democrat would be chosen and Douglas would be triumphant. He therefore begged his friends to leave him and cast their ballots for Mr. Trumbull, who, although a Democrat, was unalterably opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and to the extension of slavery. They finally consented,

although it is said that some of them shed tears in doing so. Mr. Trumbull was chosen, and Democratic rule in Illinois was at an end.

This wise, self-sacrificing act of Mr. Lincoln won him many friends; and when, soon afterward, the Whigs and Anti-Nebraskas and Free-soilers were united in a single party, he became by general consent their leader.

CHAPTER 16
The War in Kansas

When the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was passed by Congress on the 8th of May, 1854, a cannon was fired on Capitol Hill in Washington to announce the fact. Everybody believed that the slave power had gained a great victory; but, as matters turned out, the booming of the cannon really heralded the beginning of the end of slavery. Its friends had gone one step too far.

The news was quickly carried to the different sections of the Union announcing that the great West had been opened up for settlement, and that the settlers in each territory should themselves choose whether they would have slavery or freedom. The anti-slavery people in the North determined at once that Kansas should be free — and if Kansas, then the rest of the West also. The slaveholders of the South, and especially of Missouri, resolved, with equal determination, that Kansas should be made a slave state.

Then a wild race began for the possession of the territory. The slaveholders were the first in the field. Large numbers of Missourians hurried across the state border and settled themselves upon the lands in the eastern part of Kansas. Some took their families and slaves, built themselves homes in the new territory, and expected to stay there. But many more went only for a short time, to stake out land claims and live in tents or temporary huts, until by their votes they could make Kansas a slave state. They were called "squatters," and they intended, as soon as they had gained their purpose, to return to their homes in Missouri.

The free-state men — as those were called who opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill — were determined not to be outdone. Societies were formed throughout the North for the purpose of hurrying emigrants into Kansas. Soon numerous companies of "movers," with their families and household goods, were on their way to the new lands in the West, every one pledged to do all that he could to prevent the extension of slavery. They were obliged to go by a roundabout route through Iowa and Nebraska; for the slaveholders of Missouri had forbidden them to pass through their state. They went in wagons, on horseback, and on foot, for there were no railroads west of the Mississippi. It required many weeks to make the journey; and as the long trains moved slowly onward across the Western prairies, their hopes and fixed determination were voiced by the poet of freedom, John G. Whittier: —

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

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

We go to plant her common schools
On distant prairie swells.
And give the Sabbath of the wilds
The music of her bells.

The free-state people made themselves homes in the valley of the Kansas River and founded the towns of Lawrence and Topeka. The slave-state people and the squatters had taken up the lands farther north and were established in Leavenworth and all along the Missouri border.

The two parties seemed to be almost equal in strength.

The free-state men were, for the most part, peace-loving farmers, who wished to settle the great question lawfully by their votes; but they were determined to have fair play at all hazards. Many of the slave-state men came armed with Bowie knives and shotguns, intending to override all opposition; they also wished to settle the question at the ballot box, but they expected every vote to be on their side.

There could be no such thing as peace between the two parties. Eight hundred slave-state men, led by a United States marshal, marched upon Lawrence. They destroyed the anti-slavery printing presses there, burned some of the houses, and pillaged others. The free-state men were roused to madness and determined to have revenge. They killed some of the most obnoxious of their enemies, and then prepared themselves for defense.

Thus civil war was begun. On both sides the passions of excited and determined men were roused to the highest pitch. Houses were burned; men were waylaid and killed; there were false imprisonments, and daring rescues; there were battles on a small scale; and, as the strange conflict went on, each party became more and more determined to overcome its opponent. The cry of "bleeding Kansas" was heard throughout the North, and thousands of men who had hitherto been silent on the question of slavery became outspoken advocates of freedom.

When the time came for elections, several hundred Missourians, led by a United States senator, crossed the line and cast their ballots as though they were citizens of the territory. A legislature was chosen, composed entirely of slave-state men. This legislature adopted a state constitution precisely like that of Missouri, with slavery as its chief feature. To offset this, the free-state men held a convention at Topeka, and declared that the legislature had been elected not by citizens of Kansas but by Missourians, and therefore it had no right to form any laws for Kansas. They issued a call for a new

election; and another legislature was chosen which adopted a free-state constitution and petitioned Congress to admit Kansas into the Union.

And now Franklin Pierce, the President of the United States, came forward to settle the dispute. He declared that the slave-state legislature was the true lawmaking power of the territory. He said that the action of the free-state men in electing another legislature and forming a free-state constitution was nothing short of rebellion against the government. He issued a proclamation warning all persons against disturbing the peace of Kansas, and sent a body of soldiers into the territory to enforce the laws made by the slave-state legislature. When the free-state legislature attempted to meet at Topeka, its members were driven away by United States troops. Nevertheless, Kansas was not yet admitted into the Union.

"Where now, Mr. Stephen A. Douglas," said the people of the North — "where now is your doctrine of popular sovereignty? Is not slavery being forced upon the people of Kansas, without their consent and against the will of the most of them?"

CHAPTER 17
Rule or Ruin

In Ripon, Wisconsin, a joint meeting of Whigs and Free-soilers and Anti-Nebraska Democrats was held in one of the churches of the village. "Let us forget all minor differences of opinion," said they, "and unite on the one question of opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories. Let us work no longer as three parties, but as one." They therefore decided that a new political party should be organized — a party to which all persons opposed to the aggressions of the slave power might belong; and it was suggested that that party should be called "Republican." The action of this little village convention had its influence elsewhere; and soon there was a general movement for a union of the various smaller parties into one.

In Michigan, on the 6th of July, a state convention of Whigs and Free-soilers adopted a series of resolutions against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and formed a new organization to which was given the name of the "Republican party." Before the end of another year the people of fifteen states had declared themselves opposed to the extension of slavery; and of the one hundred and forty-two representatives in Congress from the Northern states, only twenty-two continued to uphold the course of Stephen A. Douglas in making it possible for the territories to become slave states.

While men in the North were thus combining to oppose a system which they believed dangerous to the country as a whole, other events were taking place which aroused them to still greater efforts. In Boston, an escaped slave was

discovered. The court decided that the wretched Negro should be delivered to his master. An attempt was made by Abolitionists to rescue him. A riot followed; the courthouse was attacked; blood was shed; the militia of Boston were called out. Then the city marshal, with a hundred civil officers of Boston, guarding the chained slave, marched out of the courthouse in a hollow square formed by United States troops. They marched down State Street to the harbor, and put the trembling fugitive on board of a United States cutter which President Pierce had sent to carry him back to bondage. It was a day to be remembered in Boston. People began then to believe that the slave power would never be content until every state in the Union was under its control.

In a city of Belgium, on an October day, three American politicians met to discuss a question of the greatest interest to the slave power. They were James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, John Y. Mason of Virginia, and Pierre Soulé of Louisiana. They were respectively the ministers of the United States to England, France, and Spain. The question which they discussed was this: "How can the United States gain possession of Cuba?" Behind that question there was still another: "What can be done to extend slavery into new territories, so as to increase the number of slave states in the Union and make the slave power forever supreme?"

Cuba was an ideal country for slavery, and sugar growers and cotton planters in the South had suggested that it ought to be made a part of the United States. The three statesmen were pleased with the thought. "The Union can never enjoy repose nor possess reliable security," they said, "so long as Cuba is not embraced within its boundaries." They therefore wrote to President Pierce and urged him to offer Spain one hundred and twenty millions of dollars for the island. But what if Spain should refuse to sell it? Then, declare war upon her, and take it by force.

When this proposition was made known, the people of the

North were indignant. Take a hundred and twenty millions of dollars from the public treasury to extend slavery and the slave power? Never! Rob Spain unjustly of her possessions, and perhaps involve the United States in war with half the nations of Europe? Never!

And so a multitude of Northern voters, who had formerly sympathized with the South, joined the ranks of Free-soilers and Abolitionists.

In the Senate of the United States, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts delivered the strongest speech that had ever been made against the slave power. His speech, which in truth was a violent one, was entitled "The Crime against Kansas," and in it he made a bitter attack upon South Carolina and upon Senator Butler of that state as largely responsible for the evils of which he complained. Two days later, as Sumner was sitting at his desk in the Senate Chamber, Preston S. Brooks, a representative from South Carolina, strode down the aisle and stood suddenly before him.

"I have read your speech twice over carefully," said Brooks. "It is a libel upon South Carolina and upon Mr. Butler, who is a relative of mine."

As he spoke the last word, he suddenly raised his cane and brought it down with terrific force upon Sumner's head. The cane broke, but Brooks went on, beating the senator with the end that remained in his hand. Sumner tried in vain to defend himself; he wrenched the desk from the floor, and held it up as a shield. But Brooks pushed the desk aside, and while his victim, blinded with blood, was reeling to the floor, kept on striking with merciless, fury. Not until his arm was seized and held by a bystander did he cease his blows.

Such a beating would have killed a man of ordinary build. Sumner, who had a powerful frame and perfect health, lay for many days at death's door, and although he lived many years afterward, he never regained his strength. Had Preston S. Brooks resorted to a braver and manlier method to avenge the

insult of which he complained, the people of the North would doubtless have sympathized with him. But they looked upon his act as being both cowardly and brutal; and thousands who had hitherto apologized for slavery turned against the slave power and became its bitter enemies.

CHAPTER 18
Under Buchanan's Administration

In May, 1856, a notable convention was held in Bloomington, Illinois. It was a meeting of men from all parts of the state, who were opposed to the extension of slavery into the territories. It had been called for the purpose of organizing a new political party.

Abraham Lincoln was there. "Let us," said he, "in building our new party, make our corner stone the Declaration of Independence." And then he delivered one of the most powerful speeches of his life — a speech which was so clear, so forcible, so convincing, that his great audience was moved to feel and believe every word that he said. Again and again, while he was speaking, "they sprang to their feet and upon the benches, and testified by long-continued shouts and the waving of hats, how deeply the speaker had wrought upon their minds and hearts."

Thus the Republican party of Illinois was formed; and from the first Abraham Lincoln was its acknowledged leader.

Three weeks later the first national convention of the party was held in Philadelphia. John Charles Fremont of California was nominated for President, and William L. Dayton of New Jersey for Vice President. On the first ballot for the vice-presidential candidate, one hundred and ten votes were cast for Mr. Lincoln. When the news was repeated to Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, he smiled and said in his droll way, "That is probably the distinguished Mr. Lincoln of Massachusetts."

The Democrats nominated James Buchanan of Pennsyl-

vania for President, and John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky for Vice President. Stephen A. Douglas had hoped to win the presidential nomination; but he had estranged so many of his Northern friends that the convention deemed it wiser to choose Mr. Buchanan, who was said to be displeased with the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

In the campaign of that summer Mr. Lincoln did his full share. He made speeches in all the important towns of his state; and, being free to say what he thought, he threw himself into the work with all his old-time energy. Mr. Douglas was also very active in support of the Democratic ticket; and often the two men spoke from the same platform. Opposed to each other as they were in politics, there was no bitterness of feeling between them.

"Twenty years ago Mr. Douglas and I first became acquainted," said Lincoln. "We were both young — he a trifle younger than I. Even then we were ambitious — I, perhaps, quite as much as he. With me the race has been a failure — a flat failure. With him it has been one of splendid success. His name fills the nation, and is not unknown in foreign lands. I affect no contempt for the high eminence he has reached. So reached that the oppressed of my species might have shared with me the elevation, I would rather stand on that eminence than wear the richest crown that ever pressed a monarch's brow."

Ten years would not pass until the world should know which of the two had made the "splendid success," and which the "flat failure."

The election was won by the Democrats, and James Buchanan became the fifteenth President of the United States. The Republicans were not yet strong enough to carry many of the states; but they had polled more votes than anybody expected, and they looked hopefully forward to the future.

President Buchanan was inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1857. On that occasion he said: "The whole territorial

question [the question of slavery in the territories] being settled upon the principle of popular sovereignty — a principle as ancient as free government itself — everything of a practical nature has been decided. May we not then hope that the long agitation on this subject [of slavery] is approaching its end, and that the geographical parties, so much dreaded by the Father of his country, will speedily become extinct?"

While he was speaking the Supreme Court of the United States was preparing that which would renew the long agitation and increase the bitterness of feeling between the two sections.

Dr. Emerson, a surgeon in the United States army, was the owner of a Negro slave whose name was Dred Scott. From his home in St. Louis he took the slave to Rock Island, in the free state of Illinois, where he lived for a year or more. Then he took him to Fort Snelling, in Minnesota, and there Dred was married to Harriet, a Negro woman whom his master purchased. Two years later Dr. Emerson returned to St. Louis, carrying with him the two slaves and their child that had been born at Fort Snelling. Dred Scott claimed that because he and his wife had been taken by their master into a free state they were entitled, under the common law of the land, to their freedom; and that the child who was born in a free territory could not be made a slave.

The case was first brought before the state courts in Missouri, and was then carried to the Supreme Court of the United States. Of the nine judges who then composed that court, five were from the slave states. In making the final decision of the case, seven of the judges held that slaves were nothing but property; that being nothing but property, they could not be citizens; and that not being citizens, they could not bring a suit in any court of the United States. "It is the opinion of the court," wrote Chief Justice Taney, "that neither Dred Scott himself, nor any of his family, were made free by being carried into free territory, even if they had been carried there

by the owner with the intention of becoming a permanent resident."

The people of the North were astounded. This decision of the Supreme Court made slavery possible in every state of the Union. Southern slaveholders might remove permanently to New York or Maine or any other Northern state, carry their Negroes with them, and hold them and their children in bondage, just as in the Southern states.

"Where now, Mr. Douglas," they asked, "is your doctrine of popular sovereignty? You say that to the people of a territory or state belongs the sole right to say whether they will or will not have slavery. But now slavery is permitted everywhere, whether the people wish it or not."

Mr. Douglas himself could not help but see that the decision of the Supreme Court had set his theory at naught. He saw, too, how the slaveholders of Missouri were trying to make Kansas a slave state in defiance of the popular will; and he resolved to oppose such measures. He told President Buchanan of his intentions.

"Let me warn you, Mr. Douglas," said Buchanan, "that no Democrat has ever differed from a President of his own party without being crushed. You, yourself, doubtless remember the fate of certain men who opposed President Jackson."

"And I beg to remind you, Mr. President," answered Douglas, "that General Andrew Jackson is dead."

From that day there began a gradual estrangement between Stephen A. Douglas and his friends in the South.

In the meanwhile, the troubles in Kansas continued. "If Kansas is abolitionized," wrote one of the senators from Missouri, "then Missouri will cease to be a slave state, New Mexico will become a free state, and California will remain a free state. But if we secure Kansas as a slave state, Missouri will be secure, New Mexico and southern California, if not all of it, will become slave states; in a word, the prosperity or ruin of the whole South depends on the Kansas struggle."

We can scarcely wonder, then, that the Missourians entered so recklessly into the struggle, and that men ordinarily peaceable and law-abiding became, for the time being, forgetful of their duties as citizens of a civilized country.

The excitement ran so high that no man's life was safe in Kansas. It was not an uncommon thing, when two men met in the road, for both to come up with pistols in their hands; and the first salutation was, "Free state or pro-slave?" If the answer was not satisfactory, the next sound might be the report of a pistol. In the district around Lawrence, farmers tilled their fields in companies, all armed to the teeth.

The elections were a mere farce. Although it was known that three fourths of the actual settlers in the territory were free-state men, yet their votes counted as nothing. A convention was called by the pro-slavery men to meet at Lecompton for the purpose of forming another state constitution and again asking for admission into the Union. The president of that convention was John Calhoun, late of Illinois — the same Calhoun for whom Abraham Lincoln had carried a surveyor's chain, twenty years before. He distinguished himself by reporting nearly four hundred pro-slavery votes from a district in which there were only forty-three voters. Fearing that he would be obliged to show the ballots to a committee of Congress, he hid them in a candle box, and thus became known to history as "Candle-box Calhoun."

The constitution that was formed at Lecompton was all that the slaveholders could wish. It was sent to Congress with a petition that Kansas should be admitted to the Union as a slave state. President Buchanan gave it his support; but it was opposed by Senator Douglas and his friends. The breach in the Democratic party was beginning to widen. "If Kansas wants a slave-state constitution," said Douglas, "she has a right to it. If she wants a free-state constitution, she has right to it. It is none of my business which way the slavery cause is decided." But he went on to show that the Lecompton Con-

stitution was not the constitution which the people wished, and that if it were fairly voted upon in Kansas, it would be voted down.

Congress at length resolved to admit Kansas into the Union, provided that the people, in a fairly conducted election, should agree to the Lecompton Constitution and slavery; and as an inducement to those who might waver, a large grant of public lands was promised to the new state.

In the meanwhile, the enthusiasm of the slave-state men in Kansas had begun to fail. The squatters from Missouri had grown tired of the struggle and had returned to their homes. The free-state men had gained control of the legislature. An election was called for the purpose of allowing the people to choose whether they would become a state with the Lecompton Constitution or whether they would remain a territory.

The election took place in January, 1858. Of 10,388 votes cast, only 162 were in favor of the constitution. Kansas remained a territory; but the great struggle was ended. When she became a state, three years later, the slave power was already doomed.

CHAPTER 19
Estrangement Between North and South

It must not be supposed that the people of the South wished to be unjust to their kinsmen of the North. It must not be thought that they were not patriotic. Still less must it be supposed that all good men were arrayed on the side of freedom and all bad men on the side of slavery.

The patriotism of the Southern people differed from the patriotism of the Northern people in that instead of being national, it was sectional. The doctrine of States' Rights was held throughout the South long after it had disappeared from the North. When our government was founded, that doctrine was almost universal. Thomas Jefferson was its first great expounder; John C. Calhoun was its last great defender. According to that doctrine, the state was supreme within its own boundaries. Our country was not one great nation, but a union of many nations. Allegiance was due first to the state, then to the section, and after that to the United States. Citizens of Mississippi, for example, were proud to be called Americans, but they were prouder still to be known as Southerners, and proudest of all when feeling that they were Mississippians. The love for one's state — a feeling almost unknown in the North — induced an attachment for the section. The Southern states had many things in common — they had the same political beliefs; they had slavery; their productions were similar; the manner of living and thinking was much the same in all. Southern, people, therefore, loved the South, and were loyal to it.

Closely dependent upon all this was the idea that the

South should always have as large a representation in Congress as the North. This idea, as we have already seen, began when our government was first founded with seven Northern states and six Southern states. The two sections remained almost equal in power until the admission of California gave to the North a decided majority in Congress. Even then there were so many Northern men with Southern sympathies that the South might have held her own for a very long time had it not been for her growing jealousy of the North and the misunderstandings that consequently sprang up in both sections. It was sectional jealousy more than any feeling about slavery that fanned the fires of discord and threatened to destroy the Union.

There was not much communication between the two sections, and the people of each section had very strange ideas about the people of the other. In the South it was very generally believed that a large number of persons in the North were engaged in nothing else but planning how to destroy slavery, and how to reduce the Southern people to poverty. It was supposed that the Abolitionists were actively plotting to arouse insurrections among the slaves and to carry disaster and ruin into every Southern home. Every victory, therefore, of the slave power in extending the limits of slavery or in obliging the Northern people to return the fugitives among them, was hailed with satisfaction as a step toward security.

The Southern people believed that it was the purpose of the North to tyrannize over the South in every possible way. They pointed to the tariff laws which, while they protected Northern manufacturers, imposed "the main burden of taxation upon the Southern people, who were consumers and not manufacturers." The larger part of the money appropriated by Congress for various purposes was disbursed in the North. These causes, they claimed, attracted immigration to the North and repelled it from the South. The North was all the time growing richer at the expense of the South, which was

scarcely holding its own.

As for the recent political troubles, they urged that the Missouri Compromise was an encroachment of the North upon the South, depriving her of "equality in the enjoyment of territory which justly belonged equally to both." That compromise, they said, was in truth repealed in 1850, by the action of the North in making California, which naturally belonged to the South, a free state. The object of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was not to force slavery upon any state or territory, but to leave the people "perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." The troubles in Kansas, they claimed, were the outgrowth of efforts in the Northern states "to prevent free migration and hinder the decision, by climate and the interests of the inhabitants," as to whether slavery was advisable. The Northern people had been the first to begin the conflict. "The war cry of the Northern politicians was 'No extension of slavery!' Its object was to inflame the minds of the less discerning and stir up hatred toward the South," said Jefferson Davis.

Such were some of the grievances, fancied or real, which filled the hearts of honest Southern people with apprehension and alarm. So intense was their devotion to the South that they had come to regard this country as composed of two distinct parts; and they believed that the chief aim of the Northern part was to get the upper hand of the Southern.

On the other hand, there was among the Northern people no deep-seated love for the North, merely as a section; but large numbers of these people had come to believe that there were in this country two antagonistic forces, pro-slavery and anti-slavery, and that the chief aim of the pro-slavery force was to get the upper hand in everything.

There were good men in the South just as there were good men in the North. There were also men in both sections who were willing to do any deed, however unlawful or unjust, in

order to forward their own selfish or ambitious aims.

Only a small portion of the Southern people were actual slaveowners. The most of them, until stirred up by slave-holding politicians, were indifferent as to whether slavery was extended into new territories or not. Those of the better class who were honest and well informed regretted that there should be so much strife between the North and the South. All were loyal patriots, as they understood patriotism. Some would have made great sacrifices to settle forever the disputes between the sections. "If I owned all the slaves in the South," said Robert E. Lee of Virginia, "I would give them all to save the Union."

CHAPTER 20
Lincoln and Douglas

Stephen A. Douglas's term in the United States Senate was drawing to a close. The new legislature soon to be elected in Illinois would choose his successor. Should he be returned to the Senate? Or should his place be filled by another?

Mr. Douglas had aided in bringing about the defeat of the Lecompton Constitution; he had saved Kansas from being admitted to the Union as a slave state; and in doing so he had made many bitter enemies in the Democratic party. President Buchanan, true to his threat, was using his influence to crush him. In Illinois all Democrats who were true to the administration would oppose him. There were thousands, however, who believed in him, and would support him despite of anything that the party leaders might do. They called themselves "Anti-Lecompton Democrats," held conventions, and nominated men for the legislature who were pledged to vote for Douglas.

The Republicans of other states were pleased because Douglas had quarreled with the President and had divided the Democratic party. They advised the Republicans of Illinois not to put forward a candidate of their own, but to vote with the Anti-Lecompton Democrats. But the Illinois Republicans knew Douglas too well. Was it not Douglas who had proposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act? Had not all the troubles in Kansas been the result of that act? Had not the Lecompton Constitution itself grown out of that act? "Stephen A. Douglas," they said, "is not to be trusted: today he supports a cause which tomorrow he will oppose. Besides this, he is a Democrat

in all things except one."

They therefore announced that Abraham Lincoln was their "first and only choice for United States senator, to fill the vacancy about to be created by the expiration of Mr. Douglas's term of office." They put forth all their efforts to elect a legislature that would carry out their wishes; and Mr. Lincoln himself made the first great speech of the campaign.

Before delivering his speech in public, he read it to a small gathering of intimate friends in the library of the capitol at Springfield. The very first paragraph filled his hearers with alarm: —

"We are now," he said, "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."

His friends looked aghast.

"What do you think of it?" he asked each one. Not one approved of it. "It is a very foolish utterance," said one.

"What you say may be true enough," said another, "but the people are not ready to hear it."

"If you utter it in public," said a third, "it will ruin all your prospects of election."

Mr. Lincoln listened quietly to all their remarks and then, calm and serene, rose from his chair. In his face was that far-away look which in later years was often seen there when he was grappling with questions not comprehended by common minds.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have given much thought to this

question. The proposition is true. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' It is time that this truth should be spoken. If it is decreed that I should go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked with it to the truth. Let me die in the advocacy of what is just and right."

The next day he delivered the speech, exactly as it was written, to a large concourse of excited listeners. "The result," said he, at the close, "is not doubtful. We shall not fail. If we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate, or mistakes may delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come."

As his friends had warned him, the people were not yet ready to be told the plain truth. They knew that the nation was divided against itself, but they believed that it would continue to stand, despite the division; and they resented the idea that the cause of that division must be removed before peace was possible.

"Mr. Lincoln, you have made a great mistake," said one of his hearers, sorrowfully.

"The time will come," said Mr. Lincoln, "when you will think this 'mistake' the wisest thing I have heretofore said."

CHAPTER 21
In Friendly Debate

The attention of both political parties was turned to the campaign that was thus opened in Illinois. A challenge was sent by Lincoln to Douglas to discuss the questions of the day in a series of joint debates. Douglas accepted, and seven meetings in different parts of the state were arranged for.

Never in the history of our country has such another political duel been fought. When the day came at any particular place for one of these debates, the people assembled in crowds from all the surrounding country. Farmers left their harvest-fields, mechanics closed their shops, merchants locked their stores. The roads for miles were crowded with men on foot, men on horseback, men in wagons. They came, bringing their provisions and camping by the roadside or on the open prairie. There were banners and brass bands without number; there were bonfires and parades and much shouting and swaggering; but the uppermost wish in the mind of every one was to hear what the two great leaders had to say.

At the first meeting twenty thousand eager listeners were present. Mr. Douglas came with his friends by railroad, in a special car decorated with flags. His arrival was heralded by a cannon and a brass band. Mr. Lincoln came alone, without display of any kind. At four of the meetings Mr. Douglas opened and closed the debate; at three that privilege was accorded to Mr. Lincoln.

"I take great pleasure," said Douglas, "in saying that I have known personally and intimately, for about a quarter of a century, the worthy gentleman who has been nominated for

my place; and I will say that I regard him as a kind, amiable, and intelligent gentleman — a good citizen and an honorable opponent. And whatever may be the issue I may have with him, it will be of principle and not of personalities."

And so the debates throughout were conducted in a friendly manner, as by two gentlemen, each saying that which he honestly believed to be just and true. Never, perhaps, were debaters more equally matched and at the same time so different in those qualities which ordinarily attract the multitude.

Lincoln was forty-nine years old; Douglas was three years younger. Lincoln was tall and gaunt, with a massive head, a rough shaven face, shaggy eyebrows, and a sad, homely countenance already seamed and wrinkled. Douglas was small of stature, his head was covered with a rank growth of grizzled hair; his face, beaming with intelligence, marked him as a man of power; his eyes were piercingly bright; his features were regular, handsome, and attractive.

In speaking, Lincoln excelled in clearness of statement, simplicity, and purity of language; everything that he said was full of meaning, and he said no more than was necessary to make his arguments complete. Douglas was bold and dashing; he never wanted for a word; he hesitated at nothing; he had the cunning of one trained to deception; his very manner compelled his hearers to believe him.

To the country people who flocked to hear them, Lincoln was "Old Abe" or "Honest Abe" of Springfield; Douglas was the "Little Giant of Illinois."

It would be out of place for us to try to repeat what was said in those great debates. The subject was necessarily slavery; the central question was the extension of slavery. The Republicans of Illinois were not Abolitionists; they would have scorned any proposition to give the Negroes of the South their freedom; but for the peace and safety of the country as a whole, they were resolved to do all that was possible

to confine slavery within the states where it then existed.

Douglas declared that the Democratic party was composed of men in every part of the Union, and was therefore national; the "Black Republicans," as he nicknamed his opponents, were sectional, and would not be permitted to carry their doctrine into the South. Lincoln answered by saying: "Are we to believe, then, that it is slavery which is national, and freedom which is sectional? Or is it the true test of the soundness of a doctrine that in some places people won't let you proclaim it?"

Lincoln quoted that passage in the Declaration of Independence which asserts that "all men are created equal." Douglas said that "the signers of the declaration had no reference to the Negro, or any other inferior or degraded race," and that they meant "only white men of European birth and descent." Lincoln answered that the plain intention of the signers was to include all men, whether white or black; "but they did not mean to declare all men equal in all respects — in color, size, intellect, moral development, social capacity." They were equal "only in certain inalienable rights" — life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Douglas declaimed against the course of the Abolitionists, who, in order to carry out their own aims, were stirring up feelings of hatred toward the South. Lincoln declared that he was concerned only with slavery, and that he had no ill feelings nor prejudices toward Southern men and women who were the owners of slaves. "They are just what we should be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up."

Douglas insisted upon his doctrine of Popular Sovereignty, that the "voters in every territory should have the right to say whether slavery should exist with them or not." Lincoln retorted by saying that the Dred Scott decision had declared that slavery was already in the territory, and that it

might be carried into any part of the Union without the consent of the voters.

The debates attracted the attention of the whole country. Soon it became plain to everybody that Lincoln was getting the better of Douglas. Long before the last speech was made, Douglas himself felt that he was worsted. He lost his self-control; he became peevish and fretful; his voice failed; he feared that disaster was before him. But Lincoln, conscious of victory, was as calm as ever; his speech was as temperate, his manners as gentle, his words as clear as at the beginning.

When the elections were held, the Republicans polled four thousand votes more than the Democrats; but the districts of the state were so divided that the new legislature contained a majority of Democrats. Douglas, although beaten in argument, would be returned to the United States Senate.

Lincoln was disappointed. To be a senator of the United States was an honor which he had long hoped for. To be defeated, after so manful a struggle, was indeed disheartening.

"Well, Lincoln," said one of his friends on the day after the election, "how do you feel to be beaten by the Little Giant?"

"I suppose," answered Lincoln, "that I feel very much like the overgrown boy who stumped his toe."

"How was that?"

"Well, when some one asked him how he felt, he said that he was hurt too bad to laugh and was too big to cry."

He had gained much more by the contest, however, than any one supposed. Printed accounts of the debates had been given in all the newspapers of the North. They were talked about from Maine to California. The name of Abraham Lincoln, hitherto known only in Illinois, was now famous throughout the entire country. He had made the first direct step toward the presidency. "The campaign of 1860 will be worth a hundred of this," he said; and no matter what he may have meant by the remark, he was right.

CHAPTER 22
Fanatical John Brown

Among the Northern emigrants who went early to Kansas there was a sturdy old anti-slavery agitator whose name was John Brown. John Brown had hated slavery all his life. He was just the sort of man which the Southern people pictured in their minds when they spoke the word "abolitionist." He was willing to do anything, suffer anything, if thereby he could deal a blow to slavery. For twenty years his life had been devoted to the one idea of giving freedom to the black men of the South.

With five of his sons, stalwart men, as fearless as himself, he made his home in the neighborhood of Osawatomie, and became at once a leader among the free-state settlers. Soon after the pillaging of the town of Lawrence five pro-slavery men were brutally murdered by a party of unknown free-state men. It was claimed, whether justly or not, that the Browns were in the party, and two of the sons were arrested. The eldest was taken in charge by a company of United States cavalry and, with his arms tied behind him, was driven on foot at a rapid rate across the prairie, while the hot sun beat down upon his uncovered head. Before reaching the end of the journey he was insane. Another one of the sons was waylaid and killed, and his bleeding body was thrown into the door of his father's cabin.

Whether these terrible doings crazed the mind of old John Brown, no one can tell. But a few years later he undertook an enterprise which only a madman or a fanatic would have thought of. He had brooded over the subject so long that he

was persuaded that Heaven had chosen him as an instrument to destroy slavery. To his mind the only way to do this was to wage war upon the slaveholders. He therefore formed a plan to invade the South, stir up an insurrection among the Negroes, lay waste the plantations, and in the end make all the slaves free. He was foolish enough to believe that the Negroes everywhere would rally to his aid.

With eighteen men, six of whom were colored, he crossed the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and seized upon the United States arsenal there. He captured one slaveholder, and took possession of the arms in the arsenal. The citizens rallied to the defense of the town. The invaders were hemmed in, several were killed, and the rest were obliged to take refuge in a little building called the engine house. The news was telegraphed to all parts of the country. Colonel Robert E. Lee of the United States army was hurriedly sent from Washington with a company of marines, and within twenty-four hours the disturbance was at an end.

John Brown, severely wounded with saber cuts and bayonet thrusts, was taken prisoner with five of his men. Four of the band escaped; the rest had been killed in the fight.

The prisoners were hastily brought to trial before a Virginia court. Brown was ably defended by counsel from Massachusetts. But the fact that he and his men had made an armed invasion of the state, that they had seized upon public property, and that they had caused the death of five Virginians, could not be disputed. They were quickly convicted and sentenced to death.

Whatever may be thought of John Brown's sanity or of the righteousness of his cause, his conduct during his last days in prison was truly heroic. Even his bitterest enemies were compelled to admire his courage. "I can leave to God," he said, "the time and manner of my death; for I believe now that the sealing of my testimony before God and man with my blood will do far more to further the cause to which I have devoted

myself, than anything else I have done in my life."

"How do you justify your acts?" asked Senator Mason of Virginia.

"I hold," answered the old man, "that the golden rule, 'Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you,' applies to all who would help others to gain their liberty. The cry of distress of the oppressed is my reason, and the only thing that prompted me to come here…. I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better — all you people at the South — prepare yourselves for a settlement of this question, that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it."

Governor Wise, who had come up from Richmond with a body of Virginia militia, was much impressed by his bearing. "He is a man," said the governor, "of clear head, of courage and fortitude; and he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth."

Wendell Phillips, the great anti-slavery leader, said of him, "He has abolished slavery."

James Russell Lowell, the poet, wrote of him: —

> Truth forever on the scaffold,
> Wrong forever on the throne;
> Yet that scaffold sways the future
> And behind the dim unknown,
> Standeth God within the shadow,
> Keeping watch above His own.

The people of the South were alarmed beyond measure. They did not know — they would not believe — that John Brown was the sole mover of the dreadful business, and that it would end with him. They imagined that there was a general conspiracy throughout the North, and that other companies of Abolitionists were preparing to invade the slave states with "whetted knives of butchery." We can imagine their feelings by supposing our own state to be suddenly

invaded by a band of anarchists, intent upon destroying whatever came in their way, with the possibility that other bands were secretly making ready to join them.

The militia was put under arms. Calls were issued for volunteers to aid in defending the South from Northern invasion. Ex-President Tyler, from his plantation, wrote: "Virginia is arming to the teeth. More than fifty thousand stand of arms are already distributed. But one sentiment pervades the country: security in the Union, or separation."

Many prominent anti-slavery men in the North expressed their sympathy with John Brown, and this only increased the apprehension of the South. But the cooler-headed men of the Republican party refused to endorse his course. While they refrained from abusing Brown himself, they condemned all unlawful attempts to interfere with slavery.

William H. Seward, then the leader of the party, declared that the raid on Harpers Ferry "was an act of treason, and criminal in just the extent that it affected the public peace and was destructive of human happiness and life."

Abraham Lincoln compared it to "the many attempts in history at the assassination of kings and emperors," which have ended in little else than in the execution of the assassin.

On the other hand, Stephen A. Douglas expressed it as his "firm and deliberate conviction that the Harpers Ferry crime was the natural, logical, inevitable result of the doctrines and teachings of the Republican party." And Jefferson Davis declared that this "invasion of a state by a murderous gang of Abolitionists" was but the natural outcome of a recent speech of William H. Seward in which it was asserted that "an irrepressible conflict" already existed between freedom and slavery.

Whether John Brown's fanatical act had any influence toward hastening the end of slavery, no man can tell. But it certainly aroused the people of the South as they had not been aroused before; it gave to designing politicians the means

of inflaming the minds of ignorant men and stirring up an intense hatred of the North; and it was added to the long list of grievances which at last afforded to the Southern states the excuse to secede from the Union.

CHAPTER 23
Eloquent at Cooper Union

About two months after the end of the tragedy at Harpers Ferry, Mr. Lincoln was invited to visit the Eastern states and make a few speeches on the question which was then uppermost in the minds of all thinking men. His first and greatest speech was made in the hall of Cooper Union in New York City.

He was known as "Abe Lincoln," the man from the uncultured West who had out-argued the Little Giant of Illinois. People were curious to hear what he would say; they were curious to see what sort of man it was who had come out of the backwoods to tell them what they already knew. Many scholars, politicians, and critics were present at the meeting, scarcely expecting to hear anything but queer stories, coarse jokes, and the rude oratory of a stump speaker. Most of the great audience had come together much as they would have come to see "the wild man of Borneo" and hear him discuss philosophy.

At the appointed hour, William Cullen Bryant, the poet, arose from his seat on the platform and introduced the speaker. That which followed is best described in the words of one who was present: —

"He was tall, tall — oh, how tall, and so angular and awkward that I had, for an instant, a feeling of pity for so ungainly a man. His clothes were black and ill-fitting, badly wrinkled — as if they had been jammed carelessly into a small trunk. His bushy head, with the stiff black hair thrown back, was balanced on a long and lean head-stalk, and when he raised

his hands in an opening gesture, I noticed that they were very large.

"He began in a very low tone of voice — as if he were used to speaking outdoors and was afraid of speaking too loud. He said, 'Mr. Cheerman' instead of 'Mr. Chairman,' and employed many other words with an old-fashioned pronunciation. I said to myself: 'Old fellow, you won't do. It's all very well for the wild West, but this will never go down in New York!'

"But pretty soon he began to get into his subject; he straightened up, and made regular and graceful gestures. His face lighted as with an inward fire; the whole man was transfigured. I forgot his clothes, his personal appearance, and his individual peculiarities. Presently, forgetting myself, I was on my feet with the rest, yelling like a wild Indian, cheering this wonderful man. In the close parts of his argument, you could hear the gentle sizzing of the gas burners. When he reached a climax, the thunders of applause were terrific.

"It was a great speech. When I came out of the hall, my face glowing with excitement and my frame all a-quiver, a friend, with his eyes aglow, asked me what I thought of Abe Lincoln, the rail splitter. I said, 'He's the greatest man since St. Paul!' And I think so yet."

It was, indeed, one of the greatest speeches ever heard in any part of our country. Everybody that listened to it was astonished. Everybody was pleased. No college graduate of the cultured East, no orator trained in the halls of Congress, could have delivered a speech so scholarly, so calm, so dignified, so convincing. It was brief, but it seemed to leave nothing more to be said. It reviewed the whole subject of slavery in the territories. Its arguments against the extension of slavery were so conclusive that no man has ever been able to reply to them. "Let us have faith," said Mr. Lincoln at the end — "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."

The speech was published the next day in all the New York papers. Mr. Lincoln had won the esteem of the most thoughtful men in the East. They said to him at parting, "Be true to your principles, and we will be true to you, and God will be true to us all."

And he answered: "I say Amen to that! Amen to that!"

BOOK THE THIRD—PERFORMANCE

CHAPTER 1
"Abraham Lincoln, the Rail Candidate"

On the 10th of May the Republicans of Illinois were holding a state convention at Decatur. The great hall, prepared for the occasion, was filled with delegates and enthusiastic party men from every county in the state. The governor of Illinois was the chairman of the convention.

"Gentlemen," said he, "there is with us at this meeting a distinguished citizen whom the people of our state delight to honor. I take pleasure in suggesting that he be invited to a place on the platform."

At once, amid a tumult of applause, a tall man, dressed in an ill-fitting suit of black, was lifted over the heads of the crowd and passed along on the upraised hands of the delegates to the speakers' stand. It was Abraham Lincoln. As he regained his feet and stood up before the convention, every man present arose and shouted, and shouted, and shouted, until it seemed that the storm of applause would never end. At length, when there was a slight lull in the tumult, the governor spoke again: —

"Gentlemen, I am informed that there is an old Democrat waiting outside of the hall, who has something that he wishes to present to this convention."

"Let him come in! Let him come in!" shouted the delegates. A side door near the platform was opened, and an old Illinois farmer, wrinkled and sunbrowned and gray-bearded, came in. It was John Hanks — the same John Hanks who,

thirty years before, had persuaded Thomas Lincoln to emigrate to Illinois. On his shoulder he carried two weatherworn fence rails, above which was a small banner bearing these 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

The scene that followed cannot be described. The convention was wild with enthusiasm. For many minutes the delegates continued shouting, stamping their feet, and waving their hats, utterly forgetful of order. At length they became quiet from very exhaustion, and Mr. Lincoln in his half-timid manner began to speak: —

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

And then, before saying anything about politics, he gave a little account of the first year that he had spent in Illinois, and of his helping his father build his cabin and plant his first crop of corn.

The men of the convention knew that he could do other things besides split rails. They resolved that Abraham Lincoln was the man whom the Republicans of Illinois would support for the presidency of the United States.

CHAPTER 2
Balloting at Chicago

A week later, the national convention of the Republican party met at Chicago. A great building, called the "Wigwam," had been put up expressly for the meeting. Twenty-five thousand strangers were in the city, which then contained only one hundred thousand inhabitants. Delegates were there from every free state and from the slave states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri.

The principles which the party was pledged to support were briefly stated: —

"The natural condition of the territories is freedom.

"No lawmaking power in the country can create slavery where it does not now exist.

"Kansas ought to be immediately admitted as a free State.

"The opening of the slave trade would be a crime against humanity."

The chief work to be done by the convention was to name a candidate for the presidency of the United States. There were many able men in the party who were anxious to be chosen and who had powerful friends to urge their nomination.

Foremost among these was William H. Seward of New York. He was the acknowledged leader of the Republican party. He had been the governor of the greatest state in the Union. He had been in the United States Senate for nearly twelve years. By nature and training he was a leader of men. He represented the wealth and culture of the Eastern states.

Edward Bates of Missouri, an accomplished lawyer and friend of free labor, was favored by several men of influence

in the East. He would attract votes from the South. If the Republican party should nominate him, a Southern man, it could no longer be accused of being purely sectional.

A part of the Pennsylvania delegation named Simon Cameron. He was a shrewd politician and bold partisan, but wrongfully suspected at that time of having too much sympathy with the South.

The Ohio delegation named Salmon P. Chase, a lifelong enemy of slavery, and formerly a leader of the Liberty party. He was descended from a long line of worthy ancestors, and represented the higher culture and intelligence of the West. He had been a senator of the United States, and had been twice elected to the governorship of Ohio.

The Illinois delegation named Abraham Lincoln. Throughout the country it was generally supposed that Seward would be the choice of the convention. His friends made use of every means to secure his nomination. They paraded the streets with banners and brass bands, yelling, "Hurrah for Seward!" They hired men to stand in different parts of the Wigwam and yell every time Seward's name was mentioned. At the hotels, on the street corners, everywhere, they seemed to be the majority.

On the third day the balloting began. The excitement was intense. As each candidate was named, his friends filled the hall with deafening applause. When the name of Abraham Lincoln was spoken, an Illinois man standing on the platform began to wave a white handkerchief. Instantly, at each end of the Wigwam, there began a roar of shouts such as had never before been heard in Chicago. Thousands of men joined in the shouting; thousands of women waved their handkerchiefs and clapped their hands; it was plain that the friends of the "rail splitter" could cheer as lustily as the hired shouters for Seward. The first ballot showed that the fight was to be between Seward and Lincoln and no others. Seward received 173½ votes, Lincoln 102; the remaining 189½ votes were

scattered among several persons. As there were 465 delegates, it was necessary that the successful candidate should receive at least 233 votes, or more than half of the entire number.

A second ballot was taken. This time Seward gained eleven votes; but Lincoln gained seventy-nine. The white handkerchief was again waved from the platform, and again the vast hall was filled with the thunders of applause. There was a general movement among the delegates. The friends of Seward were beginning to lose heart.

A third ballot, and Lincoln had 231½ votes. The leader of the Ohio delegation sprang to his feet. "Ohio," cried he, "changes four votes from Chase to Lincoln." That settled the matter. Immediately there were other changes; and when the vote was announced, Lincoln had 254 votes.

If the enthusiasm had been great before, it was now overwhelming. "Such a scene as was presented," says one who was there, "had never before been witnessed at a convention. A herd of buffaloes or lions could not have made a more tremendous roaring." Cries of "Hurrah for Old Abe!" "Hurrah for the rail splitter!" "Hurrah for Lincoln!" were drowned in the general uproar; and the shouts of tens of thousands attested the general satisfaction that a man so worthy and so strong had been chosen to be the party's candidate for President.

In the untidy office of the Springfield Journal, where the air was odorous with printer's ink, sat Abraham Lincoln. He tilted his chair back against the wall; he was ill at ease, anxious, and silent. Two or three friendly lawyers were present, speculating on what was going on at Chicago. The editor of the Journal was leaning over his desk; a few loafers were lounging about the door.

The messenger from the telegraph office ran in with an open message in his hand. Lincoln read it silently, and then handed it to his friend, the editor. There was a moment of hearty congratulation. The news spread. A crowd was

gathering. Shouts were heard in the street, "Hurrah for Honest Abe!"

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

CHAPTER 3
Revolt at Charleston

Let us go back three weeks in our story.

On the 23d of April the Democratic party held its national convention in Charleston, South Carolina.

Delegates were there from every state in the Union. Most of those from the North now saw slavery for the first time. They visited the slave markets; they saw human beings bought and sold; they saw how great wealth had been accumulated through the sweat and toil of unpaid laborers; they formed their own opinions of Southern prosperity, and determined to vote accordingly.

The convention met in a small hall; not many strangers came from other parts of the country to hurrah for their favorite candidate; there was no boisterous cheering, for every one present felt that a crisis was at hand.

Five days were spent in framing a declaration of principles. On the fifth day, Senator Yancey of Alabama, the most eloquent orator of the South, delivered a powerful speech in defense of the claims of his own people. It was addressed mainly to the delegates from the North. "You acknowledged," he said, "that slavery does not exist by the law of nature or by the law of God — that it only exists by state law; that it is wrong, but that you are not to blame. If you had taken the position directly that slavery was right, and therefore ought to be, you would have triumphed, and anti-slavery would now have been dead in your midst…. When I was a schoolboy in the North, Abolitionists were pelted with rotten eggs. But now this band of Abolitionists has spread into three bands —

the Black Republicans, the Free-soilers, and the squatter-sovereignty men — all representing the common sentiment that slavery is wrong."

Immediately Senator Pugh of Ohio, the stanch friend of Stephen A. Douglas, sprang to his feet. He thanked God that a true son of the South had spoken out boldly and told the whole truth regarding the wishes of Southern Democrats. "You demand," said he, "that we of the North shall say that slavery is right and ought to be extended. Gentlemen of the South, you mistake us — you mistake us: we will not do it."

On the eighth day a platform of principles which had been suggested and sanctioned by Stephen A. Douglas was proposed. The delegates from the Northern states voted for it; those from the Southern states voted against it. It was adopted.

The leader of the delegation from Alabama protested that the platform did not express the wishes of the South; and every delegate from his state arose and left the hall. They were followed by the delegations from Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, Texas, and Arkansas, all protesting that the rights of the South had been invaded, trampled upon.

It was a solemn moment. The great Democratic party that, with the exception of a few brief years, had controlled our government for half a century, was rent in twain. The Northern delegates were alarmed. Some even shed tears. "Is this the first act in the breaking up of the Union of states?" they asked of one another.

The best men of the South were stricken with dismay. "The seceders from the convention," said Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, "intended from the beginning to rule or ruin; and when they find they cannot rule, they will ruin…. In less than twelve months we shall be in a war, and that the bloodiest in history. Men seem to be utterly blinded to the future."

The delegates who remained in the convention tried next

to select a candidate for the presidency. They balloted for three days without reaching an agreement. Then they adjourned to meet again in June, in the city of Baltimore.

But in Baltimore the wrangling was renewed. Some of the delegates who had seceded at Charleston were in the city, but they took no part in the convention. The delegates from Virginia and from most of the other slave states withdrew. Those who remained then proceeded to select a candidate for the presidency. On the second ballot they chose Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois.

The Southern delegates met in another hall. Everything had been arranged beforehand. They adopted a platform in accordance with the wishes of the slaveholding politicians of their states. They nominated John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky as their candidate for the presidency.

In the meanwhile, the remnants of the old Whig party, with some others who thought that the best way to deal with slavery was to say nothing about it, met also in convention at Baltimore. Some of these men were from the North, some were from the South, and every one was a patriot. Their platform was, "The Constitution of the country, the Union of the states, and the enforcement of the laws." They called themselves the Union party, and nominated John Bell of Tennessee for President.

There were, therefore, in the field four parties and four candidates for the presidency. And the great question that divided the people was the question of slavery. "If the Republicans elect their candidate," said the slaveholding politicians, "all hopes of the South regaining her power will be gone, and the Southern states must secede from the Union."

"What is to become of us then," said Alexander H. Stephens, "God only knows."

CHAPTER 4
A Gloomy Prospect

Election day came and passed off quietly. The result was as everybody had foreseen. Abraham Lincoln was chosen to be the next President of the United States. The Republicans had carried every Northern state except New Jersey.

"This is a great victory" wrote the poet Longfellow. "It is the redemption of the country. Freedom is triumphant."

In South Carolina, a full month before the election, the governor and political leaders had put everything in readiness for secession. "Southern rights at all hazards!" was the cry. The state was aflame with the idea of independence from the Union.

When the news came that Lincoln was elected, there was much rejoicing. "It is better thus," said the politicians. "Our people will never consent to be ruled by a Black Republican." And throughout the South the word was passed among the common people that the newly elected President, "Old Abe," was not only a Black Republican, but that he had black blood in his veins. It was even asserted and believed that he was not a human being, but a sort of trained gorilla which the Abolitionists had put forward in order to humiliate the South and carry out their own selfish designs. This monster, it was said, whom the Black Republicans had raised to the presidency, was pledged not only to give freedom to the slaves but to give to every "—" equal rights with white men.

"Will you submit to be ruled by such a creature?" they were asked.

"Never! Never!" was the reply.

At Charleston, six weeks after the election, a state

convention was called. Men and women were wild with enthusiasm. The leaders in the convention marched in a body to St. Michael's churchyard, and standing around the grave of John C. Calhoun, took a solemn oath to give their fortunes and their lives, if need be, in defense of the doctrine of States' Rights. A resolution was passed, declaring that South Carolina dissolved all connection with the United States, and that she was, and by right ought to be, a free and independent state. Cannon boomed, men shouted, women waved their handkerchiefs, and the palmetto flag of South Carolina was unfurled to the breeze.

From the White House at Washington James Buchanan watched the course of events. He had yet nearly three months to serve as President of the United States. He saw the country divided, our flag dishonored, the Union crumbling to pieces. "I have no power to interfere," he said. And it was, perhaps, with a feeling of secret satisfaction that he believed himself to be the last President of the republic of which Washington had been the first. An army of South Carolinians was threatening the forts of the United States in Charleston harbor. "I have no power to interfere," he said. How different from Andrew Jackson and his stern declaration, "The Union must be preserved!"

The advisers of the President were either Southern men or Northern men with Southern sympathies. The Secretary of the Treasury, who was a Georgian, contrived by a series of financial blunders to destroy the credit of the United States, thus leaving the treasury empty. The Secretary of War, who was a Virginian, took measures to disarm the free states by removing the guns and other weapons from the national arsenals and sending them to the South. The Secretary of the Navy, who was from Connecticut, scattered our ships of war in distant seas, so that his successor would be long in calling them to the aid of the government.

In one of the rooms in the capitol at Washington, six

United States senators arranged a plan for seizing all the forts and government property in the Gulf states, and prepared an address to the people of those states, urging them to follow South Carolina and secede from the Union. And James Buchanan, sitting with folded hands in the White House, said, "I have no power to interfere!"

Soon Florida seceded, and then Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. Delegates from these states met at Montgomery, in Alabama, and formed a new government which they called the Confederate States of America. They adopted a constitution similar to that of the United States, but recognizing and protecting slavery. They chose Jefferson Davis to be president, and Alexander H. Stephens to be vice president of the confederacy.

"A glorious future is before us," said Jefferson Davis. "The grass will grow in the Northern cities where the pavements have been worn off by the tread of commerce. We will carry war where food for the sword and torch await our armies in the densely peopled cities."

And in the North there were multitudes of men who were ready to forget their own interests, neglect their duty to their country, and bid the confederacy "God speed!"

"If the great body of the Southern people wish to escape from the Union, we will do our best to forward their views," said Horace Greeley, the Republican leader.

"If there is to be fighting, it will be within our own borders and in our own streets," said ex-President Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire.

"Denunciations of slavery and the slave power are acts of injustice to our fellow-citizens of the South and must be frowned down by a just and law-abiding people," said the mayor of Philadelphia.

"Let the Southern states secede from the Union if they choose; and I propose that the city of New York shall follow them," said the mayor of New York. "Let us compromise with

the South before it is too late," said the Republicans of Boston.

The South was jubilant, confident, fearless. The North was in despair, wavering, almost ready to cry, "Mercy!" almost willing to do anything that was required.

And James Buchanan, sitting with folded hands in the White House, dictated a proclamation to the people of the United States, appointing a day for humiliation and prayer.

A little steamer, the Star of the West, carrying the United States flag, was about to enter Charleston harbor with provisions and supplies for the soldiers in the forts. She was fired upon by South Carolina cannoneers and forced to retire.

"Your flag has been insulted!" cried Southern bravadoes. "Redress it if you dare. You have submitted to it for two months, and you will submit to it forever."

And James Buchanan sat in the White House and said, "I have no power to interfere."

All along the Gulf coast the Confederates took possession of the forts; they hauled down the American flag and hoisted their own; they seized the arsenal at Baton Rouge; they demanded that a revenue cutter stationed at New Orleans should be surrendered to the state.

President Buchanan had been obliged to select a new Secretary of the Treasury, and he had chosen John A. Dix, an old Democrat of New York. And it was then that Mr. Dix sent flashing over the wires to New Orleans that famous dispatch, "If any man attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot."

That telegram was the first sign of fighting temper yet shown in the North. Those few ringing words stirred up dying patriotism, they aroused enthusiasm, they kindled courage. Men awoke from their stupor.

"Hurrah for the old flag!" was the shout that went up from Maine to California. "The American flag shall not be hauled -down!"

And the tide began to turn.

CHAPTER 5
Heart and Head

Where was Abraham Lincoln during these days of tumult and doubt? He was not in his law office; he was not at home with his family; he was not in any of the places where his friends were accustomed to see him. In a little room over a store, the door locked behind him, he sat alone, writing his inaugural address and pondering upon the momentous issues which he alone was to solve.

No man felt the gravity of the situation so deeply as he. Although chosen to be the leader of the nation, he seemed to stand alone. Men of his own party were ashamed of the enthusiasm which had brought about his election. "Why did we vote for that rail splitter of Illinois and bring all this trouble upon the country?" they asked themselves.

Men whom he might have expected to sympathize with him were his enemies. "Who is this huckster in politics? Who is this slave hound of Illinois?" sneered Wendell Phillips, the leader of the Abolitionists.

But Abraham Lincoln never faltered. He had set his face toward the goal, and he was resolved not to swerve from the right though the heavens should fall.

The time came for him to go to Washington. He bade his friends at Springfield good-by. "A great duty devolves upon me," he said, "a greater duty, perhaps, than has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. … I hope that you, my friends, will pray that I may receive that divine assistance without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain."

This farewell speech was telegraphed all over the North. It was printed in the newspapers. Thoughtless people sneered. "Old Abe himself is frightened," they said. "He is asking his friends to pray for him."

Nevertheless, it is probable that a majority of the most earnest and patriotic people of the North were ready to support and sympathize with the man whom they had chosen as their standard bearer.

At all the large cities on the route great crowds of people assembled to see Mr. Lincoln as he passed through. Some came to do him honor, but the multitude only to gratify an idle curiosity. At each stopping place he made a little address, — brief, full of meaning, and yet containing no forecast of the policy he intended to pursue.

"My heart, I know, is right," he said; "but the future must decide whether my head is equal to the task that is before me."

"But how about the South? Are we going to have war?" asked the timid-hearted.

"There is no necessity for it," answered Lincoln. "I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say in advance that there will be no bloodshed unless it be forced upon the government, and then it will be compelled to act in self-defense."

CHAPTER 6
Abraham Lincoln, President

The 4th of March came — the day for the inauguration. In Washington the morning broke clear and cool, the peace that reigned in air and sky giving no token of the storm and tumult in men's minds. Threats had been openly made that Mr. Lincoln should never take the oath of office. The city was full of his enemies. Timid, yielding politicians from the North — "doughfaces," as they were nicknamed — conferred with Southern sympathizers as to some means of preventing the inauguration.

But General Winfield Scott, the commander of the United States army, was early at the capitol with a body of soldiers. The police of Washington were alert to prevent every disturbance. The friends of Mr. Lincoln had rallied to the city, determined to defend him.

At the appointed hour a procession of notable men passed out of the Senate Chamber and ascended to the platform prepared for the occasion. In that procession were the judges of the Supreme Court, the President of the United States, the President-elect, the Vice President and his successor, senators, congressmen, many distinguished foreign ministers, and governors of states. Before and around the platform was a seething multitude of anxious, excited men of all classes and parties. Flanking the immense gathering were the soldiers under General Scott, drawn up in arms.

When all had taken their places, Mr. Lincoln stepped forward to read his address. He was greeted with but feeble applause. His enemies were many and bold. His friends were

anxious and fearful.

The address was long, but no longer than was necessary for a clear statement of the problems which the country required him to solve. As a matter of course, it dealt mainly with the question of secession from the Union, and much of it was addressed to the people of the South.

"Physically speaking," he said, "we cannot separate. We cannot remove our sections from each other, or build an impassable wall between them…. Is it possible to make intercourse more advantageous after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws?

"Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

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

"You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government; while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it.

"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 every 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."

With these solemn and prophetic words the address was brought to a close. Then the venerable Chief Justice of the United States, Roger B. Taney, stepped forward, and with trembling voice administered the oath of office.

Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States.

The first to congratulate him was his lifelong rival, Stephen A. Douglas. Mr. Douglas had held the President's hat while he was speaking. He now grasped his hand with the warmth of old-time friendship, and assured him that, no matter what might befall, he would stand by him and aid him in upholding the Constitution and the laws. It was a noble act. The "Rail Splitter of Illinois" and the "Little Giant of the West" were no longer rivals, they were friends and fellow-workers.

But that 4th of March offered no bright promises for the future. The leaders of secession in the South knew now that if there was to be war, they themselves must begin it. In the North it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that the Union was broken up. There were many who were still willing to give up everything to the South.

"To force the Southern states to remain in the Union would be an act of despotism," said William H. Seward, the Republican.

"If the Southern states think that they ought to have a separate government, they have a right to decide that question without appealing to you or me," said Wendell Phillips, the Abolitionist.

But Stephen A. Douglas, the Democrat, said: "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."

And President Lincoln, with that sad, far-away look in his face, and with a sublime faith that the right would surely prevail, entered the White House, and took upon his shoulders the burden of saving the republic.

CHAPTER 7
Men of the Cabinet

Among the men whom President Lincoln selected for his cabinet there were four whose names are already known to us. They were the men who had competed with him for the nomination at Chicago.

William H. Seward, the anti-slavery statesman, scholar, gentleman, shrewd politician, was the Secretary of State. Imperious, proud, and scarcely concealing his bitter disappointment, he almost felt it a humiliation to take office under the man of the West.

Simon Cameron, the Pennsylvania leader, was the Secretary of War. Fearless, aggressive, full of pluck and energy, he seemed the ideal man for the difficult duties of that responsible position.

Salmon P. Chase, the well-born, accomplished governor of Ohio, the ablest of Western Abolitionists, was the Secretary of the Treasury. Dignified, sedate, earnest, judicious, he would be a safe counselor and a wise manager.

Edward Bates, the Missourian, the gentlemanly lawyer, the foe of the slave power in his own state, was the Attorney General.

The other members of the cabinet were men of less note. The Secretary of the Navy was Gideon Welles, then scarcely known outside of New England. The Secretary of the Interior was Caleb B. Smith of Indiana. The Postmaster General was Montgomery Blair of Maryland, a politician of large influence in the middle South.

Every action of the new President was criticized in the

North. Certain Republicans complained that he was leaning toward the Democrats. His cabinet, they said, contained four ex-Democrats and only three ex-Whigs.

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

His friends wondered that he should have chosen his political rivals to be his counselors. Would not jealousy and disappointment on their part lead them to wish to make his administration a failure? Mr. Lincoln did not think so. He had great confidence in the sterling character of these men. He did not believe that they would stoop to meanness in order to serve any selfish purpose.

"Gentlemen," he said to them, "it will require the utmost skill on the part of all of us to save the republic. Let us forget ourselves and join hands like brothers. If we succeed, there will be glory enough for us all."

Some of Lincoln's friends had expressed their fears that Mr. Seward would attempt to dictate to the President, and would himself try to assume the control of the government. Before a month had passed, these fears were confirmed. In a letter entitled, "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration," Mr. Seward laid out a plan for the conduct of certain affairs, and expressed it in the manner of a superior person dictating to a subordinate.

Very calmly and judiciously, and in words that could not be misconstrued, Mr. Lincoln gave him to understand that the reins of government were in the President's own hands, and that he proposed to keep them there. And Mr. Seward, very wisely and graciously, submitted to be second to the man whom he now recognized as both stronger and wiser than himself.

CHAPTER 8
Lincoln's First Call to Arms

After the inauguration there seemed to be a brief calm before the bursting of the storm. The South became impatient because Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy, did not take some decisive action.

"Why don't you go ahead?" asked the excited leaders. The North was dissatisfied because President Lincoln did not immediately take steps to settle the difficulty and either let the states go in peace or declare war upon them. "Why don't you go ahead?" asked friend and foe.

The opportunity and necessity of "going ahead" came soon enough.

Of the important forts along the coasts of the seceded states nearly all had been taken by the Confederacy. Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor still floated the American flag. There Major Robert Anderson, with a handful of soldiers, stood at his post and refused all demands to surrender. The city was full of Confederate soldiers. Batteries were built along the shore. Cannon were placed in position and pointed toward the fort. Still Major Anderson refused to surrender.

On the 12th of April, General Beauregard, the Confederate commander, asked him to state whether he would give up the fort immediately. His supplies were exhausted. The soldiers were eating their last rations of food. He answered that unless he received other orders from the government he would go out on the 15th, but not earlier.

"Very well, then," answered Beauregard, "within one hour the Confederate batteries will open fire upon you."

The message was sent at half-past three in the morning. At half-past four the first gun was fired upon Fort Sumter. It was a declaration of war against the United States. Those who caused it to be fired felt that this was so. They wished it to be so.

The bombardment was kept up during the day and a part of the night. The outer walls of the fort were battered down. Major Anderson returned the fire as he was able; but his guns were small compared with those of the enemy. The people of Charleston were wild with enthusiasm. Throughout the South the bombardment of Fort Sumter was hailed with joy as the beginning of the end. It was believed that the United States would submit without any determined resistance, and that the Confederate states would then be firmly established.

On the following day, April the 13th, the feeble, half-starved garrison surrendered. The strongest fortress on the South Atlantic coast passed into the hands of the Confederates.

When the news was telegraphed through the North, the effect was wonderful. The people awoke suddenly to a realization of what was going on. The Union broken up, a new government making war upon the United States, the flag insulted and fired upon, triumphant foes rejoicing — these things aroused the dormant patriotism of the nation. Men who had hitherto been willing to let matters drift as they would, understood now the great peril into which the country had drifted. Their fighting spirit was aroused: there was to be no more knuckling down to the South.

President Lincoln at once called for seventy-five thousand volunteers to defend the government and maintain its laws in the South. In all the free states the call was answered with enthusiasm. Not only seventy-five thousand men offered themselves, but thousands more who could not be accepted. Michigan alone offered fifty thousand.

"Ten days ago," said the governor of Iowa, "there were

two parties in this state. Today there is but one, and that one is for the Constitution and Union unconditionally."

Within twenty-four hours, Illinois had forty companies ready; within forty-eight hours, Massachusetts had a fully equipped regiment ready to march. Factories were set to work making arms and ammunition. In every village of the North the tap of the drum was heard. The day of hesitation had passed; the war had begun.

The call was for volunteers who would serve ninety days. Most people believed that the war could not last longer than that. In the North it was thought that the South would submit without much resistance. "To whip those slaveholders will only be a little exercise before breakfast," boasted the over-confident.

But the South had been preparing for war long before this. Every state was armed. General Beauregard was at the head of a strong force, well-equipped and drilled. And every Southerner believed that every Yankee — as all Northerners were called —was an arrant coward. "One Southern soldier is a fair match for ten Yankees," boasted the over-confident.

Other Southern states, which had hitherto been wavering, now joined the ranks of secession — Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas. The remaining slave states, all except Delaware, not only refused to send the troops which the President called for, but were ready at the first favorable moment to withdraw from the Union.

The city of Washington was in the midst of slave territory. The first object of the South would be its capture. If that object could be attained, the success of the Confederacy would be assured. No one understood this better than President Lincoln, and his first care was to assemble a large force for the protection of the capital.

General Winfield Scott, then in his seventy-sixth year, was the highest officer in the regular army. "I have served my country under the flag of the Union for more than fifty years,"

he said, "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."

But age and infirmities would not permit him to take the field. The President and his cabinet decided that some younger man must be chosen to lead the army of the Union. Among all the soldiers in the country they could think of none who was braver, wiser, more trustworthy, than Robert E. Lee of Virginia.

Lee was at that time a colonel in the United States army; he was fifty-four years old; his whole life had been spent in the service of his country. He was descended from one of the oldest and proudest families in Virginia; his father had been the most trusted of the officers in the army of General Washington. Robert E. Lee loved the United States; but, like many another Southern man, he loved his own state better. He was a Virginian, and he believed that his first duty was to be loyal to Virginia. "I cannot imagine a greater calamity," he said, "than the dissolution of the Union."

When the command of the Union army was offered to him, Colonel Lee hesitated. Virginia had not yet seceded. But if she did secede, could he fight against her? Could he fight against his kinsmen and friends, all of whom were Virginians? Most certainly he could not.

Within a week the news came that Virginia had joined the Confederacy. Colonel Lee at once resigned his commission in the United States army. Three days later he was asked to take command of the Virginian troops. "Trusting in Almighty God and an approving conscience," he said, "I devote myself to the service of my native state."

In the meanwhile, Stephen A. Douglas was doing all that he could to awaken the North to a sense of the great peril which threatened the country. He hurried back to Illinois, making many speeches on the way.

"Forget party; remember only your country," he said. "It

is our duty to protect the government and the flag from every assailant, be he who he may." Never was a speaker more in earnest.

At Springfield he made his last great appeal. "The South has no cause of complaint," he said. "The election of Lincoln is a mere pretext. There can be no neutrals in this war — only patriots and traitors."

He allowed himself no rest. He denied himself sleep. He gave all his thoughts, all his strength, to the grand effort of arousing his countrymen to the defense of the Union. He overtaxed his strength. His health failed. In Chicago he was taken ill, and on the 3rd of June he died. He was but forty-eight years of age. His death seemed to be a national calamity, and Mr. Lincoln mourned for him with sorrow as deep and sincere as for a brother. His name is to be remembered as that of one who, although he had made mistakes, was among the most earnest and most able of American patriots.

CHAPTER 9
In Sight of the Capitol

Time and space would fail us to relate the history of the long and terrible war that began with the firing of the Confederate guns on Fort Sumter. It is for us rather to keep our eyes on the sad-faced man at the helm, who steered the ship of state through the dreadful storm of those memorable years.

President Lincoln had called an extra session of Congress to meet on the 4th of July. When that day dawned, the city of Washington was like an armed camp. The streets were filled with soldiers. On every hand were the signs of war. From the dome of the capitol, the Confederate flag could be seen on the distant hills beyond the Potomac, waving over the encampment of the enemy. From every part of the Confederacy armed forces were hurrying northward. "On to Washington!" was the cry of the South. The nation's capital was almost in a state of siege.

When Congress came together, only the Northern states and the border slave states were represented. The seats of the members from the extreme South were vacant.

The President's message was read and listened to with the deepest attention. In it he informed Congress of the condition of the country. He told how in the Southern states the laws of the country had been set at naught; how the arsenals and other public property had been seized; how Fort Sumter had been bombarded; how a large number of United States officers in the army and the navy had taken up arms against their country; how a call for volunteers had been made and cheerfully responded to by every Northern state; and how armed

forces were gathering in Virginia and threatening the seat of government. Finally, he asked Congress to give him the means by which to end the conflict quickly and decisively. To do this he must have four hundred thousand men and four hundred millions of dollars.

Congress acted promptly. It voted to give to the President not only all that he asked, but more. He might have at his disposal five hundred thousand men and five hundred millions of dollars.

And so another call went forth for volunteers. This time half a million men were to be put in the field and they were to serve for three years unless the war should close within a shorter time. Men no longer talked about "whipping the rebels as a pastime before breakfast." They knew now that the full strength of the nation must be put forth; and every patriotic citizen resolved that, if need be, he would give himself and all that he had for the preservation of the great republic. From every Northern state "uprose the mighty voice of the people to cheer the heart of the President. Onward it came, like the rush of many waters," singing

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

A force of men under General Benjamin F. Butler took possession of Old Point Comfort, at the mouth of the James River. General McClellan led an army into West Virginia to prevent any advance of the Confederates in that direction. Other forces were ready to protect the Northwest from invasion by way of Kentucky or the Mississippi. The troops in Missouri were placed under the command of General Fremont, the Western adventurer, who, in the Mexican War, had conquered California for the United States. The harbors of the South were blockaded, and Port Royal in South Carolina soon fell into the hands of Union forces.

But all this while the Confederacy was arming and drilling

great armies for the defense of the South and the invasion of the North; and the cry of "On to Washington" swelled into a chorus of hundreds of thousands of voices.

And then, on the 21st of July, the first great battle was fought. It was fought on Virginia soil, almost within sight of Washington, and is generally known as the first battle of Bull Run. The Union army was commanded by General McDowell; the Confederate, by General Beauregard. The soldiers on both sides were raw, untrained volunteers; but in the Southern army were many officers of note who had been educated in the military academy at West Point and had spent long years in military service. The battle was fierce and bloody, and the Confederates won the day. The Union lines were broken. A panic spread among the soldiers. They turned in wild disorder, and fled in blind dismay back toward Washington. In terrible rout and confusion, they crowded the long bridge across the Potomac, and scarcely paused in their flight until they were safe in the shadow of the capitol.

Safe? Had the Confederates known the extent of their victory, and had they followed their fleeing enemies, Washington would have fallen into their hands that day, and our country would have had a different history. But for some unexplained reason, they halted, hesitated, and then made no advance. The delay gave the panic-stricken Union soldiers time to recover from their fright. The defenses along the Potomac were strengthened. The capital city was saved.

The news of the defeat at Bull Run carried sorrow and dismay to many a Northern home. To the South it gave renewed courage and determination. To Abraham Lincoln, trusting in Providence to give victory to the right, it brought grief, but not discouragement. He must persevere. He must perfect the organization of the army. He must find able commanders and skillful generals for the different departments and divisions. He must see that the soldiers were properly drilled and equipped. And he, above all others, must have

patience, patience, patience. "Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time," he said.

CHAPTER 10
Never Too Busy to Help Others

The storm of war thickened. The life of the nation was threatened on every hand. There were perils from enemies without, from foes within, from selfish partisans, from unwise friends, from ill-guided counselors, from traitors at home and abroad. A single mistake, a single unwise movement, might involve the country in hopeless ruin.

To President Lincoln alone belonged the task of directing, perfecting, harmonizing, all the forces of the government. He must see to it that the lawmakers performed their duties wisely and well; he must direct the movements of the various branches of the army; he must preserve harmony in his cabinet; he must keep in touch with the politicians of both parties in the North; he must know the will and consult the welfare of the people whose servant he was; he must encourage the weak and the timid; he must restrain the rash and the over-bold; he must have an eye single to the preservation of the Union and the Constitution. Did ever a man have heavier burdens to bear?

But President Lincoln was still the same plain man of the people that he had always been. He dressed plainly and lived plainly. He walked where others would have ridden. He found time to look after a multitude of details which another person would have passed over to a clerk. He went out to examine fortifications, to test new guns, to learn the condition of the soldiers in camp.

He liked to listen to entertaining stories; he liked to repeat them to his friends. On his writing desk, among state

papers and documents of the gravest importance, he kept an assortment of joke books and comic almanacs. At one moment he would be absorbed in questions of deepest statecraft; at the next he would be humming the verses of a favorite hymn,

> Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud,

or repeating some quotation that had fixed itself in his mind.

> Mortal man with face of clay,
> Here tomorrow, gone today,

he would chant, as he walked back and forth in his study, pondering upon the vexatious problems which no one could solve but himself. He was never too busy to greet an old friend, or to listen to the appeals of those who were in trouble.

There were many desertions from the army, and military law required that all deserters should be shot. But President Lincoln's big heart had pity for the young fellows, and he pardoned so many that the army officers were alarmed.

"If a man had more than one life," he said on one occasion, "I think a little shooting would not hurt this one; but after he is once dead we cannot bring him back, no matter how sorry we may be. So the boy must be pardoned."

General Butler protested. "The whole army is becoming demoralized. There are desertions every day."

"How can it be stopped?" asked the President.

"By shooting every deserter," answered Butler.

"You may be right," said Mr. Lincoln; "probably are. But, Lord help me, how can I have a butcher's day every Friday in the army of the Potomac?"

Once, at the very turning point of a battle, a soldier was so overcome with fear that he dropped his gun and ran from the field. His action came near throwing his whole company into confusion. After the battle he was tried by court-martial and sentenced to die. His friends appealed to the President.

"I will put the order for execution by," he said, "until I can settle in my mind whether this soldier can better serve the country dead than living."

Another case was that of a cowardly fellow for whom no one could say a good word. Not only had he run away during the heat of battle, but it was shown that he was a thief in his regiment and altogether untrustworthy.

"Certainly this fellow can serve his country better dead than living," said the officer before whom he was tried.

But Mr. Lincoln had known the boy's father, a worthy man and patriot. He took the death warrant and said that he thought he would put it in the pigeonhole with the rest of his "leg cases." "There are cases," he said in explanation, "that you call by that long title, 'Cowardice in the face of the enemy,' but I call them, for short, my leg cases. If Almighty God has given a man a cowardly pair of legs, how can he help running away with them?"

The President never refused to listen to those who appealed to him for help; he was never so taken up with the mighty affairs of the nation as to forget the humble needs of the common people; he was never so overwhelmed with his own burdens and griefs that he could not speak words of sympathy and cheer to others who were sorrowful and broken-hearted. There are many examples that show how truly noble was his soul. The following letter, written to a stricken mother whom he did not know, is one: —

"Dear Madam: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement 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 words 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 bereavement, and leave you 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."

As the months of war went on, troubles and perplexities multiplied around him. He tried to bear up under them. He cultivated cheerfulness and repeated the old-time jokes that had so often relieved a weary hour; but they seemed to have lost their flavor. He laughed now but seldom, and never so heartily as before. Streaks of gray began to appear in his hair. The wrinkles on his face and forehead deepened and multiplied. His eyes, with their far-away look, became sadder and sadder with each passing year. "I feel as though I shall never be glad any more," he said. And yet, without a murmur, without one thought of himself, he stood bravely at his post, bearing the Nation's burdens on his shoulders, and always hoping and working and believing that the right would prevail.

"I am confident," he said, "that the Almighty has His plans, and will work them out; and whether we see it or not, they will be the wisest and best for us."

CHAPTER 11
"Contraband of War"

At the beginning of the war the utmost care was taken not to interfere with slavery in any way. Slaves that escaped and came into the Union lines were promptly sent back to their masters. Some of the Union generals went so far as to make an agreement with Confederate generals that they would put down any attempts which the Negroes might make at a rebellion. Slaves were still property. They were of great service to the Southern army; they were the diggers of trenches, the makers of earthworks, the haulers of supplies, the hardy workmen who relieved the Confederate soldiers of much of the drudgery of camp life.

General Butler, at Fortress Monroe, was the first Union officer to refuse to send escaping slaves back to their masters. He believed that, since they were used, like horses and mules, to aid the enemy, they should be confiscated just as any other war materials that might fall into his hands. "They are contraband of war," he said; and all the slaves that came to him from the enemy's camp were given their freedom. This plan seemed to be so sensible and just that Congress soon afterward passed a law providing that escaped Negroes who had been employed in the Confederate army should be confiscated by the government. From that time until the close of the war every black man from the South was called a "contraband."

But there were not many who tried to escape from slavery. They had been taught by their masters that the Abolitionists of the North were savage monsters who ate all the black men they could catch. Any fate would be better than to fall into

their hands. Working in the trenches was hard, but being eaten by "black Abolitionists" would be a thousand times worse.

About this time General Fremont in Missouri was behaving so unwisely that all the slaveholding states which had remained loyal to the Union were almost on the point of joining the Confederacy. One of his first acts was to issue a proclamation declaring that the lands of all dis-Union men in Missouri should be confiscated and their slaves set free. This was going a great deal farther than the President had wished to go. It raised a storm of protests, even in the North. A whole company of Kentucky volunteers threw down their arms and went home. The Kentucky legislature refused to give any further aid to the government until the proclamation was modified or withdrawn. What could the President do but remove Fremont from his command and declare that his acts were without authority?

"I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game," said he. "Kentucky gone, we cannot hold Missouri, nor, as I think, Maryland. These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us. We would as well consent to separation at once, including the surrender of the capital."

The extreme Abolitionists and many other short-sighted people in the North raised a great cry about this. They accused the President of trying to befriend the slaveholders, and were more bitter than ever toward the "slave hound of Illinois." But Mr. Lincoln stood his ground firmly, and the border slave states remained loyal to the Union.

CHAPTER 12
"One War at a Time"

Soon after this an incident happened which, but for the President's wise course, would have involved our country in a war with Great Britain. The Confederate government had appointed two Southern statesmen, Mason and Slidell, as envoys to visit Europe and, if possible, secure aid from England or France. These men embarked upon a small vessel in Charleston harbor, and on a dark night passed through the blockading fleet outside and sailed to Havana. There they took passage for England on the British mail steamship Trent.

All this was made known to Captain Wilkes of the United States sloop San Jacinto. On the following day he waylaid the Trent in the Bahama Channel, fired a shot across her bows, and brought her to. He then sent a company of marines on board who seized Mason and Slidell and fetched them off to the San Jacinto. The English captain and crew protested that this was an offense against the British flag under which they were sailing; but Captain Wilkes paid no heed to their words. He permitted the Trent to go on her way; but he carried Mason and Slidell to Boston harbor, and they were shut up in Fort Warren as prisoners of war.

In the North there was great enthusiasm. Short-sighted men applauded the act of Captain Wilkes; and even the Secretary of the Navy gave it his official approval. In the South there was also enthusiasm. The shrewd leaders of the Confederacy felt sure that Great Britain would demand satisfaction for the insult that had been offered her by waylaying one of her vessels on the high seas. If they could thus secure Great

Britain as their ally, victory would be assured. In England the sympathies of the ruling class were with the South. They wanted to see the great republic broken up and destroyed. Many of them would have been glad of any excuse for declaring war upon the United States.

President Lincoln was not carried away by the foolish clamor and boasting in the North. Captain Wilkes's act, far from being heroic, was both unwise and wrong, and the President did not hesitate to say so. "We fought Great Britain," he said, "for insisting on the right to do precisely what Captain Wilkes has done. If Great Britain shall now protest against the act, and demand the release of Mason and Slidell, we must give them up, apologize for the act as a violation of our doctrines, and thus forever bind her over to keep the peace in relation to neutrals, and so acknowledge that she has been wrong for sixty years."

And the British government did protest. More than this, they demanded that reparation and proper apologies should be made within seven days; and they began to get ready for immediate war. Very wisely and without any loss of dignity on the part of our government, the President yielded. He was supported in that course by Secretary Seward, and by a few of the wisest among the leaders of the North. But from the masses of the people there was a great cry of disappointment, and Mr. Lincoln and his cabinet were soundly berated as cowards unfit to be intrusted with the affairs of the nation. The President was unmoved by their clamor. "One war at a time," he said; and he calmly returned to the manifold duties of the hour. Once more he had saved the nation from disaster.

As soon as the people had taken time for sober second thought, they understood how wisely, and with what true statesmanship, he had acted; and they shuddered as they thought of what might have happened had he yielded to their wishes and not stood bravely and firmly by the right.

CHAPTER 13
Listening to Advice

The weary months came and passed, and still the war went on. Sometimes the Union gained an advantage; sometimes the Confederacy won a victory. There was no telling when or how the dreadful conflict would end. There were calls for more soldiers and more soldiers and more soldiers. In the North, hundreds of thousands of men left plows, looms, forges, counting-houses, stores, factories, schools, and cheerfully gave up everything for the sake of a united country. As they marched to the front they sang: —

> We are springing to the call of our brothers gone before,
> Shouting the battle cry of freedom,
> And we'll fill the vacant ranks with a million freemen more,
> Shouting the battle cry of freedom.
>
> The Union forever, hurrah, boys, hurrah,
> Down with the traitor and up with the stars,
> While we rally round the flag, boys, rally once
> Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

In the South there was a still more general outpouring. First all the able-bodied men, and finally the boys above sixteen, and the grandfathers, went out to defend their homes and the states of their section against what they believed were the aggressions of the North. On the great plantations, once so prosperous, few were left save the women and children and slaves. And the Southern soldiers had also their rallying song:

> Southrons, hear your country call you!
> Up, lest worse than death befall you!

To arms! to arms! to arms, in Dixie!
Lo! all the beacon fires are lighted —
Let all hearts be now united!
To arms! to arms! to arms, in Dixie!

Advance the flag of Dixie!
Hurrah! hurrah!
For Dixie's land we take our stand,
And live or die for Dixie.
To arms! to arms!
And conquer peace for Dixie!
To arms! to arms!
And conquer peace for Dixie!

To President Lincoln, every passing day brought new perplexities, every hour added something to the tremendous burden which he alone must carry. Generals upon whom he had depended for victory proved incompetent; they had to be removed, and abler commanders selected to take their places. Changes were made in the cabinet. Men from whom he should have received sympathy and aid proved to be stumbling blocks in his way.

The people became impatient and discontented. They could not understand why the war should continue so long, and yet so little be accomplished. Money was scarce, taxes were burdensome, food and clothing were very costly, factories were closed, the distress that always accompanies war was becoming more general every day. And there were those who blamed Abraham Lincoln for everything; there were thousands of men in the North who thought that they themselves were better able to manage the affairs of the nation than was the President. And then there sprang up a peace party, composed of men who wanted to end the war at any price — sympathizers with the South, disappointed politicians, cowards, Northern "doughfaces," and a few well-meaning, but short-sighted patriots.

But the President went steadily forward in the course which he believed to be safest and wisest. He listened to the advice of others, even when offered in an unfriendly spirit; he bore patiently with the complaints which came to his ears; he was lenient and forbearing even with those who abused him openly. The consciousness that he was right gave him strength.

There were men in the North who insisted that the war was being carried on for the purpose of destroying slavery; they called the Union soldiers "abolition hirelings," and "Lincoln's dogs"; they did all that they could to assist the South. On the other hand, there were Abolitionists who insisted that the war was being delayed for the purpose of befriending the slaveholders; they called the President "a supporter of slavery"; they declared that the war was a failure, and that the Confederate states should be given their independence.

Very gradually, however, a change was taking place in the minds of patriotic men who had hitherto insisted that slavery should not be molested. No one observed this change more quickly, or with greater satisfaction, than the President. As fast as he thought the country was ready for it, he moved toward what he had all along believed must come — emancipation. First, the "contrabands" were taken care of; then a law was passed to permit these contrabands to enlist in the Union army; then a few black regiments were formed to be commanded by white officers; then Congress adopted a resolution in favor of the gradual emancipation of slaves, their owners to be paid for them out of the United States treasury.

But there were some who thought that the President was not moving fast enough; they insisted that he must put an end to slavery at once, no matter what the consequences might be. To these the President made answer in a letter which he sent to Horace Greeley. It was printed in the New York Tribune: —

"My paramount object," he wrote, "is to save the Union,

and not either to save or destroy slavery.

"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; 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 this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.

"I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more whenever I believe doing more will help the cause.

"I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

"I have here stated my purpose according to my views of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

Some weeks later a number of clergymen from Chicago called upon the President and presented a petition for the immediate emancipation of all the slaves in the country. Mr. Lincoln answered them in his usual common-sense way.

"What good would a proclamation of emancipation from me do, especially as we are now situated? … Would my word free the slaves, when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the rebel states? Is there a single court, or magistrate, or individual that would be influenced by it there? And what reason is there to think it would have any greater effect upon the slaves than the late law of Congress, which I approved, and which offers protection and freedom to the slaves of rebel masters who come within our lines? Yet I cannot learn that the law has caused a single slave to come over to us. …

"Do not misunderstand me because I have mentioned these objections. They indicate the difficulties that have thus far prevented my action in some such way as you desire.

"I have not decided against a proclamation of liberty to the slaves, but hold the matter under advisement. And I can assure you that the subject is on my mind, by day and night, more than any other. Whatever shall appear to be God's will, I will do."

The war still lagged, and few besides Lincoln could see that any real progress had been made. Congress appointed a Committee on the Conduct of the War which appeared to do nothing but stand in the President's way. The peace party declared that only the worst of tyrants would attempt to force eight millions of people to submit to his government. The members of the cabinet could not agree. People became more and more impatient; and some, whom nothing could have satisfied, cried out, "Oh, that we had a Cromwell to lead us!"

But President Lincoln, sublime and unmoved, pursued the course which his conscience and good judgment told him was right. "Whatever shall appear to be God's will, I will do."

CHAPTER 14
Nearing the Great Issue

One day in midsummer, the President called a meeting of the cabinet. Not one of the members knew why they had been called. When all were seated, Mr. Lincoln took up his favorite joke book, "Artemus Ward — His Book." He opened the volume and read to the dignified gentlemen around him a whole chapter of well-worn jokes and droll conceits. He had read it dozens of times before, but now he read it as though it were entirely new to him. He laughed at every witty thought. His merriment was so boyish, so easily called forth, that his grave listeners were more pained than amused. They began to wonder whether the President had not lost his mind.

He finished the chapter. He closed the book and returned it to its place. Then his whole manner, the tone of his voice, the glance of his eye, the expression of his face, changed in a moment. Every man in the room felt awed as in the presence of a superior intelligence.

The President then informed the cabinet that he had a very important matter to lay before them. He did not expect to ask their advice, for he had fully made up his mind in regard to it. He was willing, however, to listen to suggestions. "Things have gone on, from bad to worse, until I feel that we have about reached the end of our rope on the plan of operations we have been pursuing. We must change our tactics, or lose the game. I am now determined upon the adoption of the policy of emancipation; and I have prepared the draft of a proclamation to which I ask you to listen."

He read the proclamation. The secretaries listened in

silence. It proclaimed freedom to all the slaves within those parts of the South which were at that time controlled by the Confederate government.

A few slight alterations were made. Then Secretary Seward suggested that it would not be wise to issue it just then, when the Union armies appeared to be so pressed; he feared that it would be viewed "as the last measure of an exhausted government, a cry for help"; he dreaded that it would be considered "as our last shriek on the retreat." Would it not be better to wait until the Union had gained some decisive victory, and then in the moment of success make it known to the world?

The President saw the wisdom of the suggestion. He laid the proclamation aside, and waited.

CHAPTER 15
Antietam and Emancipation

Only a few weeks later, General Lee, at the head of the Confederate army of Virginia, crossed the Potomac for the purpose of invading the North. Then it was that President Lincoln resolved fully upon the course he would pursue. He made a solemn vow that if Lee should be driven back he would "crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves."

On the 17th of September the great battle of Antietam was fought. The Confederate army was defeated. It was driven back across the Potomac. The intended invasion of the North ended in disaster.

President Lincoln was at the Soldiers' Home, near Washington, when he heard the news. He determined to wait no longer. He sat down at once, and with great care wrote a second draft of the proclamation. Here and there he made a correction; here and there he added a necessary word or erased one that seemed out of place. When the work was finished, he hastened back to the city and called the cabinet together to listen a second time to what he had written. He alone was the author of the proclamation; he alone would be responsible for whatever might be its outcome. "I must do the best I can," he said, "and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take."

On Monday, the 22d of September, just five days after the battle of Antietam, the proclamation was published to the world.

"I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of

America, and Commander-in-chief of the army and navy thereof, do hereby proclaim and declare that…on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any state, or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." That was the gist and substance of the proclamation. It still left the door open for any of the seceded states to return to the Union and thereby save slavery within its limits.

This proclamation was only a preliminary one. The final proclamation was issued on New Year's Day, 1863. Then it was that the great act of emancipation was completed. "By virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-chief…in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure, … I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within 'certain designated states and parts of states' are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons."

Had the proclamation been made six months earlier, it is probable that the people would not have approved of it at all. But the best men in the North had, little by little, been brought to the belief that the Union could never be restored until the cause of disunion had been removed. Thousands of persons, also, had become so tired of the war and so tired of supporting an institution which produced only discord and disaster, that they were ready to welcome anything that would promise relief.

There were extremists, however, who cried out against the President, and tried to prove that he had done a very wrong thing. Dissatisfied politicians in the North spoke boldly and bitterly against the proclamation.

"The war is no longer a war for the Union," they cried. "It is an abolition war — a war for the –– !"

On the other hand, there were Abolitionists who were equally dissatisfied and bitter. Nothing that the President had done or could do was pleasing to them.

"He has been forced into this course," said some.

"He is not sincere," said others, who had persisted in calling him "the slave hound of Illinois."

"He has not done enough; he is still truckling to the slave power," said the extremists.

The dissatisfaction was indeed quite general. If a vote had been taken at that time, it is possible that a majority in many of the free states would have cast their ballots against the proclamation. One branch of the Republican party, however, supported the President; the officers and soldiers in the army were enthusiastic in praising his course; Congress approved of what he had done. He himself was conscious that he had done the right thing, at the right time, and in the right way. What had he to fear?

The proclamation did not promise freedom to all the slaves in the South. In the border states of Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri slavery was not molested by it. There were also several counties and towns in some of the seceded states that were loyal to the Union; and all such places were left "precisely as though the proclamation had not been made."

It was the beginning, however, of the end of slavery; and before many months had passed everybody saw clearly that such was the fact. "In the light of history we can see that by this edict Mr. Lincoln gave slavery its vital thrust, its mortal doom. It was the word of decision, the judgment without appeal, the sentence of doom."[5]

The end of slavery in the United States came on the last

[5] Nicolay and Hay.

day of January, 1865. On that day Congress adopted the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, declaring that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, … shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

More than four millions of bondmen were thus made free.

CHAPTER 16
The Tide Turns

To the North the skies began to grow brighter. The Union armies were gaining ground. Today they might suffer defeat, but tomorrow they would win a victory that would more than make up for the loss. The resources of the Confederate states were beginning to fail.

General Ulysses S. Grant had gained many important victories in the Southwest. Nothing seemed impossible to him. He besieged Vicksburg, the last but one of the Confederate strongholds on the Mississippi. For nearly five months he tried by every possible expedient to capture the well-fortified place. At length, on the 4th of July, the long siege was brought to an end. The Southern soldiers marched out of the city which they had so long defended. They silently stacked their arms before the fortifications, while the Northern soldiers looked on as silently, and yet elated with their long-delayed victory. The Mississippi River, in its entire length, was at last in the possession of the Union. The Confederacy was cut in two.

That same memorable 4th of July found the Confederate army in the East crushed, defeated, and retreating before the forces of the Union. General Lee had made a second attempt to carry the war into the North. He had advanced into Pennsylvania. At Gettysburg the invaders attacked the forces of the Union that were drawn up to repel them. During the first three days in July the battle raged fearfully. The slaughter was dreadful. More than twenty thousand Union soldiers were killed or wounded. The loss on the side of the Confederates was almost as great — it was even greater, for they had fewer

reserves, and their resources were fast being exhausted. The third day told the tale. The Southerners were beaten, driven back. Those who survived retired slowly, making their way sullenly back to Virginia. General Meade, commanding the Union army, followed in their wake; but the struggle at Gettysburg had been so fearful that he cautiously refrained from provoking another.

The tide had turned at last. From the day of the repulse at Gettysburg the cause of the Confederacy was hopeless.

President Lincoln was much disappointed because General Meade did not follow up his victory and deal a still more crushing blow to the Confederates. It would have ended the war, he thought.

"My dear general," he wrote to Meade, "I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to close upon him would, in connection with your late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely."

And it was prolonged, but always with the odds against the South.

Ten days after these events, the President issued a proclamation, setting apart the 6th day of August as a day of national thanksgiving. He called upon all loyal people everywhere to observe the day and "to render the homage due to the Divine majesty for the wonderful things He has done in the nation's behalf."

In October the President issued another proclamation of similar import, setting apart the last Thursday in November as a day in which all the people of the land should unite in giving thanks to God for all His mercies. Thus was instituted the Thanksgiving Day — that national November festival — so dear to all Americans. Every year, save one, since that memorable 1863, the President of the United States, following the example of Lincoln, has sent forth a proclamation designating the last Thursday in November as the day in

which God's bounties are to be especially remembered with thanksgiving and praise.

The battlefield of Gettysburg was set apart as a great burying ground, or national cemetery, for the soldiers who had lost their lives in the service of their country. On the 19th of November the cemetery was dedicated with very solemn and impressive ceremonies. The great men of the nation were there. Edward Everett, the most accomplished public speaker of that time, delivered a long and scholarly oration. It was expected that the President would also give an appropriate and perhaps lengthy address. He arose at the proper moment and drew from his hat a half-sheet of foolscap, on which he had written a memorandum of that which he intended to say. The speech was brief: —

"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."

That was all. The shortness of the speech caused people to think but little of it at the time. The brilliant effort of Edward Everett, the orator, was believed to be the event of the day.

"Lincoln's address was a great disappointment," said Mr. Seward.

Mr. Lincoln himself regretted that he had not given more time to it. "I tell you it won't scour," he said to a friend. "It is a flat failure. The people are disappointed."

But little by little it began to dawn upon the minds of men of all classes that the little speech was one of the noblest orations delivered in modern times. The long and learned discourse of Edward Everett is now but little thought of; nobody reads it, nobody praises it. But Lincoln's three-minute speech has taken rank among the classics of the world; it is read and admired, it is reread and pondered upon, wherever the English language is known. If all else in prose that has been written or spoken in America should be forgotten, Lincoln's address at Gettysburg would still be remembered.

CHAPTER 17
Renominated

The war still dragged slowly along. The Confederacy was near the end of its resources. Every day the cause of the seceding states became more hopeless; every day the distress and destitution of the Southern people increased. It was plain that unless some sort of help should come from outside, the South must sooner or later submit. The time was near at hand for another presidential election. The people of the North were still by no means united. If a new President — one pledged to make peace at any cost — could be elected, the South might still have hope. And so, in the face of every discouragement, in the face of defeat, of an exhausted treasury, of an impoverished country, the Confederate armies still boldly kept the field.

It was known that President Lincoln wished to show every possible leniency to the men of the South. Other persons might cherish bitter hatred toward the foes of the Union, but he had no such feeling. Other men desired to punish in the sternest manner, as rebels and traitors, all those who had taken up arms against the government; but his sole wish was to restore the Union without causing unnecessary distress, without doing aught for revenge. He went so far as to issue a proclamation granting amnesty to all men of the South, except certain officers and leaders, who would take a simple oath to support the Constitution and the Union. He went even farther, and urged the passage of a law providing that slaveholders should receive pay for their slaves.

He practiced the true Christian principle. To him all men

were his brothers. If some had erred, the greater was the pity; he cherished no ill-will toward them; he knew no such word as revenge.

As we have already learned, however, there were two classes of men in the North who were never satisfied. One was composed of that extreme type of Abolitionists who, from opposing slavery, had come to hate the South with unreasoning bitterness. The other was composed of men who wanted peace even though the Union should be destroyed. Mr. Lincoln's kindliness toward the South was misconstrued; and his suggestion that the slaves should be paid for raised a storm of indignation even among men who had supported him in all other measures. Emerson wrote: —

> Pay ransom to the owner,
> Ay, fill it up to the brim!
> Who is the owner? The slave is owner,
> And ever was. Pay him.

Certain Republican politicians who wanted a more vigorous prosecution of the war, started a movement to prevent Mr. Lincoln's being renominated for the presidency. They said that his policy had been "imbecile and vacillating," and that a stronger man was needed at the helm. Horace Greeley wrote and spoke against him. Wendell Phillips declared that the reelection of Lincoln would mean the downfall of the Union, or something worse. General Grant, who had proved himself to be the ablest of all the Union generals in the field, was spoken of as a good man for the presidency.

"If the people think," said Mr. Lincoln, "that General Grant can end the rebellion sooner by being in this place, I shall be very glad to get out of it."

But General Grant would have nothing to do with those dissatisfied people, and declared that Lincoln must be reelected. A few of the radicals finally got together and nominated General John Charles Fremont as their candidate for

the presidency. When Mr. Lincoln heard of it, and was told that the convention was very small, he took up his Bible and read from the First Book of Samuel, "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them; and there were with him about four hundred men."

In June a national convention of Union men, composed largely of Republicans, but partly also of patriotic Democrats, met in Baltimore and nominated Abraham Lincoln for re-election to the high office which he had filled so long.

Andrew Johnson of Tennessee was nominated for the vice presidency. He was a Southern man, having been born in a slave state. He had been a slaveholder. But he had always been a stern defender of the Union and a fierce enemy of secession. He had won great confidence as the military governor of his own state; and his nomination secured the support of many "War Democrats," especially in the border states.

CHAPTER 18
Union or Disunion?

A national convention of Democrats met in Chicago late in the summer, and nominated General George B. McClellan for the presidency. This convention represented only those members of the party who were opposed to the continuance of the war; for the so-called War Democrats were for the most part in favor of the reelection of President Lincoln, and would therefore vote with the Union party. "After four years of failure to restore the Union by war," said the members of this convention, "immediate efforts should be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate convention of the states, or other practicable means, to the end that peace may be restored on the basis of the federal Union of the states."

President Lincoln pursued steadfastly the course which his rare good judgment and his conscience told him was the best for the country. Many persons proposed plans for bringing the war to an end, and every one believed himself to be wiser than the President. But Jefferson Davis declared that no terms of peace would be considered that did not recognize the independence of the South. "The North was mad and blind," he said; "it would not let us govern ourselves; and so the war came; and now it must go on till the last man of this generation falls in his tracks, and his children seize his musket and fight our battles, unless you acknowledge our right to self government. We are not fighting for slavery, we are fighting for independence; and that, or extermination, we will have."

"We accepted this war for an object, a worthy object," said President Lincoln, "and the war will end when that object

is attained. Under God, I hope it never will end until that time. Speaking of the present campaign, General Grant is reported to have said, 'I am going through on this line if it takes all summer.' This war has taken three years; it was begun or accepted upon the line of restoring the national authority over the whole national domain, and for the American people, as far as my knowledge enables me to speak, I say we are going through on this line if it takes three years more."

CHAPTER 19
Elected Again

The last weary summer of the war passed slowly enough. Unmoved by the clamors of his enemies, undisturbed by their thousand adverse criticisms, the lone pilot of the ship of state stood steadfastly by the helm, confidently hoping that the storm was near its end.

"I see the President almost every day," wrote Walt Whitman. "He never sleeps at the White House during the hot season, but has quarters at a healthy location, some three miles north of the city, the Soldier's Home, a United States military establishment. I saw him this morning about 8.30, coming in to business, riding on Vermont Avenue, near I Street.

"He always has a company of twenty-five or thirty cavalry, with sabers drawn, and held upright over their shoulders. The party makes no great show in uniforms or horses. Mr. Lincoln, on the saddle, generally rides a good-sized, easy-going gray horse, is dressed in plain black, somewhat rusty and dusty, wears a black stiff hat, and looks as ordinary in attire, etc., as the commonest man. A lieutenant, with yellow straps, rides at his left, and following behind, two by two, come the cavalrymen in their yellow-striped jackets.

"They are generally going at a slow trot, as that is the pace set them by the one they wait upon. The sabers and accouterments clank, and the entirely unornamental cortege, as it trots toward Lafayette Square, arouses no sensation, only some curious stranger stops and gazes. I see very plainly Abraham Lincoln's dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines,

the eyes, etc., always to me with a latent sadness in the expression.

"Earlier in the summer I occasionally saw the President and his wife, toward the latter part of the afternoon, out in a barouche, on a pleasure ride through the city. Mrs. Lincoln was dressed in complete black, with a long crape veil. The equipage of the plainest kind, only two horses, and they nothing extra.

"They passed me once very close, and I saw the President in the face fully, as they were moving slow, and his look, though abstracted, happened to be directed steadily in my eye. He bowed and smiled, but far beneath his smile I noticed well the expression I have alluded to. None of the artists or pictures have caught the subtle and indirect expression of this man's face. One of the great painters of two or three centuries ago is needed."

The election came in November. Of the states that voted on that day Abraham Lincoln carried every one but three. Of the electoral votes he received 212, while only 21 were cast for McClellan. There was no longer any doubt as to how the President was regarded by the country at large. His enemies and detractors were much weaker than they had supposed themselves to be. What could they do now but keep silent, and permit the man of the people to pursue his own course to the end.

CHAPTER 20
"Let Us Strive on To Finish the Work"

The end was surely drawing nigh. Nearly the whole of the South was under the control of the Union forces. General Sherman, at the head of a victorious army, was marching to the sea through Georgia. Charleston was taken, and the American flag was again floating over Fort Sumter. In Tennessee, the Confederate army under General Hood was routed and almost destroyed. In Virginia, General Grant was besieging Petersburg and threatening Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. General Robert E. Lee, with all that was left of his once splendid army, was making the last desperate stand in defense of the Southern cause.

On the 4th of March, President Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address. Like his address at Gettysburg; it was very brief, nobly worded, compact with thought, full of tenderness, breathing the very gospel of the brotherhood of man. Not a word did it contain of boasting over victories or of rejoicing over the triumph of his cause — much less of exulting over the defeat of the South. "It had all the solemnity of a father's last admonition and blessing to his children before he lay down to die," says one who listened to it.

The address will be remembered and repeated in ages to come as among the noblest utterances of modern times. You may read it many times, and at each reading you may discover some new beauty or some deep thought worthy of being remembered and pondered upon.

"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 these 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."

No other inaugural address was ever so brief as this; but it will endure in the hearts and memories of the people long

after all others are forgotten. "America never had another President who found such words in the depth of his heart."

CHAPTER 21
In Richmond

On the 3rd of April General Grant entered Petersburg, which had been abandoned by the Confederates, and at about the same time General Lee, with his broken and discouraged army, marched out of Richmond. The President, who had been waiting for some time at City Point, hastened to join General Grant and with him walked through the deserted streets of Petersburg. On the following morning he embarked on a government gunboat, and, with no companion but his son Tad, went up to Richmond, of which General Weitzel had just taken possession.

Silently and without any triumphal display he entered the fallen capital of the Confederacy. The city was full of confusion; angry and drunken men were filling the air with threats and curses; houses were burning; the Negroes, turned loose upon the world, were wild with their new-found freedom. Yet the President without one thought for his own safety walked through the streets unattended. The day was warm, and his great mind was filled with many conflicting emotions. He was "perplexed and suffering." In one hand he carried his hat with which he was trying to fan himself. The perspiration rose in drops upon his heated, careworn face. In his eyes was that old-time, far-away expression, as though he were seeing visions of another world.

But, as he walked, the fact soon became known and was repeated among the blacks that the tall, homely stranger was "President Linkum." Their enthusiasm at seeing him knew no bounds. They crowded around him, they followed him with

blessings. Hats and handkerchiefs were tossed into the air; the young danced and shouted, and the old wept tears of joy. Cries of "Glory! Hallelujah!" were heard on every hand.

One old Aunty had a sick white child in her arms, who was alarmed at the surrounding riot, and was crying to go home; but the good Negress kept trying to get the child to gaze at the President, which she was afraid to do, and she would try to turn the child's head in that direction, and would turn around herself, in order to accomplish the same object. "See yeah, honey," she would urge, "look at de Savior, an' you'll git well. Touch the hem of his garment, an' yo' pain'll be done gone."

Another black woman, crazed with delight, could do nothing but jump up and down, clapping her hands and shouting, "Bless de Lord! Bless de Lord! Bless de Lord!"

On every side young and old were springing into the air, spinning around in circles, knocking their heads together, shouting in each other's ears: —

"God bress Massa Linkum!"

"He's de Messiah, suah!"

"Oh, dis am de judgment day!"

"I'se on de mount of rejoicin'!"

"Come, Lord, I'se ready to go!"

"I see de chariot of fire!"

"My tribulations all done gone!"

"Jerusalem, my happy home!"

"Dere'll be no more sighin' dar!"

"May de good Lord bress you, President Linkum!"

The President, embarrassed and painfully disconcerted, bowed silently to his humble friends and moved slowly on. But soon the street became so packed with the wild multitude that a body of soldiers was sent to clear the way. The President was escorted to the house in which General Weitzel had his headquarters. He did not know, or if he knew he took no thought of the fact, that it was the very house which Jefferson

Davis had occupied as President of the Southern Confederacy, and from which he had hastily fled only two days before. Overcome with the strain of the last few hours, he sank into the first chair that was offered him. It was the chair which the Confederate chieftain had used at his writing desk.

CHAPTER 22
Friday, the Fourteenth of April

On the 9th of April, at Appomattox Courthouse, General Lee surrendered to General Grant. The half-starved Confederate soldiers were supplied with rations by their victors, and each officer was permitted to retain his side arms, his baggage, and his horse. Three days later the remnant of the army which had so long and so bravely withstood the superior forces of the Union had dispersed in every direction. The terrible war which for four years had desolated the country was at an end.

The Union was saved, and Abraham Lincoln's work was done.

The 14th of April was Good Friday, the day which the Christian world observes as the anniversary of the crucifixion of the Saviour. In the afternoon the President, feeling relieved in a measure from the great burden which he had borne so long, went driving with Mrs. Lincoln. He was in fine spirits, and talked and laughed with a cheerfulness of manner which he had not shown for years. His wife did not understand it, she grew uneasy. "I have seen you thus only once before," she said half reproachfully, "and that was just before our dear Willie died."

That evening President Lincoln with his wife and a few friends attended the theater. At a few minutes past ten o'clock an assassin, whose name may well be forgotten, entered the box in which the presidential party sat. All were intent upon the play, and no one saw him enter. He pointed a pistol at the back of the President's head and fired. He leaped down upon the stage, shouting: "Sic semper tyrannis!

The South is avenged!" Then he ran behind the scenes and out by the stage door.

The President fell forward. His eyes closed. He neither saw, nor heard, nor felt anything that was taking place. Kind arms carried him to a private house not far away. But there was no hope.

At twenty minutes past seven o'clock the next morning the watchers at his bedside announced that he was dead.

The whole nation wept for him. In the South as well as in the North the people bowed themselves in grief. Those who had been his enemies and detractors suddenly began to realize how wonderful a man he was — how great his intellect, how tender his heart, how true in all his acts. In every part of the world there was sincere mourning; and in every civilized land tributes of sorrow and appreciation and love were paid to his memory.

His body was taken to Springfield, where it rests in a tomb built by the people of the country which he saved from dismemberment and ruin. When the monument that stands over his tomb was dedicated, General Grant spoke truly the conviction of every patriotic heart, "In his death the nation lost its greatest hero; in his death the South lost its most just friend."

CHAPTER 23
Elegy

Walt Whitman, the "good gray poet" who had so often, during the battle summers, watched the President riding through the streets of Washington, has left us the following noble tribute to the Captain who so bravely steered the ship of state through the storm and stress of civil war: —

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths — for you the shores a-crowding.
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here, captain! dear rather!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream—that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

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

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores! and ring, O bells!
But I, without mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Abraham Lincoln: His Story

Samuel Scoville, Jr.

Author's Note

The author takes this opportunity of expressing his obligation to Dr. Talcott Williams, head of the Department of Journalism of Columbia University, for access to his scrapbook of Lincolniana, covering a period of many years. For the facts and in some cases for the phrasing of parts of this sketch the author is indebted to the host of unknown writers included in Dr. Williams' collection.

The author has also consulted and made use of the following works: *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, by John G. Nicolay and John Hay; *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by Ida M. Tarbell; *Abraham Lincoln — The Boy and the Man*, by James Morgan; *Abraham Lincoln the Christian*, by Rev. William J. Johnson; *Lincoln the Lawyer*, by Frederick T. Hill; *Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by J. G. Holland; and *The Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by John G. Nicolay and John Hay. Wherever possible the writer has allowed Lincoln to speak for himself.

Samuel Scoville, Jr.
Philadelphia, March, 1918.

Foreword

More than half a century ago the feet of this nation had slipped to the very brink of the pit and were scorched with fire. Then came the Man. Still his words ring down the years a message to us who are today giving of our best for the freedom of the world:

"This conflict will settle the question, at least for centuries to come, whether man is capable of governing himself, and consequently is of greater importance to the free than to the slaves."

"We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth."

"Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

CHAPTER 1
The Boy

In every century are born men whose lives bring messages of help and hope to those who come after. Such an one was Abraham Lincoln. The year of his birth, 1809, was a lion-year. Charles Darwin was born the same day; Mendelssohn, Edgar Allen Poe, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Alfred Tennyson, and William Ewart Gladstone in the same year. Few boys of today start life so handicapped by hardships or with fewer opportunities. Lincoln knew little about his ancestors. In later life he said that he was more concerned to know what his grandfather's grandson would be than who his grandfather had been.

One of his grandfathers was named Abraham Lincoln, and went as a pioneer to Kentucky — then the "Dark and Bloody Ground" claimed and guarded by fierce Indian tribes. There, near where the city of Louisville now stands, he cleared a field in the forest, not far from a stockade erected by other settlers, and built a cabin. A schoolmaster of that time remembers boarding in a similar cabin, which had but one room sixteen feet square, where lived a father, mother, ten children, three dogs, and two cats. It was so cold at night that he slept on his shoes in order to prevent them from freezing too stiff to be worn the next day.

One morning in the year 1784 this first Abraham Lincoln started with his three sons, Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas, to work at a little clearing near the cabin. Suddenly from a nearby thicket sounded the crack of a rifle, and this first Kentucky Lincoln fell back dead. Josiah ran to the stockade for help.

Mordecai dashed back to the cabin and took down his father's rifle just as an Indian, in full war paint, reached Thomas, a little boy of six, who had stayed by his father's body. It was necessary to shoot quick and straight to save his brother's life. Aiming through a loophole at a white string of wampum on the Indian's breast, Mordecai dropped him dead while Thomas escaped into the cabin. From there Mordecai fought off the other Indians until help came from the stockade.

The sight of his father's death turned this oldest boy Mordecai into an Indian-hunter, and he spent his life in stalking and killing Indians wherever he could find them. Thomas, the father of Abraham Lincoln, grew up a wandering laboring boy, with just enough education to write his name. Drifting from one job to another he became a carpenter and married Nancy Hanks, the niece of the man in whose shop he worked. The young couple went to housekeeping in a log cabin which had one room, one door, and one window, and was furnished with a spinning-wheel, a loom, and a feather bed.

There, in Hardin County, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born, and there he lived until he was seven years old. Lincoln's only playmate was his sister, and his playground the lonely forest. With this sister he went to school now and then under wandering school-teachers, who held school in a deserted cabin made of round logs with a dirt floor and small holes for windows covered with greased paper. There he learned his alphabet.

The War of 1812 was being fought at this time. "I had been fishing one day," he once told a friend in speaking about these times, "and had caught a little fish, which I was taking home. I met a soldier in the road and having been told at home that we must be good to the soldiers, I gave him my fish."

In April, 1816, Thomas Lincoln sold his farm for four hundred gallons of whiskey and twenty dollars, built a raft, and started down the Ohio River to find a new home in

Indiana. On the way the raft capsized, but he saved his tools and most of the whiskey. On the Indiana shore he chose some land for his new farm and then went back for his family. The last thing that the little boy remembers of his Kentucky home was that his mother took him and his sister to say good-bye to the little brother whom they were leaving behind in an unmarked grave in the wilderness.

On two borrowed horses, with some bedding and a few pans and kettles, the Lincoln family cut their way through the forest for eighteen miles to Little Pigeon Creek. There Thomas Lincoln hurriedly built a shed out of saplings entirely open on one side, and in this the family lived a whole year while he cleared a corn patch and built a rough cabin.

All through the freezing winter storms they huddled together in this rude camp. Finally the new log cabin was built and the family moved in. One can gain an idea of how hurriedly and roughly it was put together from a memorandum made by Abraham Lincoln in later years: "A few days after the completion of his eighth year," he wrote, "in the absence of his father, a flock of wild turkeys approached the new log cabin, and Abraham, with a new rifle gun, standing inside, shot through a crack and killed one of them. He has never since pulled trigger on any larger game."

The cabin had no window other than the large cracks which he mentions, nor any door to shut out the sleet and snow which drifted in through the doorway. The bare earth which served for a floor turned to mud during the winter thaws. The little boy's bed was a heap of loose leaves in a loft, which he reached by climbing up on pegs driven into the wall. Sometimes the family had nothing to eat but roast potatoes, and a neighbor remembers that peeled, sliced raw potatoes were passed around for dessert. Sometimes on cold days the children would carry a hot roast potato with them on their way to school to keep their hands warm. "They were pretty pinching times," wrote Abraham Lincoln in after years.

In 1818, when Abraham was nine years old, a mysterious disease nearly wiped out the small community at Little Pigeon Creek. It was called the "milk-sick" and attacked cattle and humans alike. Nancy Hanks Lincoln was stricken down with it. There was no doctor within thirty-five miles, and under the swift fever she died before one could be called. Her last message to her boy, as she lay dying, was to be good to his father and sister, and to love his kin and worship God. She was buried in a rude coffin on a knoll near by, with no prayer or service over the grave. Months later the little boy learned to write, and his first letter, addressed to a wandering preacher, brought the latter to preach a funeral sermon over the lonely, snow-covered grave.

Before the next winter was over, the father went back to Kentucky and so successfully courted a widow, Sarah Bush Johnston, that they were married the morning after he called upon her. This second marriage was the beginning of a better life for the two little Lincoln children. The new mother had so much property that a four-horse team was needed to bring it all to Little Pigeon Creek; and for the first time in his life Abraham Lincoln slept on a feather bed, with a pillow and blankets and even a quilt. From her, too, he received his first woolen shirt, which took the place of the deerskin one that he had always worn before. The shiftless father was forced to make a door, lay a floor, and cut out a window, which was covered with greased paper instead of glass.

Sarah Bush Lincoln was an honest, energetic Christian woman, who learned to love Abraham quite as dearly as her own children. He owed much to her love and care. It was she who persuaded the father to let him go to school. The boy would walk nine miles a day and do his studying at night in the light of a fire made from shavings, while his figuring was done with a bit of charcoal on the back of a wooden shovel, which he would whittle clean when it could hold no more. His pen was the quill of a turkey buzzard, and his ink was

made from the juice of a brier-root. Altogether he had in his whole life less than a year of schooling, but he learned to read and spell and write and cipher to the rule of three.

One day a wagon broke down in the road near the house, and a woman with her two daughters stayed with the Lincolns over night. She had some books and told the children some stories. For the first time Abraham discovered what opportunity and happiness books can bring to those who learn to read them. From that day on he borrowed and read every book that he could get for miles around. One of the earliest writings which we have of his is a copybook form which he set for a neighbor:

> *Good boys, who to their books apply.*
> *Will all be great men by and by.*

There were six books which he read and read and reread. These books were the Bible, Æsop's Fables, Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress, Robinson Crusoe, A History of the United States, and Weems's Life of Washington. The last-named book was damaged by the rain which drove in one night through the cracks in the cabin, and Lincoln had to pull fodder in the owner's cornfield for three whole days in order to pay for it. The book belonged to one "Blue-Nose" Crawford, and Lincoln afterward wrote a poem about him, making fun of his stinginess — but he paid for the book. He kept on borrowing and reading until, as he later said, he had finished every book to be obtained within a radius of fifty miles.

There are not many records left of his boyhood. Those that have come down to us are all kindly ones. Once he saved the life of the village drunkard, whom he found freezing by the roadside, carrying him in his arms to the tavern and working over him until he was out of danger. Another time, it was remembered, he rescued a mud turtle from some children who were putting red-hot coals on its shell. The words of his stepmother can best sum up the story of his boyhood: "I can say

that Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused to do anything I asked him. I had a son, John, who was raised with Abe. Both were good boys, but I must say that Abe was the best boy I ever saw."

CHAPTER 2
The Man

Lincoln's starved and straitened boyhood stretched out into a manhood that seemed to hold little but poverty and toil. As he grew large enough he began to work out as a farmhand and afterward as a flatboatsman. Every yard of the brown jeans dyed with walnut juice which he wore was earned by splitting rails. A da"s work lasted from sunrise to sunset and brought him in twenty-five cents. Listen to the story of Lincoln's first dollar:

> I was about eighteen years of age and belonged, as you know, to what they call down South the "scrubs." I was very glad to have the chance of earning something, and supposed each of the men would give me a couple of bits. 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. 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.

It was on a trip to New Orleans on a flatboat with John Hanks that he saw, for the first time, men and women put up on a block and sold as slaves. Lincoln turned to Hanks and said, "John, if I ever get a chance to hit this thing, … I'll hit

it hard."

In 1831 he went to New Salem, on the Sangamon River, twenty miles northwest of Springfield. The town consisted of only fifteen houses all built of logs. Lincoln reached there on election day and the clerk of election needed a helper. Seeing Lincoln hanging around the polls he asked him whether he could write. "Well," said Lincoln, "I can make a few rabbit tracks."

He got the job and afterward was hired as a clerk in the village store. It was there that he laid the foundation of his reputation for absolute honesty. Finding one evening that he had taken six cents too much from a customer, he walked three miles that night, after the store was closed, to return the money. Another time, in weighing out half a pound of tea, he made a mistake of four ounces. Discovering this mistake the first thing in the morning, he closed the store until he could deliver the rest of the tea.

While he was still a clerk in this store the Black Hawk Indian War broke out. There was a call for volunteers and Abraham Lincoln was elected captain. The other candidate was a man named Kirkpatrick, who had once hired Lincoln and cheated him out of two dollars in wages. Lincoln afterward wrote that no other success in life ever gave him so much satisfaction.

He did not make a great record as a military man. In afterlife he used to tell how he got his men through a gateway into a field: "I could not for the life of me remember the right word of command for getting my company endwise, so that it could get through the gate; so when we came near I shouted, 'This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate.'"

Lincoln did not win much glory in this campaign, but at some risk to himself he saved the life of a helpless old Indian whom his men wished to kill.

When he came back to New Salem, in partnership with a

man named Berry he opened a store, giving his notes in payment for the stock. Berry ran the business heavily into debt and died. Instead of going through bankruptcy Lincoln sold out, shouldered the burden for fifteen years, and paid off every dollar of the debt with interest.

Later on he became the postmaster at New Salem. Most of the letters he carried around in his hat and delivered to his neighbors at their cabins on his way to work — one of the earliest systems on record of rural free-delivery.

At length came a chance to secure an appointment as deputy state surveyor. The only difficulty was that Lincoln knew absolutely nothing about surveying. He borrowed a textbook and, with the help of a schoolmaster friend, worked night and day for six weeks. At the end of that time, pale and haggard but a master of surveying, he got the job.

It was about this time that he fell in love with the beautiful Ann Rutledge, who died soon after they became engaged. "My heart is buried there," he said to a friend when they once passed her grave. There is no doubt that Lincoln was a changed man after her death and that her loss deepened his life. This thought has been nobly phrased by Edgar Lee Masters in the epitaph which he has written for her almost unmarked grave:

ANN RUTLEDGE

Out of me, unworthy and unknown.
The vibrations of deathless music:
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,

From the dust of my bosom!

In 1834 Lincoln was elected to the state legislature and went to Springfield to live. He reached that town on a borrowed horse, with all of his possessions in a couple of saddlebags, and accepted the offer of Joshua Speed, a storekeeper, to share his room and bed until he got a start. Going upstairs Lincoln set his saddlebags on the floor and coming down said beamingly, "Well, Speed, I'm moved."

In 1842 Lincoln married Mary Todd, a spirited, pretty Kentucky girl. They lived at the Globe Tavern at four dollars a week. He wrote to a friend who had invited him to visit in Kentucky: "I am so poor, and make so little headway, that I drop back in a month of idleness as much as I would gain in a year's sowing."

Here is Lincoln's own account of his appearance at this time: "I am in height six feet four inches nearly, lean in flesh, weighing on an average of a hundred and eighty pounds, dark complexion, with coarse, black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected."

He always had unusual strength and endurance. Once he picked up and carried a weight of six hundred pounds. At another time he shouldered some posts which several men were vainly trying to lift with a hoisting machine. In harness he was able to lift a dead weight of half a ton off the ground. Moreover, he was able to use this strength in protecting himself when it became necessary. At New Salem, when forced into a fight, he whipped Jack Armstrong, the leader of the Clary's Grove gang, and then with his back to the wall held his own against the rest of the gang, all of whom afterward became his devoted friends and supporters.

Throughout life Lincoln was a melancholy man. He thus wrote about himself in 1841 to his friend and partner Stuart: "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. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell; I awfully forebode I shall not."

He fought this natural despondency with his stories, when many another man would have given in to it. Of this use of stories Lincoln said:

> I am not a story-teller. Often by the use of a story I can illustrate a point, or take the sting out of a refusal to grant a request. Sometimes, too, the telling of a good story or the listening to one lightens the load of sorrow and suffering that one in my position has to bear; but it is a mistake to think that I am a humorist or tell stories for the laugh that is in them.

Most of his stories come under this, his own description of them, as when, at one of the receptions given by him when President, a Virginia farmer pushed his way through the crowd and told him that some Union soldiers had carried off his hay. "I hope, Mr. President," he ended, "that you'll see that I'm paid."

Mr. Lincoln's only reply was to tell him the story of Jack Chase, the river captain. Once when he was piloting a steamer through the rapids and straining every nerve and muscle to follow the narrow channel, a boy pulled his coat-tail and shouted in his ear above the roar of the waters: "Say, Mr. Captain, I wish you'd stop the boat a minute. I've dropped my apple overboard."

At other times his whimsical drollery and quaint flashes of humor were efforts, perhaps unconscious, to relieve the rooted melancholy of his life. "Why, Mr. President, do you black your own boots?" exclaimed Charles Sumner when he found Mr. Lincoln so engaged at the White House. "Whose boots did you think I blacked?" responded the President.

Another time, when he was visiting the Union army, a young officer pushed his way through the crowd and complained to him bitterly that Colonel Sherman, as he was then,

had threatened to shoot him.

"Did he threaten to shoot you?" exclaimed Lincoln.

"Yes, shoot me!" the officer assured him earnestly. Leaning over to him Lincoln said in a stage whisper, "Well, if I were you and Sherman had threatened to shoot me, I wouldn't trust him for a moment — for I believe he'd do it."

Early in life Lincoln resolved not to weigh himself down with bad habits. He led a straight, clean life morally. What he said about the women of America at the end of the Civil War can be quoted as his attitude toward women during his entire life:

"If all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women were applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war. I will close by saying, 'God bless the women of America.'"

He neither drank nor smoked. In the early forties he wrote to George E. Pickett, afterward a Confederate general:

"I have just told the folks here in Springfield, on the hundred-and-tenth anniversary of Washington's birthday, that the one victory we can ever call complete will be that one which proclaims that there is not one slave nor one drunkard on the face of God's green earth. Recruit for this victory!"

The picture of his inner life is a harder one to draw than that of his appearance and habits. There were two men in Lincoln. One of them was the Lincoln known to all his townsfolk — the plain, honest, shrewd, kindly, humorous man, with a certain native dignity which kept them from calling him by his first name. "He was folky but not familiar," one of them afterward wrote. The other man was the dreamer, who made his dreams come true; the mystic, who dreamed of the swift ship carrying him to a dark shore before the battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and the night before his death; the thinker, who walked the streets wrapped in solitude, not

seeing his best friends, but looking beyond the horizon and pondering in his own mind through many a lonely night the great problem of slavery. It was this Lincoln whom few even of his best friends knew. To the day of his death some of them persisted in believing that his greatness was an accident or a miracle. Lincoln's own words throw light on what were the guiding motives of his inner life:

> The better part of one's life consists of our friendships,

he wrote to Judge Gillespie.

> I would have the whole human race your friend and mine,

he said to his little son "Tad."

> If any man cease to attack me I never remember his past against him,

he declared in one of his speeches.

> Stand with anybody that stands right, and part with him when he goes wrong,

he said to men who esteem their party more than they do their principles.

> The advice of a father to his son, "Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but being in, bear it that the opposed may beware of thee," is good, but not the best. Quarrel not at all. No men resolved to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper and the loss of self-control. Yield larger things to which you can show no more than equal right; yield lesser ones, though clearly your own. Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him in contesting the right. Even killing the dog would not cure the bite.

So he wrote, and so he lived.

He trained himself into a habit of sympathy. No man with whom he talked even for a few moments but felt that Lincoln was genuinely interested in him. Men trusted him for that, and because they saw by his everyday life that his sympathy was not put on but real. We like to read of the time in Springfield when he found a child sobbing on the porch of her home. She was to take her first railroad trip. The family had gone on and the hackman had forgotten to call for her trunk. There was no time to get him before the train went. Lincoln shouldered the trunk and carried it on his back down to the station, arriving just in time to catch the train. This habit of kindness never left him all his life through. He was merciful in the merciless days of the Civil War. He pardoned men condemned for cowardice in battle. "If God Almighty gives a man a cowardly pair of legs," he said, "how can he help running away?"

He allowed no boys of eighteen to be shot for desertion. Once when a man was condemned to death for sleeping at his post he drove ten miles in the middle of the night to make sure that his telegram pardoning him had been received. On the very day of his death he said at a Cabinet meeting, when the treatment of the Confederate leaders was under discussion: "Enough lives have been sacrificed. We must extinguish our resentments."

Thirty-six hours after the fall of Richmond, Lincoln visited the place and sought out the home of General Pickett, who had made the great charge at Gettysburg. Lincoln had known him as a boy. He found the house and knocked at the door. "Is this where George Pickett lives?" he asked a woman who came to answer the door with a baby in her arms. She said that it was and that she was Mrs. Pickett. "I am Abraham Lincoln, George's old friend," he said. Then he took the baby in his arms and told Mrs. Pickett that everything would be done to make her comfortable and her home safe.

It is this simplicity and kindness which companions

Lincoln forever in our thoughts with the gentle and heroic of older lands, so that of him John Bright, the English statesman, wrote: "In him I have observed a singular resolution honestly to do his duty, a great courage, a great gentleness under the most desperate provocations, and a pity and mercifulness to his enemies. His simplicity did much to hide his greatness."

CHAPTER 3
The Lawyer

A man stands revealed by his work. For twenty-three years Abraham Lincoln practiced law and sowed the harvest which the nation reaped in his presidency.

He was admitted to the bar in 1836, and his bar examinations consisted simply of an inquiry into his moral character. In those frontier days judges and lawyers depended more on common-sense than on common-law, and most of the courthouses were log cabins. A contemporary of Lincoln remembered that when Judge John Reynolds sat in the Circuit Court of Washington County, the sheriff opened court by coming to the door of the one-room log-built courthouse and shouting to the crowd outside: "Come in, boys; our John is a-goin' to hold court."

Another sheriff used to announce the opening of court as follows: "Oh yes! Oh yes! Oh yes! The Honorable Judge is now opened!"

One of the judges of Lincoln's time once restored order in his court by leaving the bench and thrashing the offenders, remarking as he resumed his seat: "I don't know what power the law gives me to keep order in this court, but I know very well the power God Almighty has given me."

Another one of Lincoln's contemporaries tells of a trial which he attended, when the sheriff burst into the courtroom, out of breath, and announced to the judge that he had six jurors tied up and that his deputies were running down the others. Evidently, jury duty was no more popular in Lincoln's day than it is at present.

It was in such surroundings that Abraham Lincoln began the practice of law. His legal training dated back to the day when he bought an old barrel for his store for fifty cents, and discovered under some rubbish in the bottom a complete set of Blackstone's Commentaries. He afterward said that was the best stroke of business he ever did as a storekeeper.

Some of the happiest years of Lincoln's life were spent in walking or riding the circuit, which embraced more than a dozen counties and was one hundred and fifty miles broad. Once before he was able to afford a horse he was trudging along a frozen road toward a county-seat, when he was overtaken by a man in a wagon.

"Would you mind carrying my overcoat to town for me?" inquired Lincoln, stopping him.

"Certainly," said the other, "but how will you get it again?"

"Easy enough," replied Lincoln; "I'll stay inside of it!"

Lincoln always had trouble in getting a bed that was long enough for him. Once when traveling by steamboat he found his usual difficulty with his berth. During the day while Lincoln was on deck the captain had it lengthened and widened. The next morning Lincoln came to breakfast much puzzled and said solemnly that a great miracle had happened. During the night he had shrunk at least a foot in length and over six inches in breadth!

At the taverns the judge and lawyers sat at one end of the table, while the witnesses and prisoners, with the ordinary guests, sat at the other. Lincoln, however, was often found at the wrong end of the table among the common folks. Once Judge Davis, who ruled the whole bar with a rod of iron, tried to call Lincoln back to his end of the table.

"Come up here where you belong, Lincoln," he shouted.

"Got anything better to eat at your end, Judge?" drawled Lincoln, remaining where he was.

He soon became one of the best known and best liked

men throughout this great expanse of country. In his hand he usually carried a queer, old carpet-bag. Although he was always careless about his clothes he kept himself scrupulously clean, and had learned that a man who shaves every day will go much farther than one who does not. Sometimes his appearance was against him, as when he was sent by his first partner, Major Stuart, to try a case in an adjoining county for one Baddeley, an Englishman. The latter, who was accustomed to the bewigged, powdered, and gowned advocates of his home-country, was disgusted to find that he was to be represented by a tall, awkward young man whose trousers were as much too short as his coat was too large. Baddeley immediately sent him back to Stuart and retained someone else. He lived, however, to become one of Lincoln's most enthusiastic admirers.

In 1850 Lincoln in a lecture to young lawyers made some suggestions which are worth repeating:

> The leading rule for a lawyer, as for the man of every other calling, is diligence. Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today. Never let your correspondence fall behind. ... Extemporaneous speaking should be practiced and cultivated. It is the lawyer's avenue to the public. However able and faithful he may be in other respects, people are slow to bring him business if he cannot make a speech. And yet there is not a more fatal error to young lawyers than relying too much on speech-making. If anyone, upon his rare powers of speaking, shall claim an exemption from the drudgery of the law, his case is a failure in advance.

Lincoln brought into the practice of his profession the same charity and kindness that he had shown as a laborer, a storekeeper, and a surveyor. A young lawyer tells about arguing his first case in Chicago and making a failure of it. After he had sat down in despair a complete stranger to him came forward from the back of the room and stated that, as a

member of the bar, he claimed the privilege of helping a young man who was evidently embarrassed. In spite of the protests of the lawyers on the other side, the court allowed him to do this, and he delivered a short, concise summing-up of the case which won it for the novice. The latter afterward found out that the stranger was Abraham Lincoln from Springfield.

Lincoln also had the rare faculty of trying a case without insulting or quarreling with his opponent. During all the years of his practice he never made an enemy of another lawyer.

The honesty of Lincoln's character was always evident in his practice. Once Herndon, his young partner, had drawn up a dilatory plea which would throw a case over at least one term of court. "Is this founded on fact?" demanded Lincoln. Herndon admitted that it was not, but urged that it would save the interests of their clients if the delay was obtained. "You know it is a sham," replied Lincoln, "and a sham is very often another name for a lie. Don't let it go on record. The cursed thing may come staring us in the face long after this suit has been forgotten."

Such scrupulous honesty Lincoln carried through all his practice. It gave him a standing and a reputation which were worth more to him than fine gold. He never made the mistake that young lawyers sometimes make of sacrificing a reputation for honesty for the sake of winning a case. Moreover, unless he had confidence in a case he would not take it.

Once when it was shown that his client had been guilty of fraud he walked out of the courtroom and refused to continue the trial. The judge sent a messenger, directing him to return, but he positively declined. "Tell the judge that my hands are dirty, and that I have gone away to wash them," was the answer that he sent back.

"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." So Lincoln lectured, and no man at the bar ever carried out this advice more conscientiously. Once he was asked to collect a claim of two and a half dollars and his client insisted, against Lincoln's advice, that suit be brought. Lincoln thereupon gravely demanded ten dollars as a retainer. Half of this he gave to the defendant, who then confessed judgment and paid the two and a half. By this method he satisfied both parties.

"Yes, there is no reasonable doubt that I can gain your case for you," he said to another client, who had stated a case which Lincoln thought an objectionable one. "I can set a whole neighborhood at loggerheads; I can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children and thereby get for you six hundred dollars, which rightfully belongs, it appears to me, as much to them as to you. I shall not take your case, but I will give you a little advice for nothing. You seem a sprightly, energetic man. I would advise you to try your hand at making six hundred dollars in some other way."

The lawyer, however, who underestimated Lincoln at a trial soon found that he had made a fatal mistake. Underneath Lincoln's honesty, frankness, and fairness was a consummate mastery of tactics, an intimate knowledge of human nature, and a broad grasp of legal principles, which finally made him the leader of the Illinois bar. "A stranger going into a court when he was trying a case would after a few minutes find himself instinctively on Lincoln's side and wishing him success." This was the way his methods impressed an associate.

Lincoln's mildness and good humor were habitual, but woe be to him who relied on those qualities to take a wrongful advantage of his client. In a murder case in which he represented the defendant, the judge unexpectedly made a ruling which was contrary to the decisions of the Supreme Court and was most injurious to Lincoln's client. A spectator described what follows: "Lincoln rose to his feet as quick as

thought and was the most unearthly looking man imaginable. He roared like a lion roused from his lair and he said and did more things in ten minutes than he ordinarily said and did in an hour."

Perhaps the real secret of his success at the bar can best be summed up by the statement of E. M. Prince, who had seen him try over a hundred cases of all kinds:

> Mr. Lincoln had a genius for seeing the real point in a case at once and aiming steadily at it from the beginning of a trial to the end. The issue in most cases lies in very narrow compass, and the really great lawyer disregards everything not directly tending to that issue. The mediocre advocate is apt to miss the crucial point in his case and is easily diverted by minor matters. Mr. Lincoln instinctively saw the kernel of every case at the outset, never lost sight of it, and never let it escape the jury.

Often he clinched his point with some anecdote which so riveted it in the minds of the jury that it could not be dislodged by any amount of eloquence from his opponent. There was the case where he appeared for a defendant who was charged with assault and battery. It was proved that the plaintiff, who had been seriously injured, had made the first attack, but his lawyer argued that the defendant should not have defended himself so forcefully.

> "That reminds me of the man who was attacked by a farmer's dog, which he killed with a pitchfork," commented Lincoln. "'What made you kill my dog?' demanded the farmer. 'What made him try to bite me?' said the other. 'But why didn't you go at him with the other end of your pitchfork?' persisted the farmer. 'Well, why didn't he come at me with his other end?' was the retort."

Another time Lincoln disposed of the contention that

custom makes law with this anecdote:

> Old Squire Bagley from Menard once came to my office and said, "Lincoln, I want your advice as a lawyer. Has a man what's been elected a justice of the peace a right to issue a marriage license?" I told him he had not. "Lincoln, I thought you was a lawyer," he retorted. "Bob Thomas and me had a bet on this thing and we agreed to let you decide it; but if that is your opinion, I don't want it, for I know a blame sight better. I've been squire now eight years, and I've done it all the time!"

The case of Duff Armstrong, who was accused of murder, well shows Lincoln as a man and as a lawyer. Duff was the son of Jack Armstrong, the leader of the Clary Grove gang, whom Lincoln had once whipped in a fight when he was working as a clerk at New Salem. Afterward Jack and he had become firm friends. Duff and two others named Norris and Metzker had been drinking and there had been a free fight. Metzker had been struck over the head with a club by Norris and had received other injuries. Norris had already been convicted of manslaughter and the case looked bad for Duff Armstrong, who claimed that although he had struck Metzker with his fist he had not been guilty of the injuries which had caused the former's death.

Jack Armstrong by this time had died, and his widow appealed to Lincoln. He was in the middle of a political campaign, but he dropped everything to help the son of his old friend. At the trial a witness by the name of Allen took the stand and swore that he had actually seen Duff strike Metzker a blow with a blackjack. On cross-examination Lincoln brought out the fact that the fight had occurred at about eleven o'clock at night, away from any house or fight. Then he asked the witness how he had been able to see the occurrence so plainly. "By the moonlight," answered the witness.

Under further cross-examination Lincoln had Allen

locate the position of the moon and testify that it was about full. Lincoln asked him no further questions and scarcely cross-examined the other witnesses, none of whom had actually seen the fight. Under the law of Illinois at that time the defendant was not permitted to take the stand himself. As Lincoln allowed witness after witness to testify, with scarcely a word of cross-examination, all the spectators in the courtroom felt that the case against Armstrong was hopeless. This feeling became a certainty when Lincoln announced that he would call no witnesses, and had only one exhibit to offer in evidence. This exhibit, however, turned out to be an almanac which showed that the moon was only in its first quarter and nearly set. Making but one point — the complete discrediting of the only eyewitness — Lincoln summed up to the jury and acquitted his client.

There can be no better ending to an account of Lincoln's life as a lawyer than the advice which he once gave to young lawyers:

> Let no young man choosing the law for a calling yield to the popular belief that a lawyer cannot be an honest man. If in your judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer resolve to be honest without being a lawyer. Choose some other occupation.

CHAPTER 4
The Speaker

It was Abraham Lincoln's speaking which made him the President of the United States. His first speech when he was twenty-three years old raised him out of the ranks of day-laborers in his tiny town. Later his speeches sent him to the state legislature, to Congress, and to the White House, and pointed out the path which this nation followed and is still following, although Lincoln has been in his grave for more than half a century.

How did he do it? How did this awkward, poor, uneducated man, with a bad speaking voice which often broke, make himself the greatest orator of his day? How did he deliver the Gettysburg Address, "which will live until languages are dead and lips are dust"? His methods are plain and simple. Every boy and every man, by following them, can make himself a speaker, and add to his influence with men. Here are some of Lincoln's rules for oratory:

> Don't shoot too high. Aim low and the common people will understand you. They are the ones you want to reach — at least they are the ones you ought to reach. The educated and refined people will understand you, anyway. If you aim too high your ideas will go over the heads of the masses and only hit those who need no hitting.

As a lawyer he never used a word that the dullest juryman could not understand. He followed the same method as a speaker. At Yale University the writer studied elocution under Prof. Mark Bailey, who had taught his father before him.

Prof. Bailey first heard Lincoln speak when he was stumping New England for Fremont. He was so impressed with Lincoln's power that he followed him from town to town to hear him.

Finally he succeeded in having a talk with him and asked him to explain his success as a speaker. "Well, all I know," said Lincoln, "is that when neighbors would come to my father's house and talk to father in language I did not understand, I would become offended sometimes and I would find myself going to bed that night unable to sleep. I bounded it on the north, south, east, and west until I had caught the idea, and then I said it to myself and when I said it, I used the language I would use when talking to the boys on the street."

That was one of the secrets of Lincoln's oratory — the use of the small word. He never used a big word when a little one would do. His sentences were usually short and he spoke not to be heard but to be understood. More than fifty per cent of the words used in his great speeches are words of one syllable. He would say, "I dug a ditch," instead of, "I excavated a channel"; "I lost out by bad luck," instead of, "I was defeated by a fortuitous combination of circumstances." It is for this reason that he is quoted more than any other American except Franklin, another master of short sentences.

In the Gettysburg Address, the greatest short speech in the English language, he used two hundred and seventy-one words. Of these exactly two hundred are words of one syllable, or almost seventy-four percent. There are whole lines of short words, such as: "That these dead shall not have died in vain." This use of the short word gives his sentences a force like the impact of a bullet.

Again, Lincoln was a master in the use of Anglo-Saxon. We are not a Latin race and the speaker or the writer who can use language from our Saxon and Viking forebears will always most strongly appeal to us. Examine some of Lincoln's best sentences, such as:

> The father of waters again goes unvexed to the sea.
> That this government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
> As sure as God reigns and school-children read, that black, foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed truth.

There is hardly a word from the Latin or the Greek in them. The use of quaint, homely similes and illustrations was another of Lincoln's methods. When the mayor of New York, in the panic and bewilderment which followed the breaking out of the Civil War, proposed that New York City be taken out of the Union and made a free city — another Hamburg — Lincoln disposed of the plan in one sentence:

> It will be some time before the front door sets up housekeeping on its own account.

When his plan of reconstruction was objected to as not elaborate enough, Lincoln defended it with an illustration:

> Admit that my policy is in the beginning to what the final policy will be in the end as an egg is to the chicken. Don't you think that you will get the chicken quicker by hatching the egg than by smashing it?

His speeches were full of homely epigrams which needed only to be heard to be admitted, and which stuck forever in his hearers' memories:

> God must have loved the common people, for he made so many of them.
> You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.
> Anything that argues me into social and political equality with the Negro is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, as if a man could prove a horse chestnut to be a chestnut horse.

Again he would crystallize his whole argument into a single sentence:

> Among free men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet.
>
> We must not promise what we ought not, lest we be called upon to perform what we cannot.
>
> We will say to the Southern disunionist, "We won't go out of the Union and you shan't!"
>
> I protest against the counterfeit logic which concludes that because I do not want a black woman for a slave, I must necessarily want her for a wife.

On the platform as in court Lincoln could retort severely if the occasion demanded it. When only twenty-six years of age he was once bitterly attacked at a political meeting by a sarcastic speaker of great local reputation, who had changed his politics and by so doing had been appointed Register of the Land Office. Moreover, he had the distinction of owning the only lightning-rod in the county. When Lincoln came to reply he said:

> I am young in years but younger in the tricks and trade of a politician. Live long or die young, however, I would rather die now than like the last speaker change my politics in order to receive three thousand a year and then have to erect a lightning-rod over my house to protect my guilty conscience from an offended God.

Like Franklin, Lincoln possessed in an extraordinary degree the power of persuasion. Can anything be more appealing, more frank, more void of offense, than his appeal to the South in his First Inaugural Address?

> Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? … I am loath to close. We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not

> break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Like Franklin, too, Lincoln possessed the tact of a true statesman. The night of Lee's surrender at Appomattox there was a wild time in Washington. A band serenaded the President, playing various patriotic airs, such as "Columbia" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." When Lincoln was called upon to speak he turned to the bandmaster and said: "Play 'Dixie' now. It's ours again."

Another secret of Abraham Lincoln's strength as a speaker was the fact that he had saturated his mind with the two great masterpieces of English literature, the King James' Version of the Bible and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Lincoln read and reread, again and again, both of these books until they became for him a storehouse to which he turned unconsciously for words, and phrases, and ideas. A part of his great speech in 1857 on the Dred Scott Decision of the Supreme Court, which, in effect, took away the last rights of the negro, might have been written by Bunyan:

> All the powers of earth seem rapidly combining against the black man. Mammon is after him; ambition follows, philosophy follows, and the theology of the day is fast joining in the cry. They have him in the prison house; they have searched his person and left no prying instrument with him. One after another they have closed the heavy iron doors upon him; and now they have him, as it were, bolted in with a lock of a hundred keys, which cannot be unlocked without the concurrence of every key; the keys in the hands of a hundred different men, and they scattered to a hundred different places; and they stand, musing as to what invention in all the

> dominions of mind and matter can be produced to make the impossibility of escape more complete than it is.

Who but one nourished on the imagery of the Bible could have spoken as Lincoln did in his first reply to Senator Douglas in 1854?

> These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and Mammon, and whosoever holds to the one must despise the other. … Our Republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us purify it. Let us turn and wash it white in the spirit if not the blood of the Revolution.

Last and first and all the time Lincoln's power lay in the fact that he always had something to say. He thought things out for himself, instead of accepting other men's conclusions. In 1856, at the first convention of the Republican party, he delivered a speech which cast such a spell over his audience that even the reporters forgot to take notes. For years it was known as the "Lost Speech." Finally in recent years a report of it was found. Across the years the echo of it thrills us today. Every young man should read Abraham Lincoln's speech of May 19, 1856, which created a great party and outlined principles that this country has made a part of itself.

It was on November 19, 1863, that Lincoln reached his full height as an orator. The national cemetery at Gettysburg was to be dedicated. Edward Everett had spoken for two hours, furbishing up old ideas and redressing old thoughts with wonderful rhetoric and eloquence. Then Lincoln spoke for five minutes. Today no one remembers a sentence, a line, or an idea from Everett's speech. Read what Lincoln said, and note how every sentence rings true and familiar, like some oft-heard chapter of the Bible:

> 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.

CHAPTER 5
The Statesman

It has been well said that the difference between a politician and a statesman is that a politician tries to make the people do something for him, while a statesman tries to do something for the people. Applying this test Abraham Lincoln was always a statesman. In his first speech in 1832, when he was only twenty-three years old, he declared:

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

It was the recognition that he was really trying to serve them and not himself which gave him the confidence of the people. Moreover, he had the same trust in the people that they had in him.

> Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? … Is there any better or equal hope in the world?

he asked in one of his speeches.

Honesty was the policy on which he founded his public life. In 1834, when he was first elected to the Illinois legislature, his friends raised a fund of two hundred dollars for his election expenses. After the campaign was over he returned to them $199.25 of this fund. In 1836 he first showed in public life that moral courage which was to carry him so far. A bill was introduced to move the capital of Illinois to Springfield, which was Lincoln's home and where he and all his

constituents wished the capital to be. Another measure, of which he did not approve, was joined as a rider to this bill, in the hope that it might be passed. Lincoln refused to vote for it. An all-night meeting was held and great pressure brought to bear upon him by prominent citizens from all over the state. Finally, after midnight, Lincoln rose amid profound silence and made an earnest speech, ending with this statement of one of the abiding principles of his political life:

> You will never get me to support a measure which I believe to be wrong, although by so doing I may accomplish that which I believe to be right.

In 1837 he again had a chance to show his moral courage against odds. Incidentally he began to carry out the promise which he had made when he first saw slaves sold on the block. A few men had met together in Boston and, protesting against slavery, had pledged themselves to fight for its abolition. It seems strange in these days, when all men are free as a matter of course, to read of the fire and fury that arose against the Abolitionists in both the North and the South. A mob of prominent citizens dragged William Lloyd Garrison, one of the first of the Abolitionists, through the streets of Boston with a halter around his body, while in Cincinnati the publication of an anti-slavery paper was stopped by the simple process of throwing the printing-press into the Ohio River, and in Illinois an editor was murdered.

When a resolution was offered in the legislature of Illinois, attacking abolition and defending slavery, Lincoln and one other man voted against it. Lincoln offered a counter resolution that the institution of slavery was not only founded on injustice but was bad policy. At that time he announced another of his political principles:

> The probability that we may fail in a worthy cause is not a sufficient justification for our refusing to support it.

In 1847 Lincoln was elected to Congress. His own estimate of himself and his life up to that time is contained in a few lines prepared for the Congressional Record, in contrast with the pages of biography so often inflicted on that publication. It ran as follows:

> Born, February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Ky.
> Education, defective.
> Profession, a lawyer.
> Have been a captain of volunteers in Black Hawk War.
> Postmaster in a very small office.
> Four times a member of the Illinois legislature, and a member of the Lower House of Congress.

In Congress he voted against the iniquitous Mexican War, although his stand cost him a re-election. He wrote to Herndon, his partner:

> Would you have voted what you felt and knew to be a lie? I know you would not. Would you have gone out of the House — skulked the vote? I expect not.

Lincoln returned to private life with his popularity shattered but with his conscience whole. Apparently his principles had mustered him out of public life forever.

Time went on. Stephen A. Douglas had brought about in Congress a repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which was an agreement that slavery should be kept out of all territory north of a certain parallel. Lincoln was riding circuit when the news of the repeal of this last safeguard against slavery was brought to him. A friend who occupied the same room with him that night told afterward how Lincoln spent the evening discussing the repeal and what it meant to the country. When this friend woke up in the morning he saw Lincoln sitting just where he had left him the night before. As if the conversation had not been interrupted Lincoln said to him: "I tell you, this country cannot continue to exist half-slave and half-free."

That sentence became the keynote of his convictions.

From that night he again entered politics. One of his friends was running for re-election to Congress. Lincoln began to speak for him and in all of his speeches he attacked the extension of slavery. Finally in 1858 he was nominated for the United States Senate, for the seat then occupied by Douglas. At a convention at Springfield he said:

> I do not believe that this government can permanently endure half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided.

This thought aroused men like a firebell at midnight. There followed the great debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, rival candidates for the Senate. The prize was the presidency of the United States. The odds seemed overwhelmingly in favor of Douglas. He was wealthy, a senator, a trained debater with a magnificent voice, and the leader of the Democratic party. Lincoln was hardly known except as an able country lawyer. Douglas traveled in a special train, carrying a cannon that announced his presence at each town where he spoke. Lincoln was likely to arrive shabby and haggard from an all-night ride in a day-coach. At first the rhetoric and eloquence of Douglas seemed to give him the advantage. Little by little Lincoln began to win a verdict from his audiences by the nailed force of his arguments and his pitiless logic. Finally, Lincoln propounded to his opponent a question as unanswerable as the one that Christ asked the Pharisees. Whichever way he answered it Douglas would inevitably lose the support of either the North or the South. Douglas tried to compromise. By so doing he won the race for the senatorship but lost the contest for the presidency later on.

> "We accuse him for this," thundered Judah P. Benjamin, the most able of the Southern senators. "Under the stress of a local election his knees gave way, his whole person trembled. His adversary stood upon

> principle and was beaten; and lo, he is the candidate of a mighty party for the presidency of the United States. The senator from Illinois faltered. He got the prize for which he faltered, but the grand prize of his ambition today slips from his grasp because of his faltering in his former contest; and his success in the canvass for the Senate, purchased for an ignoble price, has cost him the loss of the presidency of the United States!"

There followed the convention and campaign of 1860, and the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency of the United States. Under the responsibilities and discipline of that great office Lincoln reached his full stature as a statesman and grew into the heroic figure which has come down to us. Only a great man could have shown the magnanimity and forgetfulness of self which he showed to Seward, to Stanton, to McClellan, and to a host of others.

Lincoln called political and personal opponents to office. His only test was whether they could be of service to the country. Most of his Cabinet and even his generals regarded his election as an accident and himself as a country politician wholly unfitted to be President. McClellan, one of Lincoln's first generals, was a Democrat and had provided the special trains on which Douglas had traveled during his debates with Lincoln. When appointed a general McClellan disregarded Lincoln's orders and treated his chief in a way that but few men could have borne. At one time when Lincoln called at his house to see him on a critical matter, McClellan sent down word that he could not be disturbed and calmly went to bed, leaving the President of the United States to take himself home. Lincoln bore with him, however, until the very last, hoping against hope that he would finally learn to lead the armies of the Union to a victory. To one who urged him to discipline the general for his insolence, Lincoln merely said: "I will stand outside and hold McClellan's horse for him if he will only bring us success."

Seward was called to become Secretary of State. He was the recognized leader of the Republican party, a candidate for the presidency, and in the Cabinet expected to be the power behind the throne. Compassionating what he supposed to be Lincoln's weakness, Seward actually wrote him a letter, proposing to take charge of the government and become acting President. Lincoln refused this extraordinary suggestion, but with so much tact and kindness that he made Seward one of his warmest supporters and was able to avail himself of his great talents for the country's good. It was only a few weeks after this letter that the Secretary of State wrote to Mrs. Seward: "The President is the best of us all."

Throughout his presidency Lincoln refused to treasure up any personal injury and utilized even his enemies to help him save the country. He kept Chase as Secretary of the Treasury even when he knew that he was plotting to secure the nomination for the presidency.

Lincoln had first met Edwin M. Stanton when he had been retained with the latter in one of the most important cases of his legal career. "Where did that long-armed creature come from, and what does he expect to do in this case?" demanded Stanton after they had met in Cincinnati, speaking so loudly as to be heard by Lincoln through an open door in the hotel. As a result of his contemptuous treatment of Lincoln, the latter was sidetracked and Stanton made the argument. After Lincoln had been elected President, Stanton, who had served in Buchanan's Cabinet, wrote and spoke of him with the utmost bitterness and disdain, referring to him in his letters as a "gorilla." Yet it was Stanton whom Lincoln called to be Secretary of War. Even after his appointment Stanton treated the President with marked disrespect. Once when Lincoln released some prisoners without regard to Stanton's wishes, the latter said that the only thing left to do was "to get rid of that baboon in the White House."

"I wouldn't endure that insult," said an indignant friend

who reported the matter to the President. "Insult? That is no insult," returned Lincoln. "All he said was that I was a baboon, and that is only a matter of opinion, sir." Then he added after a pause, "The thing that concerns me most is that I find that Stanton is usually right." Yet Stanton lived to say at Lincoln's bier: "There lies the greatest leader of men the world has ever seen."

In the presidency, as outside, Lincoln was great enough to do the right thing even when the whole country was against him. When the commander of a Union vessel took the Confederate commissioners Mason and Slidell, by force from a British steamer, the North made a hero of the officer. Lincoln realized instantly that this act was of the same class as those committed by Great Britain which brought on the War of 1812. In spite of the clamor of the whole country he restored the Confederate commissioners to Great Britain and disavowed their capture.

He who looks ever into the far future and seeks constantly to know the eternal purposes of life wins to a clearer vision than ordinary men. It was so with Abraham Lincoln. Listen to some of the messages that he has left for us of another generation:

> No man is good enough to govern another person without that other's consent.
>
> This is a world of compensation. He who would be no slave must be content to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it.
>
> It is best for all to leave each man free to acquire property as fast as he can. I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich. It would do more harm than good. I want every man to have a chance to better his condition.

Repeal the Missouri Compromise; repeal all the compromises; repeal the Declaration of Independence; repeal all past history — you still cannot repeal human nature.

CHAPTER 6
The Christian

Like Moses, Luther, and Washington, Lincoln became a great leader of men only when he surrendered himself to God. His mother, Nancy Hanks, was a Christian woman. Of her he said: "I remember her prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life."

As a boy he read his Bible and attended church when he could. In those days he learned the hymns which were his favorites throughout life, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" and "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood." During his early manhood he drifted into a temporary indifference toward religious matters. Yet even through this time he read and reread his Bible, and his later life showed what it did for him. "Take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance on faith and you will live and die a happier man," Lincoln wrote to a skeptical friend.

Another great war president of our own time has borne testimony about this Book of books, which Lincoln would have echoed in the last years of his life:

> The Bible is the Word of life. I beg that you will read it and find this out for yourselves. Read, not little snatches here and there, but long passages that will really be the road to the heart of it. You will not only find it full of real men and women, but also of the things you have wondered about and been troubled about all your life, as men have been always; and the more you read the more it will become plain to you what things are worth while and what are not; what things make men happy — loyalty, right dealings, speaking the truth, readiness

> to give everything for what they think their duty, and, most of all, the wish that they may have the approval of the Christ, who gave everything for them; and the things that are guaranteed to make men unhappy — selfishness, cowardice, greed, and everything that is low and mean. When you have read the Bible you will know that it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty.
>
> --Woodrow Wilson

Lincoln's period of indifference was followed by an awakening to higher things. In 1842 he wrote to his friend Speed a letter in which he said:

> I believe God made me one of the instruments of bringing Fanny and you together, which union I have no doubt he had foreordained. Whatever he designs he will do for me yet. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" is my text just now.

More and more Lincoln's speeches became tinged with religious thought. In 1856 in the "Lost Speech" he said:

> The stars in their courses, aye, an invisible power, greater than the puny efforts of men, will fight for us. … Our moderation and forbearance will stand us in good stead when, if ever, we must make an appeal to battle and to the God of hosts.

At last, preferred to all the great leaders of his party, he was made the President of his country. The sheer wonder of it made him know that he had been chosen of God for a great purpose.

> I cannot but know what you all know that without a name, perhaps without a reason why I should have a name, there has fallen upon me a task such as did not rest even upon the father of his country; and so feeling I cannot but turn and look for that support without

> which it will be impossible for me to perform that great task. I turn, then, and look to the great American people and to that God who has never forsaken them.

His farewell to his friends at Springfield as he left to go to Washington shows as does nothing else the new spirit of his life. As with the friends of the Apostle Paul at Miletus, many of them "wept sore, … sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." To them he said:

> 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 I may ever 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.

From that day a new life begins for him — the life of a devoted Christian. "I have been driven many times to my knees," he later wrote, "because I had nowhere else to go."

Again he declared:

> I would be the veriest blockhead if I thought I could get through with a single day's business without relying upon Him who doeth all things well.

This spirit shows constantly throughout all his duties. To a Missouri delegation he said:

> I desire to so conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the very end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every friend on earth, I shall have at least one friend left — my conscience.

When a minister, representing a visiting delegation, said to him that he hoped the Lord was on their side, Mr. Lincoln replied:

> I am more concerned to know whether we are on the Lord's side.

Constantly he sought for the sympathy, and the prayers, and the help of all Christian people. A minister from a little village in central New York State called to tell him that every Christian father and mother was praying for him every day. The tears filled Lincoln's eyes as he thanked his visitor and said:

> But for these prayers I should have faltered and perhaps failed long ago. Tell every father and mother you know to keep on praying and I will keep on fighting.

After the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed he said to some men who had called to congratulate him on the success of the Union arms:

> On many a defeated field there was a voice louder than the thundering of cannon. It was the voice of God crying, "Let my people go." We were all very slow in realizing that it was God's voice, but after many humiliating defeats the nation came to believe it as a great and solemn command. Great multitudes begged and prayed that I might answer God's voice by signing the Emancipation Proclamation, and I did it, believing that we should never be successful in the great struggle unless we obeyed the Lord's command. Since that the God of battles has been on our side.

Just before the Battle of Gettysburg all of the members of

the Cabinet were in a state of terrible anxiety. General Lee with a powerful army had swept up into Pennsylvania. On the eve of the battle General Meade, almost an untried general, had been placed in command. A defeat meant the loss of the Capital and perhaps the occupation of Philadelphia and even New York. Everywhere was panic. Only Lincoln remained unmoved and unafraid. After the battle he told General Sickles the reason of his confidence:

> In the pinch of your campaign up there, when everybody seemed panic-stricken and nobody could tell what was going to happen, I went to my room one day and locked the door and got down on my knees before Almighty God, and prayed for victory at Gettysburg. I told him that this was his war, and our cause his cause, but that we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. Then I made a vow to Almighty God that if he would stand by our boys at Gettysburg, I would stand by him, and he did stand by you boys and I will stand by him. And after that, I don't know how it was and I can't explain it, but soon a sweet comfort swept into my soul that God Almighty had taken the whole business into his own hands, and that is why I have no fears about you.

To Chittenden, the Register of the Treasury, Lincoln said:

> That the Almighty does make use of human agencies, and directly intervenes in human affairs, is one of the plainest statements in the Bible. I have had so many evidences of his direction, so many instances when I have been controlled by some other power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this power comes from above. I frequently see my way clear to a decision when I am conscious that I have not sufficient facts upon which to found it. I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know it.

It was this deep and achieved faith in God that made John Hay, who had been one of his private secretaries, say of him:

> Abraham Lincoln, one of the mightiest masters of statecraft that history has known, was also one of the most devoted and faithful servants of Almighty God who have ever sat in the high places of the world.

Only a Christian could have written the letter which he sent to a Mrs. Bixby, who had lost five sons in the service. It is copied in letters of gold on the walls of a great English university:

> Dear Madam:
>
> I have been shown in the files of the War Department 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 words 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 bereavement, and leave you 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.
>
> Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
> Abraham Lincoln.

Time went on. The war was drawing to its close. On the day of the receipt of the news of Lee's surrender the President held a meeting of the Cabinet. Neither Lincoln nor any member was able for a time to speak. Finally, at the suggestion of the President, all dropped on their knees and thanked God in silence and in tears for the victory that he had granted to the Union. It is doubtful whether there is any other recorded instance where the meeting of the Cabinet of a great country

ended in prayer.

The victories of the Union arms re-elected Lincoln as President. In his Second Inaugural Address he reached heights not achieved before, when looking back over four years of war, hatred, and calumny he was yet able to say:

> The Almighty has his own purposes. 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 up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said: "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."
>
> With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are now 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.

In his last public speech of April 11, 1865, Lincoln again testified to his faith and trust in God. He said in part:

> We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Richmond and Petersburg, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give the hope of a just and speedy peace, the joyous

> expression of which cannot be restrained. In all this joy, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten.

Three nights later in the state box at Ford's Theatre he was talking to Mrs. Lincoln about a trip to the Holy Land. Just as he was saying that there was no city which he so much wished to see as Jerusalem, his words were cut short by the fatal bullet. On the morning of April 15, 1865, he who had wept often but who had never flinched nor faltered, went, not without abundant entrance, into the presence of his Lord. Edwin M. Stanton, the Secretary of War and his onetime enemy, broke the silence of the death-chamber and said:

> Now he belongs to the ages.

Selections From:

The Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln

Being Extracts from the Speeches, State Papers, and Letters of the Great President

The Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln

At what point shall we expect the approach of danger [to our republican institutions]? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a trial of a thousand years.

At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer. If it ever reach us it must spring up amongst us; it cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen we must live through all time or die by suicide….[6]

• • •

When the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion, kind, unassuming persuasion, should ever be adopted. It is an old and a true maxim "that a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall." So with men. If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a drop of honey that catches his heart, which, say what he will, is the great highroad to his reason, and which, when once gained, you will find but little trouble in convincing his judgment of the justice of your

[6] The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions. An address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Ill., January 27, 1837.

cause, if indeed that cause really be a just one. On the contrary, assume to dictate to his judgment, or to command his action, or to mark him as one to be shunned and despised, and he will retreat within himself, close all the avenues to his head and his heart; and though your cause be naked truth itself, transformed to the heaviest lance, harder than steel, and sharper than steel can be made, and though you throw it with more than herculean force and precision, you shall be no more able to pierce him than to penetrate the hard shell of a tortoise with a rye straw. Such is man, and so must he be understood by those who would lead him, even to his own best interests.[7]

• • •

In the early days of our race the Almighty said to the first of our race, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"; and since then, if we except the light and the air of heaven, no good thing has been or can be enjoyed by us without having first cost labor. And inasmuch as most good things are produced by labor, it follows that all such things of right belong to those whose labor has produced them. But it has so happened, in all ages of the world, that some have labored, and others have without labor enjoyed a large proportion of the fruits. This is wrong, and should not continue. To secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as nearly as possible, is a worthy object of any good government.

But then a question arises. How can government best effect this? In our own country, in its present condition, will the protective principle advance or retard this object? Upon this subject the habits of our whole species fall into three great classes—useful labor, useless labor, and idleness. Of these the first only is meritorious, and to it all the products of labor

[7] Address to the Washington Society of Springfield, Ill., February 22, 1842.

rightfully belong; but the two latter, while they exist, are heavy prisoners upon the first, robbing it of a large portion of its just rights. The only remedy for this is to, so far as possible, drive useless labor and idleness out of existence. And, first, as to useless labor. Before making war upon this, we must learn to distinguish it from the useful. It appears to me that all labor done directly and indirectly in carrying articles to the place of consumption, which would have been produced in sufficient abundance, with as little labor, at the place of consumption as at the place they were carried from, is useless labor. Let us take a few examples of the application of this principle to our own country. Iron, and everything made of iron, can be produced in sufficient abundance, and with as little labor, in the United States as anywhere else in the world; therefore all labor done in bringing iron and its fabrics from a foreign country to the United States is useless labor….

We may easily see that the cost of this useless labor is very heavy. It includes not only the cost of the actual carriage, but also the insurances of every kind, and the profits of the merchants through whose hands it passes. All these create a heavy burden necessarily falling upon the useful labor connected with such articles, either depressing the price to the producer or advancing it to the consumer, or, what is more probable, doing both in part…. [Therefore] the abandonment of the protective policy by the American government must result in the increase of both useless labor and idleness, and so, in proportion, must produce want and ruin among our people.[8]

• • •

Possibly you consider those acts [of aggression upon the Mexicans] too small for notice. Would you venture to so

[8] Notes on Protection jotted down while Congressman-elect; December 1847.

consider them had they been committed by any nation on earth against the humblest of our people? I know you would not. Then I ask, is the precept "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" obsolete? of no force? of no application?[9]

• • •

The true rule in determining to embrace or reject anything, is not whether it have any evil in it, but whether it have more of evil than of good. There are few things wholly evil or wholly good. Almost everything, especially of government policy, is an inseparable compound of the two; so that our best judgment of the preponderance between them is continually demanded.[10]

• • •

Were I President, I should desire the legislation of the country to rest with Congress, uninfluenced by the executive in its origin or progress, and undisturbed by the veto unless in very special and clear cases.[11]

• • •

I am not an accomplished lawyer. I find quite as much material for a lecture in those points wherein I have failed, as in those wherein I have been moderately successful. The leading rule for the lawyer, as for the man of every other calling, is diligence. Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today. Never let your correspondence fall behind. Whatever piece of business you have in hand, before stopping, do all the labor pertaining to it which can then be done. When you bring a common-law suit, if you have the facts for doing so,

[9] Letter to J.M. Peck; May 21, 1848.
[10] Speech in Congress; June 20, 1848.
[11] Vote; July 1848.

write the declaration at once. If a law point be involved, examine the books, and note the authority you rely on upon the declaration itself, where you are sure to find it when wanted. The same of defenses and pleas. In business not likely to be litigated—ordinary collection cases, foreclosures, partitions, and the like—make all examinations of titles, and note them, and even draft orders and decrees in advance. This course has a triple advantage; it avoids omissions and neglect, saves your labor when once done, performs the labor out of court when you have leisure, rather than in court when you have not. Extemporaneous speaking should be practiced and cultivated. It is the lawyer's avenue to the public. However able and faithful he may be in other respects, people are slow to bring him business if he cannot make a speech. And yet there is not a more fatal error to young lawyers than relying too much on speechmaking. If any one, upon his rare powers of speaking, shall claim an exemption from the drudgery of the law, his case is a failure in advance.

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.

Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this. Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects in titles, whereon to stir up strife, and put money in his pocket? A moral tone ought to be infused into the profession which should drive such men out of it.

The matter of fees is important, far beyond the mere question of bread and butter involved. Properly attended to, fuller justice is done to both lawyer and client. An exorbitant fee should never be claimed. As a general rule never take your whole fee in advance, nor any more than a small retainer. When fully paid beforehand, you are more than a common

mortal if you can feel the same interest in the case, as if something was still in prospect for you, as well as for your client. And when you lack interest in the case the job will very likely lack skill and diligence in the performance. Settle the amount of fee and take a note in advance. Then you will feel that you are working for something, and you are sure to do your work faithfully and well. Never sell a fee note — at least not before the consideration service is performed. It leads to negligence and dishonesty — negligence by losing interest in the case, and dishonesty in refusing to refund when you have allowed the consideration to fail.

There is a vague popular belief that lawyers are necessarily dishonest. I say vague, because when we consider to what extent confidence and honors are reposed in and conferred upon lawyers by the people, it appears improbable that their impression of dishonesty is very distinct and vivid. Yet the impression is common, almost universal. Let no young man choosing the law for a calling for a moment yield to the popular belief — resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer. Choose some other occupation, rather than one in the choosing of which you do, in advance, consent to be a knave. — [12]

• • •

Mr. Clay ever was on principle and in feeling opposed to slavery. The very earliest, and one of the latest, public efforts of his life, separated by a period of more than fifty years, were both made in favor of gradual emancipation. He did not perceive that on a question of human right the negroes were to be excepted from the human race. And yet Mr. Clay was the owner of slaves. Cast into life when slavery was already widely spread and deeply seated, he did not perceive, as I think no

[12] Notes for Law Lecture; July, 1850.

wise man has perceived, how it could be at once eradicated without producing a greater evil even to the cause of human liberty itself. His feeling and his judgment, therefore, ever led him to oppose both extremes of opinion on the subject. Those who would shiver into fragments the Union of these States, tear to tatters its now venerated Constitution, and even burn the last copy of the Bible, rather than slavery should continue a single hour, together with all their more halting sympathizers, have received, and are receiving, their just execration; and the name and opinions and influence of Mr. Clay are fully and, as I trust, effectually and enduringly arrayed against them.[13]

• • •

The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities. In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere.

Equality in society alike beats inequality, whether the latter be of the British aristocratic sort or of the domestic slavery sort. We know Southern men declare that their slaves are better off than hired laborers among us. How little they know whereof they speak! There is no permanent class of hired laborers amongst us. Twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer. The hired laborer of yesterday labors on his own account today, and will hire others to labor for him tomorrow. Advancement — improvement in condition — is the order of things in a society of equals. As labor is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden onto the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race. Originally a curse for transgression upon the

[13] Eulogy of Henry Clay; July 16, 1852.

whole race, when, as by slavery, it is concentrated on a part only, it becomes the double-refined curse of God upon his creatures.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The power of hope upon human exertion and happiness is wonderful. The slave-master himself has a conception of it, and hence the system of tasks among slaves. The slave whom you cannot drive with the lash to break seventy-five pounds of hemp in a day, if you will task him to break a hundred, and promise him pay for all he does over, he will break you a hundred and fifty. You have substituted hope for the rod. And yet perhaps it does not occur to you that to the extent of your gain in the case, you have given up the slave system and adopted the free system of labor.[14]

• • •

What I do say is that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent.[15]

• • •

Since then [the Missouri Compromise of 1820] we have had thirty-six years of experience; and this experience has demonstrated, I think, that there is no peaceful extinction of slavery in prospect for us. The signal failure of Henry Clay and other good and great men, in 1849, to effect anything in favor of gradual emancipation in Kentucky, together with a thousand other signs, extinguished that hope utterly. On the question of liberty as a principle, we are not what we have been. When we were the political slaves of King George, and wanted to be free, we called the maxim that "all men are created equal" a self-evident truth, but now when we have grown fat,

[14] Notes on Government; July, 1854.

[15] On the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise speech at Peoria, Ill.; October 16, 1854.

and have lost all dread of being slaves ourselves, we have become so greedy to be masters that we call the same maxim "a self-evident lie." The Fourth of July has not quite dwindled away; it is still a great day— for burning fire-crackers!!!

That spirit which desired the peaceful extinction of slavery has itself become extinct with the occasion and the men of the Revolution. Under the impulse of that occasion, nearly half the States adopted systems of emancipation at once, and it is a significant fact that not a single State has done the like since. So far as peaceful voluntary emancipation is concerned, the condition of the negro slave in America, scarcely less terrible to the contemplation of a free mind, is now as fixed and hopeless of change for the better, as that of the lost souls of the finally impenitent. The Autocrat of all the Russias will resign his crown and proclaim his subjects free republicans sooner than will our American masters voluntarily give up their slaves.

Our political problem now is, "Can we as a nation continue together permanently — forever — half slave and half free?" The problem is too mighty for me — may God, in his mercy, superintend the solution. — [16]

• • •

I acknowledge your rights and my obligations under the Constitution in regard to your slaves. I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet. In 1841 you and I had together a tedious low-water trip on a steamboat from Louisville to St. Louis. You may remember, as I well do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio there were on board ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons. That sight was a continued torment to me and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio or any other

[16] Letter to George Robertson; August 15, 1855.

slave border. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union. I do oppose the extension of slavery because my judgment and feeling so prompt me, and I am under no obligations to the contrary. If for this you and I must differ, differ we must….

You inquire where I now stand. That is a disputed point. I think I am a Whig; but others say there are no Whigs, and that I am an Abolitionist. When I was at Washington, I voted for the Wilmot proviso as good as forty times; and I never heard of any one attempting to un-Whig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the extension of slavery. I am not a Know-nothing; that is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except negroes." When the Know-nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes and foreigners and Catholics." When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty — to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy. — [17]

• • •

I think the authors of that notable instrument [the Declaration of Independence] intended to include all men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect,

[17] Letter to Joshua F. Speed; August 24, 1855.

moral developments, or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness in what respects they did consider all men created equal — equal with "certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This they said, and this they meant. They did not mean to assert the obvious untruth that all were then actually enjoying that equality, nor yet that they were about to confer it immediately upon them. In fact, they had no power to confer such a boon. They meant simply to declare the right, so that enforcement of it might follow as fast as circumstances should permit.

They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening, its influence and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere. The assertion that "all men are created equal" was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain; and it was placed in the Declaration not for that, but for future use. Its authors meant it to be — as, thank God, it is now proving itself — a stumbling-block to all those who in after times might seek to turn a free people back into the hateful paths of despotism. They knew the proneness of prosperity to breed tyrants, and they meant when such should reappear in this fair land and commence their vocation, they should find left for them at least one hard nut to crack.[18]

• • •

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

[18] Speech in Reply to Senator Douglas at Springfield, Ill.; June 26, 1857.

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.[19]

• • •

Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defence is in the spirit which prized liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors.[20]

• • •

I insist that our fathers did not make this nation half slave and half free, or part slave and part free. I insist that they found the institution of slavery existing here. They did not make it so, but they left it so because they knew of no way to get rid of it at that time…. More than that: when the fathers of the government cut off the source of slavery by the abolition of the slave-trade, and adopted a system of restricting it from the new Territories where it had not existed, I maintain that they placed it where they understood, and all sensible men understood, it was in the course of ultimate extinction;

[19] Speech accepting the nomination for United States Senator, Springfield, Ill,; June 16, 1858.
[20] Speech at Edwardsville, Ill.; September 13, 1858.

and when Judge Douglas asks me why it cannot continue as our fathers made it, I ask him why he and his friends could not let it remain as our fathers made it?

It is precisely all I ask of him in relation to the institution of slavery, that it shall be placed upon the basis that our fathers placed it upon. Mr. Brooks, of South Carolina, once said, and truly said, that when this government was established, no one expected the institution of slavery to last until this day….[21]

• • •

That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles — right and wrong — throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, "You toil and work and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for slaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.[22]

• • •

This is a world of compensation; and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.[23]

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[21] Debate with Douglas at Quincy, Ill.; October 13, 1858.
[22] Debate with Douglas at Alton, Ill.; October 15, 1858.
[23] Letter to Jefferson Dinner Committee of Boston; April 6, 1859.

• • •

Labor is the great source from which nearly all, if not all, human comforts and necessities are drawn. There is a difference in opinion about the elements of labor in society. Some men assume that there is a necessary connection between capital and labor, and that connection draws within it the whole of the labor of the community. They assume that nobody works unless capital excites him to work. They begin next to consider what is the best way. They say there are but two ways — one is to hire men and to allure them to labor by their consent; the other is to buy the men and drive them to it, and that is slavery. Having assumed that, they proceed to discuss the question of whether the laborers themselves are better off in the condition of slaves or of hired laborers, and they usually decide that they are better off in the condition of slaves.

In the first place, I say that the whole thing is a mistake. That there is a certain relation between capital and labor, I admit. That it does exist, and rightfully exists, I think is true. That men who are industrious and sober and honest in the pursuit of their own interests should after a while accumulate capital, and after that should be allowed to enjoy it in peace, and also if they should choose, when they have accumulated it, to use it to save themselves from actual labor, and hire other people to labor for them, is right. In doing so, they do not wrong the man they employ, for they find men, who have not their own land to work upon, or shops to work in, and who are benefitted by working for others — hired laborers, receiving their capital for it. Thus a few men that own capital hire a few others, and these establish the relation of which I make no complaint. But I insist that that relation, after all, does not embrace more than one eighth of the labor of the country.

We must have a national policy in regard to the

institution of slavery that acknowledges and deals with that institution as being wrong. Whoever desires the prevention of the spread of slavery and the nationalization of that institution, yields all when he yields to any policy that either recognizes slavery as being right, or as being an indifferent thing. Nothing will make you successful but setting up a policy which shall treat the thing as being wrong. When I say this, I do not mean to say that this General Government is charged with the duty of redressing or preventing all the wrongs in the world; but I do think that it is charged with preventing and redressing all wrongs which are wrongs to itself. This government is expressly charged with the duty of providing for the general welfare. We believe that the spreading out and perpetuity of the institution of slavery impairs the general welfare. We believe — nay, we know — that that is the only thing that has ever threatened the perpetuity of the Union itself. The only thing which has ever menaced the destruction of the government under which we live, is this very thing. To repress this thing, we think, is providing for the general welfare….

I say that we must not interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists, because the Constitution forbids it, and the general welfare does not require us to do so. We must not withhold an efficient fugitive-slave law, because the Constitution requires us, as I understand it, not to withhold such a law. But we must prevent the outspreading of the institution, because neither the Constitution nor the general welfare requires us to extend it. We must prevent the revival of the African slave-trade, and the enacting by Congress of a territorial slave-code. We must prevent each of these things being done by either congresses or courts. The people of these United States are the rightful masters of both congresses and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.

To do these things we must employ instrumentalities. We

must hold conventions; we must adopt platforms, if we conform to ordinary custom; we must nominate candidates; and we must carry elections…. I should be glad to have some of the many good and able and noble men of the South to place themselves where we can confer upon them the high honor of an election upon one or the other end of our ticket. It would do my soul good to do that thing. It would enable us to teach them that, inasmuch as we select one of their own number to carry out our principles, we are free from the charge that we mean more than we say.[24]

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The prudent, penniless beginner in the world labors for the wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself, then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This, say its advocates, is free labor — the just, and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way for all, gives hope to all, and energy, and progress, and improvement of condition to all. If any continue through life in the condition of the hired laborer, it is not the fault of the system, but because of either a dependent nature which prefers it, or improvidence, folly, or singular misfortune. I have said this much about the elements of labor generally, as introductory to the consideration of a new phase which that element is in process of assuming. The old general rule was that educated people did not perform manual labor. They managed to eat their bread, leaving the toil of producing it to the uneducated. This was not an insupportable evil to the working bees, so long as the class of drones remained very small. But now, especially in these free States, nearly all are educated — quite too nearly all to leave the labor of the uneducated in any wise adequate to the support of the whole. It follows from this that

[24] Speech at Cincinnati; September 17, 1859.

henceforth educated people must labor. Otherwise, education itself would become a positive and intolerable evil. No country can sustain in idleness more than a small percentage of its numbers. The great majority must labor at something productive. From these premises the problem springs, "How can labor and education be the most satisfactorily combined?"

By the "mud-sill" theory it is assumed that labor and education are incompatible, and any practical combination of them impossible. According to that theory, a blind horse upon a tread-mill is a perfect illustration of what a laborer should be — all the better for being blind, that he could not kick understandingly. According to that theory, the education of laborers is not only useless but pernicious and dangerous. In fact, it is, in some sort, deemed a misfortune that laborers should have heads at all. Those same heads are regarded as explosive materials, only to be safely kept in damp places, as far as possible from that peculiar sort of fire which ignites them. A Yankee who could invent a strong-handed man without a head would receive the everlasting gratitude of the "mud-sill" advocates. But free labor says, "No." Free labor argues that as the Author of man makes every individual with one head and one pair of hands, it was probably intended that heads and hands should co-operate as friends, and that that particular head should direct and control that pair of hands. As each man has one mouth to be fed, and one pair of hands to furnish food, it was probably intended that that particular pair of hands should feed that particular mouth — that each head is the natural guardian, director, and protector of the hands and mouth inseparably connected with it; and that being so, every head should be cultivated and improved by whatever will add to its capacity for performing its charge. In one word, free labor insists on universal education.

Erelong the most valuable of all arts will be the art of deriving a comfortable subsistence from the smallest area of soil.

No community whose every member possesses this art, can ever be the victim of oppression in any of its forms. Such community will be alike independent of crowned kings, money kings, and land kings.

It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words, "And this, too, shall pass away." How much it expresses! How chastening in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction! "And this, too, shall pass away." And yet, let us hope, it is not quite true. Let us hope, rather, that by the best cultivation of the physical world beneath and around us, and the intellectual and moral world within us, we shall secure an individual, social, and political prosperity and happiness, whose course shall be onward and upward, and which, while the earth endures, shall not pass away.[25]

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Slavery is wrong in its effect upon white people and free labor. It is the only thing that threatens the Union. It makes what Senator Seward has been much abused for calling an "irrepressible conflict." When they get ready to settle it, we hope they will let us know. Public opinion settles every question here; any policy to be permanent must have public opinion at the bottom — something in accordance with the philosophy of the human mind as it is. The property basis will have its weight. The love of property and a consciousness of right or wrong have conflicting places in our organization, which often make a man's course seem crooked, his conduct a riddle.[26]

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[25] Address at Wisconsin State Agricultural Fair; September 30, 1859.
[26] Speech at Hartford, Conn.; March 5, 1860.

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Now, gentlemen, the Republicans desire to place this great question of slavery on the very basis on which our fathers placed it, and no other. It is easy to demonstrate that "our fathers who framed this government under which we live" looked on slavery as wrong, and so framed it and everything about it as to square with the idea that it was wrong, so far as the necessities arising from its existence permitted. In forming the Constitution they found the slave-trade existing, capital invested in it, fields depending upon it for labor, and the whole system resting upon the importation of slave labor. They therefore did not prohibit the slave-trade at once, but they gave the power to prohibit it after twenty years. Why was this? What other foreign trade did they treat in that way? Would they have done this if they had not thought slavery wrong?

Another thing was done by some of the same men who framed the Constitution, and afterward adopted as their own act by the first Congress held under that Constitution, of which many of the framers were members — they prohibited the spread of slavery in the Territories. Thus the same men, the framers of the Constitution, cut off the supply and prohibited the spread of slavery; and both acts show conclusively that they considered that the thing was wrong.

If additional proof is wanting, it can be found in the phraseology of the Constitution. When men are framing a supreme law and chart of government to secure blessings and prosperity to untold generations yet to come, they use language as short and direct and plain as can be found to express their meaning. In all matters but this of slavery the framers of the Constitution used the very clearest, shortest, and most direct language. But the Constitution alludes to slavery three times without mentioning it once! The language used becomes ambiguous, roundabout, and mystical. They speak of

the "immigration of persons," and mean the importation of slaves, but do not say so. In establishing a basis of representation they say "all other persons," when they mean to say slaves. Why did they not use the shortest phrase? In providing for the return of fugitives they say "persons held to service or labor." If they had said "slaves," it would have been plainer and less liable to misconstruction. Why didn't they do it? We cannot doubt that it was done on purpose. Only one reason is possible, and that is supplied us by one of the framers of the Constitution — and it is not possible for man to conceive of any other. They expected and desired that the system would come to an end, and meant that when it did the Constitution should not show that there ever had been a slave in this good free country of ours.[27]

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What is the true condition of the laborer? I take it that it is best for all to leave each man free to acquire property as fast as he can. Some will get wealthy. I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich; it would do more harm than good. So while we do not propose any war upon capital, we do wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else. When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition; he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor for his whole life. I am not ashamed to confess that twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer, hauling rails, at work on a flatboat — just what might happen to any poor man's son. I want every man to have the chance — and I believe a black man is entitled to it— in which he can better his condition — when he may look forward and hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally to hire men to work for him. That is the true

[27] Speech at New Haven; March 6, 1860.

system. Up here in New England you have a soil that scarcely sprouts black-eyed beans, and yet where will you find wealthy men so wealthy, and poverty so rarely in extremity? There is not another such place on earth.[28]

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When the people rise in mass in behalf of the Union and the liberties of this country, truly may it be said, "The gates of hell cannot prevail against them." In all trying positions in which I shall be placed, and doubtless I shall be placed in many such, my reliance will be upon you and the people of the United States; and I wish you to remember, now and forever, that it is your business, and not mine; that if the union of these States and the liberties of this people shall be lost, it is but little to any one man of fifty-two years of age, but a great deal to the thirty millions of people who inhabit these United States, and to their posterity in all coming time.[29]

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There is no crisis but an artificial one. What is there now to warrant the condition of affairs presented by our friends over the river? Take even their own view of the questions involved, and there is nothing to justify the course they are pursuing. I repeat, then, there is no crisis excepting such a one as may be gotten up at any time by turbulent men aided by designing politicians. My advice to them, under such circumstances, is to keep cool. If the great American people only keep their temper on both sides of the line, the troubles will come to an end, and the question which now distracts the country will be settled, just as surely as all other difficulties of a like character which have originated in this government have been adjusted. Let the people on both sides keep their

[28] Speech at New Haven; March 6, 1860.
[29] Remarks at Indianapolis; February 11, 1861.

self-possession, and just as other clouds have cleared away in due time, so will this great nation continue to prosper as heretofore.[30]

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Away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, … Weems' "Life of Washington." I remember all the accounts there given of the battlefields and struggles [of our forefathers] for the liberties of the country. … I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that these men struggled for. I am exceedingly anxious that that thing — that something even more than national independence; that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world to all time to come — I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made, and I shall be most happy indeed if I shall be a humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle.[31]

• • •

It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Now, my friends, can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider

[30] Remarks at Pittsburg; February 15, 1861.
[31] Remarks to the Senate of New Jersey; February 21, 1861.

myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it.[32]

• • •

It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever — it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.[33]

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Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.[34]

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This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or

[32] Remarks in Independence Hall, Philadelphia; February 22, 1861.
[33] First Inaugural Address; March 4, 1861.
[34] First Inaugural Address; March 4, 1861.

overthrow it….[35]

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In a storm at sea no one on board can wish the ship to sink; and yet not infrequently all go down together because too many will direct, and no single mind can be allowed to control.[36]

• • •

No men living are more worthy to be trusted than those who toil up from poverty — none less inclined to take or touch aught which they have not honestly earned. Let them beware of surrendering a political power which they already possess, and which, if surrendered, will surely be used to close the door of advancement against such as they, and to fix new disabilities and burdens upon them, till all of liberty shall be lost.[37]

• • •

Your race is suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people. But even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. You are cut off from many of the advantages which the other race enjoys. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free, but on this broad continent not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best, and the ban is still upon you…. But for your race among us there could not be war, although many men engaged on either side do not care for you one way or the other…. It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated. I know that there are free men

[35] First Inaugural Address; March 4, 1861.
[36] Annual Message to Congress; December 8, 1861.
[37] Annual Message to Congress; December 8, 1861.

among you who, even if they could better their condition, are not as much inclined to go out of the country as those who, being slaves, could obtain their freedom on this condition. I suppose one of the principal difficulties in the way of colonization is that the free colored man cannot see that his comfort would be advanced by it.... This is (I speak in no unkind sense) an extremely selfish view of the case. You ought to do something to help those who are not so fortunate as yourselves. There is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us. Now, if you could give a start to the white people, you would open a wide door for many to be made free. If we deal with those who are not free at the beginning, and whose intellects are clouded by slavery, we have very poor material to start with. If intelligent colored men, such as are before me, would move in this matter, much might be accomplished. It is exceedingly important that we have men at the beginning capable of thinking as white men, and not those who have been systematically oppressed. There is much to encourage you. For the sake of your race you should sacrifice something of your present comfort for the purpose of being as grand in that respect as the white people. It is a cheering thought throughout life, that something can be done to ameliorate the condition of those who have been subject to the hard usages of the world. It is difficult to make a man miserable while he feels he is worthy of himself and claims kindred to the great God who made him.[38]

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What good would a proclamation of emancipation from me do, especially as we are now situated? I do not want to issue a document that the whole world will see must necessarily be inoperative, like the Pope's bull against the comet.

[38] Address to a Deputation of Colored Men; August 14, 1862.

Would my word free the slaves, when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the rebel States? Is there a single court, or magistrate, or individual that would be influenced by it there? And what reason is there to think it would have any greater effect upon the slaves than the late law of Congress, which I approved, and which offers protection and freedom to the slaves of rebel masters who come within our lines? Yet I cannot learn that that law has caused a single slave to come over to us. And suppose they could be induced by a proclamation of freedom from me to throw themselves upon us, what should we do with them? How can we feed and care for such a multitude? …

Now, then, tell me, if you please, what possible result of good would follow the issuing of such a proclamation as you desire? Understand, I raise no objections against it on legal or constitutional grounds; for, as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, in time of war I suppose I have a right to take any measure which may best subdue the enemy; nor do I urge objections of a moral nature, in view of possible consequences of insurrection and massacre at the South. I view this matter as a practical war measure, to be decided on according to the advantages or disadvantages it may offer to the suppression of the rebellion.

I admit that slavery is the root of the rebellion, or at least its sine qua non. The ambition of politicians may have instigated them to act, but they would have been impotent without slavery as their instrument. I will also concede that emancipation would help us in Europe, and convince them that we are incited by something more than ambition. I grant, further, that it would help somewhat at the North, though not so much, I fear, as you and those you represent imagine. Still, some additional strength would be added in that way to the war, and then, unquestionably, it would weaken the rebels by drawing off their laborers, which is of great importance; but I am not so sure we could do much with the blacks. If we were

to arm them, I fear that in a few weeks the arms would be in the hands of the rebels; and, indeed, thus far we have not had arms enough to equip our white troops. I will mention another thing, though it meet only your scorn and contempt. There are fifty thousand bayonets in the Union armies from the border slave States. It would be a serious matter if, in consequence of a proclamation such as you desire, they should go over to the rebels. I do not think they all would — not so many, indeed, as a year ago, or as six months ago — not so many today as yesterday. Every day increases their Union feeling. They are also getting their pride enlisted, and want to beat the rebels. Let me say one thing more: I think you should admit that we already have an important principle to rally and unite the people, in the fact that constitutional government is at stake. This is a fundamental idea going down about as deep as anything.

Do not misunderstand me because I have mentioned these objections. They indicate the difficulties that have thus far prevented my action in some such way as you desire. I have not decided against a proclamation of liberty to the slaves, but hold the matter under advisement; and I can assure you that the subject is on my mind, by day and night, more than any other. Whatever shall appear to be God's will, I will do.[39]

• • •

The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect his purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is

[39] Remarks to Representatives of Chicago Churches; September 13, 1862.

probably true; that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere great power on the minds of the now contestants, he could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, he could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.[40]

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Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We — even we here — hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free — honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just — a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.[41]

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Whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord:

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[40] Meditation on the Divine Will; September 30, 1862.
[41] Annual Message to Congress; December 1, 1862.

And insomuch as we know that by his divine law nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.[42]

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The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people, just now, are much in want of one. We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. Here are two, not only different, but incompatible things, called by the same name, liberty. And it follows that each of the things is, by the

[42] Proclamation of April 30, 1863 as a National Fast Day; March 30, 1863.

respective parties, called by two different and incompatible names — liberty and tyranny.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act, as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty; and precisely the same difference prevails today among us human creatures, even in the North, and all professing to love liberty. Hence we behold the process by which thousands are daily passing from under the yoke of bondage hailed by some as the advance of liberty, and bewailed by others as the destruction of all liberty.[43]

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In regard to this great book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it.[44]

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Gold is good in its place, but living, brave, patriotic men are better than gold.[45]

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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

[43] Remarks at a Sanitary Fair in Baltimore; April 18, 1864.
[44] Remarks to a Negro delegation; September 7, 1864.
[45] Remarks in Response to a Serenade; November 10, 1864.

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.[46]

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[46] Second Inaugural Address; March 4, 1865.