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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

George Putnam  
**Abraham Lincoln**

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# **George Haven Putnam**

## **Abraham Lincoln / The People's Leader**

### **in the Struggle for National Existence**

#### **INTRODUCTORY NOTE**

The twelfth of February, 1909, was the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. In New York, as in other cities and towns throughout the Union, the day was devoted to commemoration exercises, and even in the South, in centres like Atlanta (the capture of which in 1864 had indicated the collapse of the cause of the Confederacy), representative Southerners gave their testimony to the life and character of the great American.

The Committee in charge of the commemoration in New York arranged for a series of addresses to be given to the people of the city and it was my privilege to be selected as one of the speakers. It was an indication of the rapid passing away of the generation which had had to do with the events of the War, that the list of orators, forty-six in all, included only four men who had ever seen the hero whose life and character they were describing.

In writing out later, primarily for the information of children and grandchildren, my own address (which had been delivered without notes), I found myself so far absorbed in the interest of the subject and in the recollections of the War period, that I was impelled to expand the paper so that it should present a more comprehensive study of the career and character of Lincoln than it had been possible to attempt within the compass of an hour's talk, and should include also references, in outline, to the constitutional struggle that had preceded the contest and to the chief events of the War itself with which the great War President had been most directly concerned. The monograph, therefore, while in the form of an essay or historical sketch, retains in certain portions the character of the spoken address with which it originated.

It is now brought into print in the hope that it may be found of interest for certain readers of the younger generation and may serve as an incentive to the reading of the fuller histories of the War period, and particularly of the best of the biographies of the great American whom we honour as the People's leader.

I have been fortunate enough to secure (only, however, after this monograph had been put into type) a copy of the pamphlet printed in September, 1860, by the Young Men's Republican Union of New York, in which is presented the text, as revised by the speaker, of the address given by Lincoln at the Cooper Institute in February, – the address which made him President.

This edition of the speech, prepared for use in the Presidential campaign, contains a series of historical annotations by Cephas Brainerd of the New York Bar and Charles C. Nott, who later rendered further distinguished service to his country as Colonel of the 176th Regiment, N.Y.S. Volunteers, and (after the close of the War) as chief justice of the Court of Claims.

These young lawyers (not yet leaders of the Bar) appear to have realised at once that the speech was to constitute the platform upon which the issues of the Presidential election were to be contested. Not being prophets, they were, of course, not in a position to know that the same statements were to represent the contentions of the North upon which the Civil War was fought out.

I am able to include, with the scholarly notes of the two lawyers, a valuable introduction to the speech, written (as late as February, 1908) by Judge Nott; together with certain letters which in February, 1860, passed between him (as the representative of the Committee) and Mr. Lincoln.

The introduction and the letters have never before been published, and (as is the case also with the material of the notes) are now in print only in the present volume.

I judge, therefore, that I may be doing a service to the survivors of the generation of 1860 and also to the generations that have grown up since the War, by utilising the occasion of the publication of my own little monograph for the reprinting of these notes in a form for permanent preservation and for reference on the part of students of the history of the Republic.

G.H.P.

NEW YORK, April 2, 1909.

# I

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAN

On the twelfth of February, 1909, the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, Americans gathered together, throughout the entire country, to honour the memory of a great American, one who may come to be accepted as the greatest of Americans. It was in every way fitting that this honour should be rendered to Abraham Lincoln and that, on such commemoration day, his fellow-citizens should not fail to bear also in honoured memory the thousands of other good Americans who like Lincoln gave their lives for their country and without whose loyal devotion Lincoln's leadership would have been in vain.

The chief purpose, however, as I understand, of a memorial service is not so much to glorify the dead as to enlighten and inspire the living. We borrow the thought of his own Gettysburg address (so eloquent in its exquisite simplicity) when we say that no words of ours can add any glory to the name of Abraham Lincoln. His work is accomplished. His fame is secure. It is for us, his fellow-citizens, for the older men who had personal touch with the great struggle in which Lincoln was the nation's leader, for the younger men who have grown up in the generation since the War, and for the children by whom are to be handed down through the new century the great traditions of the Republic, to secure from the life and character of our great leader incentive, illumination, and inspiration to good citizenship, in order that Lincoln and his fellow-martyrs shall not have died in vain.

It is possible within the limits of this paper simply to touch upon the chief events and experiences in Lincoln's life. It has been my endeavour to select those that were the most important in the forming or in the expression of his character. The term "forming" is, however, not adequate to indicate the development of a personality like Lincoln's. We rather think of his sturdy character as having been *forged* into its final form through the fiery furnace of fierce struggle, as hammered out under the blows of difficulties and disasters, and as pressed beneath the weight of the nation's burdens, until was at last produced the finely tempered nature of the man we know, the Lincoln of history, that exquisite combination of sweetness of nature and strength of character. The type is described in Schiller's Song of the Founding of the Bell:

Denn, wo das strenge mit dem zarten,  
Wo mildes sich und starkes paarten,  
Da giebt es einen guten Klang.

There is a tendency to apply the term "miraculous" to the career of every hero, and in a sense such description is, of course, true. The life of every man, however restricted its range, is something of a miracle; but the course of a single life, like that of humanity, is assuredly based on a development that proceeds from a series of causations. Holmes says that the education of a man begins two centuries before his birth. We may recall in this connection that Lincoln came of good stock. It is true that his parents belonged to the class of poor whites; but the Lincoln family can be traced from an eastern county of England (we might hope for the purpose of genealogical harmony that the county was Lincolnshire) to Hingham in Massachusetts, and by way of Pennsylvania and Virginia to Kentucky. The grandfather of our Abraham was killed, while working in his field on the Kentucky farm, by predatory Indians shooting from the cover of the dense forest. Abraham's father, Thomas, at that time a boy, was working in the field where his father was murdered. Such an incident in Kentucky simply repeated what had been going on just a century before in Massachusetts, at Deerfield and at dozens of other settlements on the edge of the great forest which was the home of the Indians. During

the hundred years, the frontier of the white man's domain had been moved a thousand miles to the south-west and, as ever, there was still friction at the point of contact.

The record of the boyhood of our Lincoln has been told in dozens of forms and in hundreds of monographs. We know of the simplicity, of the penury, of the family life in the little one-roomed log hut that formed the home for the first ten years of Abraham's life. We know of his little group of books collected with toil and self-sacrifice. The series, after some years of strenuous labour, comprised the Bible, *Aesop's Fables*, a tattered copy of Euclid's *Geometry*, and Weems's *Life of Washington*. The *Euclid* he had secured as a great prize from the son of a neighbouring farmer. Abraham had asked the boy the meaning of the word "demonstrate." His friend said that he did not himself know, but that he knew the word was in a book which he had at school, and he hunted up the *Euclid*. After some bargaining, the *Euclid* came into Abraham's possession. In accordance with his practice, the whole contents were learned by heart. Abraham's later opponents at the Bar or in political discussion came to realise that he understood the meaning of the word "demonstrate." In fact, references to specific problems of Euclid occurred in some of his earlier speeches at the Bar.

A year or more later, when the Lincoln family had crossed the river to Indiana, there was added to the "library" a copy of the revised Statutes of the State. The Weems's *Washington* had been borrowed by Lincoln from a neighbouring farmer. The boy kept it at night under his pillow, and on the occasion of a storm, the water blew in through the chinks of the logs that formed the wall of the cabin, drenching the pillow and the head of the boy (a small matter in itself) and wetting and almost spoiling the book. This was a grave misfortune. Lincoln took his damaged volume to the owner and asked how he could make payment for the loss. It was arranged that the boy should put in three days' work shucking corn on the farm. "Will that work pay for the book or only for the damage?" asked the boy. It was agreed that the labour of three days should be considered sufficient for the purchase of the book.

The text of this biography and the words of each valued volume in the little "library" were absorbed into the memory of the reader. It was his practice when going into the field for work, to take with him written-out paragraphs from the book that he had at the moment in mind and to repeat these paragraphs between the various chores or between the wood-chopping until every page was committed by heart. Paper was scarce and dear and for the boy unattainable. He used for his copying bits of board shaved smooth with his jack-knife. This material had the advantage that when the task of one day had been mastered, a little labour with the jack-knife prepared the surface of the board for the work of the next day. As I read this incident in Lincoln's boyhood, I was reminded of an experience of my own in Louisiana. It happened frequently during the campaign of 1863 that our supplies were cut off through the capture of our waggon trains by that active Confederate commander, General Taylor. More than once, we were short of provisions, and, in one instance, a supply of stationery for which the adjutants of the brigade had been waiting, was carried off to serve the needs of our opponents. We tore down a convenient and unnecessary shed and utilised from the roof the shingles, the clean portions of which made an admirable substitute for paper. For some days, the morning reports of the brigade were filed on shingles.

Lincoln's work as a farm-hand was varied by two trips down the river to New Orleans. The opportunity had been offered to the young man by the neighbouring store-keeper, Gentry, to take part in the trip of a flat-boat which carried the produce of the county to New Orleans, to be there sold in exchange for sugar or rum. Lincoln was, at the time of these trips, already familiar with certain of the aspects and conditions of slavery, but the inspection of the slave-market in New Orleans stamped upon his sensitive imagination a fresh and more sombre picture, and made a lasting impression of the iniquity and horror of the institution. From the time of his early manhood, Lincoln hated slavery. What was exceptional, however, in his state of mind was that, while abominating the institution, he was able to give a sympathetic understanding to the opinions and to the prejudices of the slave-owners. In all his long fight against slavery as the curse both of the white and of the black, and as the great

obstacle to the natural and wholesome development of the nation, we do not at any time find a trace of bitterness against the men of the South who were endeavouring to maintain and to extend the system.

It was of essential importance for the development of Lincoln as a political leader, first for his State, and later in the contest that became national, that he should have possessed an understanding, which was denied to many of the anti-slavery leaders, of the actual nature, character, and purpose of the men against whom he was contending. It became of larger importance when Lincoln was directing from Washington the policy of the national administration that he should have a sympathetic knowledge of the problems of the men of the Border States who with the outbreak of the War had been placed in a position of exceptional difficulty, and that he should have secured and retained the confidence of these men. It seems probable that if the War President had been a man of Northern birth and Northern prejudices, if he had been one to whom the wider, the more patient and sympathetic view of these problems had been impossible or difficult, the Border States could not have been saved to the Union. It is probable that the support given to the cause of the North by the sixty thousand or seventy thousand loyal recruits from Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, and Virginia, may even have proved the deciding factor in turning the tide of events. The nation's leader for the struggle seems to have been secured through a process of natural selection as had been the case a century earlier with Washington. We may recall that Washington died but ten years before Lincoln was born; and from the fact that each leader was at hand when the demand came for his service, and when without such service the nation might have been pressed to destruction, we may grasp the hope that in time of need the nation will always be provided with the leader who can meet the requirement.

After Lincoln returned from New Orleans, he secured employment for a time in the grocery or general store of Gentry, and when he was twenty-two years of age, he went into business with a partner, some twenty years older than himself, in carrying on such a store. He had so impressed himself upon the confidence of his neighbours that, while he was absolutely without resources, there was no difficulty in his borrowing the money required for his share of the capital. The undertaking did not prove a success. Lincoln had no business experience and no particular business capacity, while his partner proved to be untrustworthy. The partner decamped, leaving Lincoln to close up the business and to take the responsibility for the joint indebtedness. It was seventeen years before Lincoln was able, from his modest earnings as a lawyer, to clear off this indebtedness. The debt became outlawed in six years' time but this could not affect Lincoln's sense of the obligation. After the failure of the business, Lincoln secured work as county surveyor. In this, he was following the example of his predecessor Washington, with whose career as a surveyor the youngster who knew Weems's biography by heart, was of course familiar. His new occupation took him through the county and brought him into personal relations with a much wider circle than he had known in the village of New Salem, and in his case, the personal relation counted for much; the history shows that no one who knew Lincoln failed to be attracted by him or to be impressed with the fullest confidence in the man's integrity of purpose and of action.

## II

### WORK AT THE BAR AND ENTRANCE INTO POLITICS

In 1834, when he was twenty-five years old, Lincoln made his first entrance into politics, presenting himself as candidate for the Assembly. His defeat was not without compensations; he secured in his own village or township, New Salem, no less than 208 out of the 211 votes cast. This prophet had honour with those who knew him. Two years later, he tried again and this time with success. His journeys as a surveyor had brought him into touch with, and into the confidence of, enough voters throughout the county to secure the needed majority.

Lincoln's active work as a lawyer lasted from 1834 to 1860, or for about twenty-six years. He secured in the cases undertaken by him a very large proportion of successful decisions. Such a result is not entirely to be credited to his effectiveness as an advocate. The first reason was that in his individual work, that is to say, in the matters that were taken up by himself rather than by his partner, he accepted no case in the justice of which he did not himself have full confidence. As his fame as an advocate increased, he was approached by an increasing number of clients who wanted the advantage of the effective service of the young lawyer and also of his assured reputation for honesty of statement and of management. Unless, however, he believed in the case, he put such suggestions to one side even at the time when the income was meagre and when every dollar was of importance.

Lincoln's record at the Bar has been somewhat obscured by the value of his public service, but as it comes to be studied, it is shown to have been both distinctive and important. His law-books were, like those of his original library, few, but whatever volumes he had of his own and whatever he was able to place his hands upon from the shelves of his friends, he mastered thoroughly. His work at the Bar gave evidence of his exceptional powers of reasoning while it was itself also a large influence in the development of such powers. The counsel who practised with and against him, the judges before whom his arguments were presented, and the members of the juries, the hard-headed working citizens of the State, seem to have all been equally impressed with the exceptional fairness with which the young lawyer presented not only his own case but that of his opponent. He had great tact in holding his friends, in convincing those who did not agree with him, and in winning over opponents; but he gave no futile effort to tasks which his judgment convinced him would prove impossible. He never, says Horace Porter, citing Lincoln's words, "wasted any time in trying to massage the back of a political porcupine." "A man might as well," says Lincoln, "undertake to throw fleas across the barnyard with a shovel."

He had as a youngster won repute as a teller of dramatic stories, and those who listened to his arguments in court were expecting to have his words to the jury brightened and rendered for the moment more effective by such stories. The hearers were often disappointed in such expectation. Neither at the Bar, nor, it may be said here, in his later work as a political leader, did Lincoln indulge himself in the telling a story for the sake of the story, nor for the sake of the laugh to be raised by the story, nor for the momentary pleasure or possible temporary advantage of the discomfiture of the opponent. The story was used, whether in law or in politics, only when it happened to be the shortest and most effective method of making clear an issue or of illustrating a statement. In later years, when he had upon him the terrible burdens of the great struggle, Lincoln used stories from time to time as a vent to his feelings. The impression given was that by an effort of will and in order to keep his mind from dwelling too continuously upon the tremendous problems upon which he was engaged, he would, by the use of some humorous reminiscence, set his thoughts in a direction as different as possible from that of his cares. A third and very valuable use of the story which grew up in his Washington days was to turn aside some persistent but impossible application; and to give to the applicant, with the least risk of unnecessary annoyance to his feelings, the "no" that was necessary. It

is doubtless also the case that, as has happened to other men gifted with humour, Lincoln's reputation as a story-teller caused to be ascribed to him a great series of anecdotes and incidents of one kind or another, some of which would have been entirely outside of, and inconsistent with, his own standard and his own method. There is the further and final word to be said about Lincoln's stories, that they were entitled to the geometrical commendation of "being neither too long nor too broad."

In 1846, Lincoln was elected to Congress as a Whig. The circle of acquaintances whom he had made in the county as surveyor had widened out with his work as a lawyer; he secured a unanimous nomination and was elected without difficulty in a constituency comprising six counties. I find in the record of the campaign the detail that Lincoln returned to certain of his friends who had undertaken to find the funds for election expenses, \$199.90 out of the \$200 subscribed.

In 1847, Lincoln was one of the group of Whigs in Congress who opposed the Mexican War. These men took the ground that the war was one of aggression and spoliation. Their views, which were quite prevalent throughout New England, are effectively presented in Lowell's *Biglow Papers*. When the army was once in the field, Lincoln was, however, ready to give his Congressional vote for the fullest and most energetic support. A year or more later, he worked actively for the election of General Taylor. He took the ground that the responsibility for the war rested not with the soldiers who had fought it to a successful conclusion, but with the politicians who had devised the original land-grabbing scheme.

In 1849, we find Lincoln's name connected with an invention for lifting vessels over shoals. His sojourn on the Sangamon River and his memory of the attempt, successful for the moment but ending in failure, to make the river available for steamboats, had attracted his attention to the problem of steering river vessels over shoals.

In 1864, when I was campaigning on the Red River in Louisiana, I noticed with interest a device that had been put into shape for the purpose of lifting river steamers over shoals. This device took the form of stilts which for the smaller vessels (and only the smaller steamers could as a rule be managed in this way) were fastened on pivots from the upper deck on the outside of the hull and were worked from the deck with a force of two or three men at each stilt. The difficulty on the Red River was that the Rebel sharpshooters from the banks made the management of the stilts irregular.

In 1854, Douglas carried through Congress the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. This bill repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and cancelled also the provisions of the series of compromises of 1850. Its purpose was to throw open for settlement and for later organisation as Slave States the whole territory of the North-west from which, under the Missouri Compromise, slavery had been excluded. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill not only threw open a great territory to slavery but re-opened the whole slavery discussion. The issues that were brought to the front in the discussions about this bill, and in the still more bitter contests after the passage of the bill in regard to the admission of Kansas as a Slave State, were the immediate precursors of the Civil War. The larger causes lay further back, but the War would have been postponed for an indefinite period if it had not been for the pressing on the part of the South for the right to make Slave States throughout the entire territory of the country, and for the readiness on the part of certain Democratic leaders of the North, of whom Douglas was the chief, to accept this contention, and through such expedients to gain, or to retain, political control for the Democratic party.

In one of the long series of debates in Congress on the question of the right to take slaves into free territory, a planter from South Carolina drew an affecting picture of his relations with his old coloured foster-mother, the "mammy" of the plantation. "Do you tell me," he said, addressing himself to a Free-soil opponent, "that I, a free American citizen, am not to be permitted, if I want to go across the Missouri River, to take with me my whole home circle? Do you say that I must leave my old 'Mammy' behind in South Carolina?" "Oh!" replied the Westerner, "the trouble with you is not that you cannot take your 'Mammy' into this free territory, but that you are not to be at liberty to sell her when you get her there."

Lincoln threw himself with full earnestness of conviction and ardour into the fight to preserve for freedom the territory belonging to the nation. In common with the majority of the Whig party, he held the opinion that if slavery could be restricted to the States in which it was already in existence, if no further States should be admitted into the Union with the burden of slavery, the institution must, in the course of a generation or two, die out. He was clear in his mind that slavery was an enormous evil for the whites as well as for the blacks, for the individual as for the nation. He had himself, as a young man, been brought up to do toilsome manual labour. He would not admit that there was anything in manual labour that ought to impair the respect of the community for the labourer or the worker's respect for himself. Not the least of the evils of slavery was, in his judgment, its inevitable influence in bringing degradation upon labour and the labourer.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act made clear to the North that the South would accept no limitations for slavery. The position of the Southern leaders, in which they had the substantial backing of their constituents, was that slaves were property and that the Constitution, having guaranteed the protection of property to all the citizens of the commonwealth, a slaveholder was deprived of his constitutional rights as a citizen if his control of this portion of his property was in any way interfered with or restricted. The argument in behalf of this extreme Southern claim had been shaped most eloquently and most forcibly by John C. Calhoun during the years between 1830 and 1850. The Calhoun opinion was represented a few years later in the Presidential candidacy of John C. Breckinridge. The contention of the more extreme of the Northern opponents of slavery voters, whose spokesmen were William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, James G. Birney, Owen Lovejoy, and others, was that the Constitution in so far as it recognised slavery (which it did only by implication) was a compact with evil. They held that the Fathers had been led into this compact unwittingly and without full realisation of the responsibilities that they were assuming for the perpetuation of a great wrong. They refused to accept the view that later generations of American citizens were to be bound for an indefinite period by this error of judgment on the part of the Fathers. They proposed to get rid of slavery, as an institution incompatible with the principles on which the Republic was founded. They pointed out that under the Declaration of Independence all men had an equal right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and that there was no limitation of this claim to men of white race. If it was not going to be possible to argue slavery out of existence, these men preferred to have the Union dissolved rather than to bring upon States like Massachusetts a share of the responsibility for the wrong done to mankind and to justice under the laws of South Carolina.

The Whig party, whose great leader, Henry Clay, had closed his life in 1852, just at the time when Lincoln was becoming prominent in politics, held that all citizens were bound by the compact entered into by their ancestors, first under the Articles of Confederation of 1783, and later under the Constitution of 1789. Our ancestors had, for the purpose of bringing about the organisation of the Union, agreed to respect the institution of slavery in the States in which it existed. The Whigs of 1850, held, therefore, that in such of the Slave States as had been part of the original thirteen, slavery was an institution to be recognised and protected under the law of the land. They admitted, further, that what their grandfathers had done in 1789, had been in a measure confirmed by the action of their fathers in 1820. The Missouri Compromise of 1820, in making clear that all States thereafter organised north of the line thirty-six thirty were to be Free States, made clear also that States south of that line had the privilege of coming into the Union with the institution of slavery and that the citizens in these newer Slave States should be assured of the same recognition and rights as had been accorded to those of the original thirteen.

The Missouri Compromise permitted also the introduction of Missouri itself into the Union as a Slave State (as a counterpoise to the State of Maine admitted the same year), although almost the entire territory of the State of Missouri was north of the latitude 36° 30'.

We may recall that, under the Constitution, the States of the South, while denying the suffrage to the negro, had secured the right to include the negro population as a basis for their representation

in the lower House. In apportioning the representatives to the population, five negroes were to be counted as the equivalent of three white men. The passage, in 1854, of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the purpose of which was to confirm the existence of slavery and to extend the institution throughout the country, was carried in the House by thirteen votes. The House contained at that time no less than twenty members representing the negro population. The negroes were, therefore, in this instance involuntarily made the instruments for strengthening the chains of their own serfdom.

It was in 1854 that Lincoln first propounded the famous question, "Can the nation endure half slave and half free?" This question, slightly modified, became the keynote four years later of Lincoln's contention against the Douglas theory of "squatter sovereignty." The organisation of the Republican party dates from 1856. Various claims have been made concerning the precise date and place at which were first presented the statement of principles that constituted the final platform of the party, and in regard to the men who were responsible for such statement. At a meeting held as far back as July, 1854, at Jackson, Michigan, a platform was adopted by a convention which had been brought together to formulate opposition to any extension of slavery, and this Jackson platform did contain the substance of the conclusions and certain of the phrases which later were included in the Republican platform. In January, 1856, Parke Godwin published in *Putnam's Monthly*, of which he was political editor, an article outlining the necessary constitution of the new party. This article gave a fuller expression than had thus far been made of the views of the men who were later accepted as the leaders of the Republican party. In May, 1856, Lincoln made a speech at Bloomington, Illinois, setting forth the principles for the anti-slavery campaign as they were understood by his group of Whigs. In this speech, Lincoln speaks of "that perfect liberty for which our Southern fellow-citizens are sighing, the liberty of making slaves of other people"; and again, "It is the contention of Mr. Douglas, in his claim for the rights of American citizens, that if *A* sees fit to enslave *B*, no other man shall have the right to object." Of this Bloomington speech, Herndon says: "It was logic; it was pathos; it was enthusiasm; it was justice, integrity, truth, and right. The words seemed to be set ablaze by the divine fires of a soul maddened by a great wrong. The utterance was hard, knotty, gnarly, backed with wrath."

From this time on, Lincoln was becoming known throughout the country as one of the leaders in the new issues, able and ready to give time and service to the anti-slavery fight and to the campaign work of the Republican organisation. This political service interfered to some extent with his work at the Bar, but he did not permit political interests to stand in the way of any obligations that had been assumed to his clients. He simply accepted fewer cases, and to this extent reduced his very moderate earnings. In his work as a lawyer, he never showed any particular capacity for increasing income or for looking after his own business interests. It was his principle and his practice to discourage litigation. He appears, during the twenty-five years in which he was in active practice, to have made absolutely no enemies among his professional opponents. He enjoyed an exceptional reputation for the frankness with which he would accept the legitimate contentions of his opponents or would even himself state their case. Judge David Davis, before whom Lincoln had occasion during these years to practise, says that the Court was always prepared to accept as absolutely fair and substantially complete Lincoln's statement of the matters at issue. Davis says it occasionally happened that Lincoln would supply some consideration of importance on his opponent's side of the case that the other counsel had overlooked. It was Lincoln's principle to impress upon himself at the outset the full strength of the other man's position. It was also his principle to accept no case in the justice of which he had not been able himself to believe. He possessed also by nature an exceptional capacity for the detection of faulty reasoning; and his exercise of the power of analysis in his work at the Bar proved of great service later in widening his influence as a political leader. The power that he possessed, when he was assured of the justice of his cause, of convincing court and jury became the power of impressing his convictions upon great bodies of voters. Later, when he had upon his shoulders the leadership of the nation, he took the people into his confidence; he reasoned with them as if they were sitting as a great jury for

the determination of the national policy, and he was able to impress upon them his perfect integrity of purpose and the soundness of his conclusions, – conclusions which thus became the policy of the nation.

He calls himself a "mast-fed lawyer" and it is true that his opportunities for reading continued to be most restricted. Davis said in regard to Lincoln's work as a lawyer: "He had a magnificent equipoise of head, conscience, and heart. In non-essentials he was pliable; but on the underlying principles of truth and justice, his will was as firm as steel." We find from the record of Lincoln's work in the Assembly and later in Congress that he would never do as a Representative what he was unwilling to do as an individual. His capacity for seeing the humorous side of things was of course but a phase of a general clearness of perception. The man who sees things clearly, who is able to recognise both sides of a matter, the man who can see all round a position, the opposite of the man in blinders, that man necessarily has a sense of humour. He is able, if occasion presents, to laugh at himself. Lincoln's capacity for absorbing and for retaining information and for having this in readiness for use at the proper time was, as we have seen, something that went back to his boyhood. He says of himself: "My mind is something like a piece of steel; it is very hard to scratch anything on it and almost impossible after you have got it there to rub it out."

Lincoln's correspondence has been preserved with what is probably substantial completeness. The letters written by him to friends, acquaintances, political correspondents, individual men of one kind or another, have been gathered together and have been brought into print not, as is most frequently the case, under the discretion or judgment of a friendly biographer, but by a great variety of more or less sympathetic people. It would seem as if but very few of Lincoln's letters could have been mislaid or destroyed. One can but be impressed, in reading these letters, with the absolute honesty of purpose and of statement that characterises them. There are very few men, particularly those whose active lives have been passed in a period of political struggle and civil war, whose correspondence could stand such a test. There never came to Lincoln requirement to say to his correspondent, "Burn this letter."

### III

## THE FIGHT AGAINST THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

In 1856, the Supreme Court, under the headship of Judge Taney, gave out the decision of the Dred Scott case. The purport of this decision was that a negro was not to be considered as a person but as a chattel; and that the taking of such negro chattel into free territory did not cancel or impair the property rights of the master. It appeared to the men of the North as if under this decision the entire country, including in addition to the national territories the independent States which had excluded slavery, was to be thrown open to the invasion of the institution. The Dred Scott decision, taken in connection with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise (and the two acts were doubtless a part of one thoroughly considered policy), foreshadowed as their logical and almost inevitable consequence the bringing of the entire nation under the control of slavery. The men of the future State of Kansas made during 1856-57 a plucky fight to keep slavery out of their borders. The so-called Lecompton Constitution undertook to force slavery upon Kansas. This constitution was declared by the administration (that of President Buchanan) to have been adopted, but the fraudulent character of the voting was so evident that Walker, the Democratic Governor, although a sympathiser with slavery, felt compelled to repudiate it. This constitution was repudiated also by Douglas, although Douglas had declared that the State ought to be thrown open to slavery. Jefferson Davis, at that time Secretary of War, declared that "Kansas was in a state of rebellion and that the rebellion must be crushed." Armed bands from Missouri crossed the river to Kansas for the purpose of casting fraudulent votes and for the further purpose of keeping the Free-soil settlers away from the polls.

This fight for freedom in Kansas gave a further basis for Lincoln's statement "that a house divided against itself cannot stand; this government cannot endure half slave and half free." It was with this statement as his starting-point that Lincoln entered into his famous Senatorial campaign with Douglas. Douglas had already represented Illinois in the Senate for two terms and had, therefore, the advantage of possession and of a substantial control of the machinery of the State. He had the repute at the time of being the leading political debater in the country. He was shrewd, forcible, courageous, and, in the matter of convictions, unprincipled. He knew admirably how to cater to the prejudices of the masses. His career thus far had been one of unbroken success. His Senatorial fight was, in his hope and expectation, to be but a step towards the Presidency. The Democratic party, with an absolute control south of Mason and Dixon's Line and with a very substantial support in the Northern States, was in a position, if unbroken, to control with practical certainty the Presidential election of 1860. Douglas seemed to be the natural leader of the party. It was necessary for him, however, while retaining the support of the Democrats of the North, to make clear to those of the South that his influence would work for the maintenance and for the extension of slavery.

The South was well pleased with the purpose and with the result of the Dred Scott decision and with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. It is probable, however, that if the Dred Scott decision had not given to the South so full a measure of satisfaction, the South would have been more ready to accept the leadership of a Northern Democrat like Douglas. Up to a certain point in the conflict, they had felt the need of Douglas and had realised the importance of the support that he was in a position to bring from the North. When, however, the Missouri Compromise had been repealed and the Supreme Court had declared that slaves must be recognised as property throughout the entire country, the Southern claims were increased to a point to which certain of the followers of Douglas were not willing to go. It was a large compliment to the young lawyer of Illinois to have placed upon him the responsibility of leading, against such a competitor as Douglas, the contest of the Whigs, and of the Free-soilers back of the Whigs, against any further extension of slavery, a contest which was really a fight for the continued existence of the nation.

Lincoln seems to have gone into the fight with full courage, the courage of his convictions. He felt that Douglas was a trimmer, and he believed that the issue had now been brought to a point at which the trimmer could not hold support on both sides of Mason and Dixon's Line. He formulated at the outset of the debate a question which was pressed persistently upon Douglas during the succeeding three weeks. This question was worded as follows: "Can the people of a United States territory, prior to the formation of a State constitution or against the protest of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery?" Lincoln's campaign advisers were of opinion that this question was inadvisable. They took the ground that Douglas would answer the question in such way as to secure the approval of the voters of Illinois and that in so doing he would win the Senatorship. Lincoln's response was in substance: "That may be. I hold, however, that if Douglas answers this question in a way to satisfy the Democrats of the North, he will inevitably lose the support of the more extreme, at least, of the Democrats of the South. We may lose the Senatorship as far as my personal candidacy is concerned. If, however, Douglas fails to retain the support of the South, he cannot become President in 1860. The line will be drawn directly between those who are willing to accept the extreme claims of the South and those who resist these claims. A right decision is the essential thing for the safety of the nation." The question gave no little perplexity to Douglas. He finally, however, replied that in his judgment the people of a United States territory had the right to exclude slavery. When asked again by Lincoln how he brought this decision into accord with the Dred Scott decision, he replied in substance: "Well, they have not the right to take constitutional measures to exclude slavery but they can by local legislation render slavery practically impossible." The Dred Scott decision had in fact itself overturned the Douglas theory of popular sovereignty or "squatter sovereignty." Douglas was only able to say that his sovereignty contention made provision for such control of domestic or local regulations as would make slavery impossible.

The South, rendered autocratic by the authority of the Supreme Court, was not willing to accept the possibility of slavery being thus restricted out of existence in any part of the country. The Southerners repudiated Douglas as Lincoln had prophesied they would do. Douglas had been trying the impossible task of carrying water on both shoulders. He gained the Senatorship by a narrow margin; he secured in the vote in the Legislature a majority of eight, but Lincoln had even in this fight won the support of the people. His majority on the popular vote was four thousand.

The series of debates between these two leaders came to be of national importance. It was not merely a question of the representation in the Senate from the State of Illinois, but of the presentation of arguments, not only to the voters of Illinois but to citizens throughout the entire country, in behalf of the restriction of slavery on the one hand or of its indefinite expansion and protection on the other. The debate was educational not merely for the voters who listened, but for the thousands of other voters who read the reports. It would be an enormous advantage for the political education of candidates and for the education of voters if such debates could become the routine in Congressional and Presidential campaigns. Under the present routine, we have, in place of an assembly of voters representing the conflicting views of the two parties or of the several political groups, a homogeneous audience of one way of thinking, and speakers who have no opponent present to check the temptation to launch forth into wild statements, personal abuse, and irresponsible conclusions. An interruption of the speaker is considered to be a disturbance of order, and the man who is not fully in sympathy with the views of the audience is likely to be put out as an interloper. With a system of joint debates, the speakers would be under an educational repression. False or exaggerated statements would not be made, or would not be made consciously, because they would be promptly corrected by the other fellow. There would of necessity come to be a better understanding and a larger respect for the positions of the opponent. The men who would be selected as leaders or speakers to enforce the contentions of the party, would have to possess some reasoning faculty as well as oratorical fluency. The voters, instead of being shut in with one group of arguments more or less reasonable, would be brought into touch with the arguments of other groups of citizens. I can conceive of no better method

for bringing representative government on to a higher plane and for making an election what it ought to be, a reasonable decision by reasoning voters, than the institution of joint debates.

I cite certain of the incisive statements that came into Lincoln's seven debates. "A slave, says Judge Douglas (on the authority of Judge Taney), is a human being who is legally not a person but a thing." "I contend [says Lincoln] that slavery is founded on the selfishness of man's nature. Slavery is a violation of the eternal right, and as long as God reigns and as school-children read, that black evil can never be consecrated into God's truth." "A man does not lose his right to a piece of property which has been stolen. Can a man lose a right to himself if he himself has been stolen?" The following words present a summary of Lincoln's statements:

Judge Douglas contends that if any one man chooses to enslave another, no third man has a right to object. Our Fathers, in accepting slavery under the Constitution as a legal institution, were of opinion, as is clearly indicated by the recorded utterances, that slavery would in the course of a few years die out. They were quite clear in their minds that the slave-trade must be abolished and for ever forbidden and this decision was arrived at under the leadership of men like Jefferson and without a protest from the South. Jefferson was himself the author of the Ordinance of 1787, which in prohibiting the introduction of slavery, consecrated to freedom the great territory of the North-west, and this measure was fully approved by Washington and by the other great leaders from the South. Where slavery exists, full liberty refuses to enter. It was only through this wise action of the Fathers that it was possible to bring into existence, through colonisation, the great territories and great States of the North-west. It is this settlement, and the later adjustment of 1820, that Douglas and his friends in the South are undertaking to overthrow. Slavery is not, as Judge Douglas contends, a local issue; it is a national responsibility. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise throws open not only a great new territory to the curse of slavery; it throws open the whole slavery question for the embroiling of the present generation of Americans. Taking slaves into free territory is the same thing as reviving the slave-trade. It perpetuates and develops interstate slave-trade. Government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. The Fathers did not claim that "the right of the people to govern negroes was the right of the people to govern themselves."

The policy of Judge Douglas was based on the theory that the people did not care, but the people did care, as was evinced two years later by the popular vote for President throughout the North. One of those who heard these debates says: "Lincoln loved truth for its own sake. He had a deep, true, living conscience; honesty was his polar star. He never acted for stage effect. He was cool, spirited, reflective, self-possessed, and self-reliant. His style was clear, terse, compact ... He became tremendous in the directness of his utterance when, as his soul was inspired with the thought of human right and Divine justice, he rose to impassioned eloquence, and at such times he was, in my judgment, unsurpassed by Clay or by Mirabeau."

As the debates progressed, it was increasingly evident that Douglas found himself hard pushed. Lincoln would not allow himself to be swerved from the main issue by any tergiversation or personal attacks. He insisted from day to day in bringing Douglas back to this issue: "What do you, Douglas, propose to do about slavery in the territories? Is it your final judgment that there is to be no further reservation of free territory in this country? Do you believe that it is for the advantage of this country to put no restriction to the extension of slavery?" Douglas wriggled and squirmed under this direct questioning and his final replies gave satisfaction neither to the Northern Democrats nor to those of the South. The issue upon which the Presidential contest of 1860 was to be fought out had been fairly stated. It was the same issue under which, in 1861, the fighting took the form of civil war. It was the issue that took four years to fight out and that was finally decided in favour of the continued existence of the nation as a free state. In this fight, Lincoln was not only, as the contest was finally shaped, the original leader; he was the final leader; and at the time of his death the great question had been decided for ever.

Horace White, in summing up the issues that were fought out in debate between Lincoln and Douglas, says:

"Forty-four years have passed away since the Civil War came to an end and we are now able to take a dispassionate view of the question in dispute. The people of the South are now generally agreed that the institution of slavery was a direful curse to both races. We of the North must confess that there was considerable foundation for the asserted right of States to secede. Although the Constitution did in distinct terms make the Federal Government supreme, it was not so understood at first by the people either North or South. Particularism prevailed everywhere at the beginning. Nationalism was an aftergrowth and a slow growth proceeding mainly from the habit into which people fell of finding their common centre of gravity at Washington City and of viewing it as the place whence the American name and fame were blazoned to the world. During the first half century of the Republic, the North and South were changing coats from time to time, on the subject of State Rights and the right to secede, but meanwhile the Constitution itself was working silently in the North to undermine the particularism of Jefferson and to strengthen the nationalism of Hamilton. It had accomplished its work in the early thirties, when it found its perfect expression in Webster's reply to Hayne. But the Southern people were just as firmly convinced that Hayne was the victor in that contest as the Northern people were that Webster was. The vast material interests bottomed on slavery offset and neutralised the unifying process in the South, while it continued its wholesome work in the North, and thus the clashing of ideas paved the way for the clash of arms. That the behaviour of the slaveholders resulted from the circumstances in which they were placed and not from any innate devilry is a fact now conceded by all impartial men. It was conceded by Lincoln both before the War and during the War, and this fact accounts for the affection bestowed upon him by Southern hearts to-day."

Lincoln carried into politics the same standard of consistency of action that had characterised his work at the Bar. He writes, in 1859, to a correspondent whom he was directing to further the organisation of the new party: "Do not, in order to secure recruits, lower the standard of the Republican party. The true problem for 1860, is to fight to prevent slavery from becoming national. We must, however, recognise its constitutional right to exist in the States in which its existence was recognised under the original Constitution." This position was unsatisfactory to the Whigs of the Border States who favoured a continuing division between Slave States and Free States of the territory yet to be organised into States. It was also unsatisfactory to the extreme anti-slavery Whigs of the new organisation who insisted upon throttling slavery where-ever it existed. It is probable that the raid made by John Brown, in 1859, into Virginia for the purpose of rousing the slaves to fight for their own liberty, had some immediate influence in checking the activity of the more extreme anti-slavery group and in strengthening the conservative side of the new organisation. Lincoln disapproved entirely of the purpose of Brown and his associates, while ready to give due respect to the idealistic courage of the man.

In February, 1860, Lincoln was invited by certain of the Republican leaders in New York to deliver one of a series of addresses which had been planned to make clear to the voters the purposes and the foundations of the new party. His name had become known to the Republicans of the East through the debates with Douglas. It was recognised that Lincoln had taken the highest ground in regard to the principles of the new party, and that his counsels should prove of practical service in the shaping of the policy of the Presidential campaign. It was believed also that his influence would be of value in securing voters in the Middle West. The Committee of Invitation included, in addition to a group of the old Whigs (of whom my father was one), representative Free-soil Democrats like William C. Bryant and John King. Lincoln's methods as a political leader and orator were known to one or two men on the committee, but his name was still unfamiliar to an Eastern audience. It was understood that the new leader from the West was going to talk to New York about the fight against slavery. It is probable that at least the larger part of the audience expected something "wild and woolly." The West at that time seemed very far off from New York and was still but little understood

by the Eastern communities. New Yorkers found it difficult to believe that a man who could influence Western audiences could have anything to say that would count with the cultivated citizens of the East. The more optimistic of the hearers were hoping, however, that perhaps a new Henry Clay had arisen and were looking for utterances of the ornate and grandiloquent kind such as they had heard frequently from Clay and from other statesmen of the South.

The first impression of the man from the West did nothing to contradict the expectation of something weird, rough, and uncultivated. The long, ungainly figure upon which hung clothes that, while new for this trip, were evidently the work of an unskilful tailor; the large feet, the clumsy hands of which, at the outset, at least, the orator seemed to be unduly conscious; the long, gaunt head capped by a shock of hair that seemed not to have been thoroughly brushed out, made a picture which did not fit in with New York's conception of a finished statesman. The first utterance of the voice was not pleasant to the ear, the tone being harsh and the key too high. As the speech progressed, however, the speaker seemed to get into control of himself; the voice gained a natural and impressive modulation, the gestures were dignified and appropriate, and the hearers came under the influence of the earnest look from the deeply-set eyes and of the absolute integrity of purpose and of devotion to principle which were behind the thought and the words of the speaker. In place of a "wild and woolly" talk, illumined by more or less incongruous anecdotes; in place of a high-strung exhortation of general principles or of a fierce protest against Southern arrogance, the New Yorkers had presented to them a calm but forcible series of well-reasoned considerations upon which their action as citizens was to be based. It was evident that the man from the West understood thoroughly the constitutional history of the country; he had mastered the issues that had grown up about the slavery question; he knew thoroughly, and was prepared to respect, the rights of his political opponents; he knew with equal thoroughness the rights of the men whose views he was helping to shape and he insisted that there should be no wavering or weakening in regard to the enforcement of those rights; he made it clear that the continued existence of the nation depended upon having these issues equitably adjusted and he held that the equitable adjustment meant the restriction of slavery within its present boundaries. He maintained that such restrictions were just and necessary as well for the sake of fairness to the blacks as for the final welfare of the whites. He insisted that the voters in the present States in the Union had upon them the largest possible measure of responsibility in so controlling the great domain of the Republic that the States of the future, the States in which their children and their grandchildren were to grow up as citizens, must be preserved in full liberty, must be protected against any invasion of an institution which represented barbarity. He maintained that such a contention could interfere in no way with the due recognition of the legitimate property rights of the present owners of slaves. He pointed out to the New Englander of the anti-slavery group that the restriction of slavery meant its early extermination. He insisted that war for the purpose of exterminating slavery from existing slave territory could not be justified. He was prepared, for the purpose of defending against slavery the national territory that was still free, to take the risk of the war which the South threatened because he believed that only through such defence could the existence of the nation be maintained; and he believed, further, that the maintenance of the great Republic was essential, not only for the interests of its own citizens, but for the interests of free government throughout the world. He spoke with full sympathy of the difficulties and problems resting upon the South, and he insisted that the matters at issue could be adjusted only with a fair recognition of these difficulties. Aggression from either side of Mason and Dixon's Line must be withstood.

I was but a boy when I first looked upon the gaunt figure of the man who was to become the people's leader, and listened to his calm but forcible arguments in behalf of the principles of the Republican party. It is not likely that at the time I took in, with any adequate appreciation, the weight of the speaker's reasoning. I have read the address more than once since and it is, of course, impossible to separate my first impressions from my later direct knowledge. I do remember that I was at once impressed with the feeling that here was a political leader whose methods differed from

those of any politician to whom I had listened. His contentions were based not upon invective or abuse of "the other fellow," but purely on considerations of justice, on that everlasting principle that what is just, and only what is just, represents the largest and highest interests of the nation as a whole. I doubt whether there occurred in the whole speech a single example of the stories which had been associated with Lincoln's name. The speaker was evidently himself impressed with the greatness of the opportunity and with the dignity and importance of his responsibility. The speech in fact gave the keynote to the coming campaign.

It is hardly necessary to add that it also decided the selection of the national leader not only for the political campaign, but through the coming struggle. If it had not been for the impression made upon New York and the East generally by Lincoln's speech and by the man himself, the vote of New York could not have been secured in the May convention for the nomination of the man from Illinois.

Robert Lincoln (writing to me in July, 1908) says:

"After my father's address in New York in February, 1860, he made a trip to New England in order to visit me at Exeter, N.H., where I was then a student in the Phillips Academy. It had not been his plan to do any speaking in New England, but, as a result of the address in New York, he received several requests from New England friends for speeches, and I find that before returning to the West, he spoke at the following places: Providence, R.I., Manchester, N.H., Exeter, N.H., Dover, N.H., Concord, N.H., Hartford, Conn., Meriden, Conn., New Haven, Conn., Woonsocket, R.I., Norwalk, Conn., and Bridgeport, Conn. I am quite sure that coming and going he passed through Boston merely as an unknown traveller."

Mr. Lincoln writes to his wife from Exeter, N.H., March 4, 1860, as follows:

"I have been unable to escape this toil. If I had foreseen it, I think I would not have come East at all. The speech at New York, being within my calculation before I started, went off passably well and gave me no trouble whatever. The difficulty was to make nine others, before reading audiences who had already seen all my ideas in print."<sup>1</sup>

An edition of Mr. Lincoln's address was brought into print in September, 1860, by the Young Men's Republican Union of New York, with notes by Charles C. Nott (later Colonel, and after the war Judge of the Court of Claims in Washington) and Cephas Brainerd. The publication of this pamphlet shows that as early as September, 1860, the historic importance and permanent value of this speech were fairly realised by the national leaders of the day. In the preface to the reprint, the editors say:

"The address is characterised by wisdom, truthfulness and learning ... From the first line to the last – from his premises to his conclusion, the speaker travels with a swift, unerring directness that no logician has ever excelled. His argument is complete and is presented without the affectation of learning, and without the stiffness which usually accompanies dates and details ... A single simple sentence contains a chapter of history that has taken days of labour to verify, and that must have cost the author months of investigation to acquire. The reader may take up this address as a political pamphlet, but he will leave it as an historical treatise – brief, complete, perfect, sound, impartial truth – which will serve the time and the occasion that called it forth, and which will be esteemed hereafter no less for its unpretending modesty than for its intrinsic worth."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This letter has not been published. It is cited here through the courtesy of Mr. Robert Lincoln and Mr. R.W. Gilder.

<sup>2</sup> The text of the speech, as revised by Lincoln and with the introduction and notes by Nott and Brainerd, is given as an appendix to this volume.

Horace White, who was himself present at the Chicago Convention, writes (in 1909) as follows:

"To anybody looking back at the Republican National Convention of 1860, it must be plain that there were only two men who had any chance of being nominated for President.

"These were Lincoln and Seward. I was present at the Convention as a spectator and I knew this fact at the time, but it seemed to me at the beginning that Seward's chances were the better. One third of the delegates of Illinois preferred Seward and expected to vote for him after a few complimentary ballots for Lincoln. If there had been no Lincoln in the field, Seward would certainly have been nominated and then the course of history would have been very different from what it was, for if Seward had been nominated and elected there would have been no forcible opposition to the withdrawal of such States as then desired to secede. And as a consequence the Republican party would have been rent in twain and disabled from making effectual resistance to other demands of the South.

"It was Seward's conviction that the policy of non-coercion would have quieted the secession movement in the Border States and that the Gulf States would, after a while, have returned to the Union like repentant prodigal sons. His proposal to Lincoln to seek a quarrel with four European nations, who had done us no harm, in order to arouse a feeling of Americanism in the Confederate States, was an outgrowth of this conviction. It was an indefensible proposition, akin to that which prompted Bismarck to make use of France as an anvil on which to hammer and weld Germany together, but it was not an unpatriotic one, since it was bottomed on a desire to preserve the Union without civil war."

Never was a political leadership more fairly, more nobly, and more reasonably won. When the ballot boxes were opened on the first Tuesday in November, Lincoln was found to have secured the electoral vote of every Northern State except New Jersey, and in New Jersey four electors out of seven. Breckinridge, the leader of the extreme Southern Democrats, had back of him only the votes of the Southern States outside of the Border States, these latter being divided between Bell and Douglas. Douglas and his shallow theories of "squatter sovereignty" had been buried beneath the good sense of the voters of the North.

## IV

# LINCOLN AS PRESIDENT ORGANISES THE PEOPLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF NATIONAL EXISTENCE

After the election of November, 1860, events moved swiftly. On the 20th of December, comes the first act of the Civil War, the secession of South Carolina. The secession of Georgia had for a time been delayed by the influence of Alexander H. Stephens who, on the 14th of November, had made a great argument for the maintenance of the Union. His chief local opponent at the time was Robert Toombs, the Southern leader who proposed in the near future to "call the roll-call of his slaves on Bunker Hill." Lincoln was still hopeful of saving to the cause of the Union the Border States and the more conservative divisions of States, like North Carolina, which had supported the Whig party.

In December, we find correspondence between Lincoln and Gilmer of North Carolina, whom he had known in Washington. "The essential difference," says Lincoln, "between your group and mine is that you hold slavery to be in itself desirable and as something to be extended. I hold it to be an essential evil which, with due regard to existing rights, must be restricted and in the near future exterminated."

On the 23d of February, 1861, Lincoln reaches Washington where he is to spend a weary and anxious two weeks of waiting for the burden of his new responsibilities. He is at this time fifty-two years of age. In one of his brief addresses on the way to Washington he says:

"It is but little to a man of my age, but a great deal to thirty millions of the citizens of the United States, and to posterity in all coming time, if the Union of the States and the liberties of the people are to be lost. If the majority is not to rule, who would be the judge of the issue or where is such judge to be found?"

It is difficult to imagine a more exasperating condition of affairs than obtained in Washington while Lincoln was awaiting the day of inauguration. The government appeared to be crumbling away under the nerveless direction, or lack of direction, of President Buchanan and his associates. In his last message to Congress, Buchanan had taken the ground that the Constitution made no provision for the secession of States or for the breaking up of the Union; but that it also failed to contain any provision for measures that could prevent such secession and the consequent destruction of the nation. The old gentleman appeared to be entirely unnerved by the pressure of events. He could not see any duty before him. He certainly failed to realise that the more immediate cause of the storm was the breaking down, through the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, of the barriers that had in 1820, and in 1850, been placed against the extension of slavery. He evidently failed to understand that it was his own action in backing up the infamous Lecompton Constitution, and the invasion of Kansas by the slave-owners, which had finally aroused the spirit of the North, and further that it was the influence of his administration which had given to the South the belief that it was now in a position to control for slavery the whole territory of the Republic.

It has before now been pointed out that, under certain contingencies, the long interval between the national election and the inaugural of the new President from the first Tuesday in November until the fourth day of March must, in not a few instances, bring inconvenience, disadvantage, and difficulty not only to the new administration but to the nation. These months in which the members of an administration which had practically committed itself to the cause of disintegration, were left in charge of the resources of the nation gave a most serious example and evidence of such disadvantage. This historic instance ought to have been utilised immediately after the War as an influence for bringing about a change in the date for bringing into power the administration that has been chosen in November.

By the time when Lincoln and the members of his Cabinet had placed in their hands the responsibilities of administration, the resources at the disposal of the government had, as far as practicable, been scattered or rendered unavailable. The Secretary of the Navy, a Southerner, had taken pains to send to the farthest waters of the Pacific as many as possible of the vessels of the American fleet; the Secretary of War, also a Southerner, had for months been busy in transferring to the arsenals of the South the guns and ammunition that had been stored in the Federal arsenals of the North; the Secretary of the Treasury had had no difficulty in disposing of government funds in one direction or another so that there was practically no balance to hand over to his successor available for the most immediate necessities of the new administration.

One of the sayings quoted from Washington during these weeks was the answer given by Count Gurowski to the inquiry, "Is there anything in addition this morning?" "No," said Gurowski, "it is all in subtraction."

By the day of the inaugural, the secession of seven States was an accomplished fact and the government of the Confederacy had already been organised in Montgomery. Alexander H. Stephens had so far modified his original position that he had accepted the post of Vice-President and in his own inaugural address had used the phrase, "Slavery is the corner-stone of our new nation," a phrase that was to make much mischief in Europe for the hopes of the new Confederacy.

In the first inaugural, one of the great addresses in a noteworthy series, Lincoln presented to the attention of the leaders of the South certain very trenchant arguments against the wisdom of their course. He says of secession for the purpose of preserving the institution of slavery:

"You complain that under the government of the United States your slaves have from time to time escaped across your borders and have not been returned to you. Their value as property has been lessened by the fact that adjoining your Slave States were certain States inhabited by people who did not believe in your institution. How is this condition going to be changed by war even under the assumption that the war may be successful in securing your independence? Your slave territory will still adjoin territory inhabited by free men who are inimical to your institution; but these men will no longer be bound by any of the restrictions which have obtained under the Constitution. They will not have to give consideration to the rights of slave-owners who are fellow-citizens. Your slaves will escape as before and you will have no measure of redress. Your indignation may produce further wars, but the wars can but have the same result until finally, after indefinite loss of life and of resources, the institution will have been hammered out of existence by the inevitable conditions of existing civilisation."

Lincoln points out further in this same address the difference between his responsibilities and those of the Southern leaders who are organising for war. "You," he says, "have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy this government, while I have the most solemn oath to preserve, direct, and defend it."

"It was not necessary," says Lincoln, "for the Constitution to contain any provision expressly forbidding the disintegration of the state; perpetuity and the right to maintain self-existence will be considered as a fundamental law of all national government. If the theory be accepted that the United States was an association or federation of communities, the creation or continued existence of such federation must rest upon contract; and before such contract can be rescinded, the consent is required of both or of all of the parties assenting to it."

He closes with the famous invocation to the fellow Americans of the South against whom throughout the whole message there had not been one word of bitterness or rancour: "We are not

enemies but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained our relations, it must not break our bonds of affection."

It was, however, too late for argument, and too late for invocations of friendship. The issue had been forced by the South and the war for which the leaders of the South had for months, if not for years, been making preparation was now to be begun by Southern action. It remained to make clear to the North, where the people up to the last moment had been unwilling to believe in the possibility of civil war, that the nation could be preserved only by fighting for its existence. It remained to organise the men of the North into armies which should be competent to carry out this tremendous task of maintaining the nation's existence.

It was just after the great inaugural and when his head must have been full of cares and his hands of work, that Lincoln took time to write a touching little note that I find in his correspondence. It was addressed to a boy who had evidently spoken with natural pride of having met the President and whose word had been questioned:

"The White House, March 18, 1861.

"I did see and talk in May last at Springfield, Illinois, with Master George Edward Patten."

With the beginning of the work of the administration, came trouble with the members of the Cabinet. The several secretaries were, in form at least, the choice of the President, but as must always be the case in the shaping of a Cabinet, and as was particularly necessary at a time when it was of first importance to bring into harmonious relations all of the political groups of the North which were prepared to be loyal to the government, the men who took office in the first Cabinet of Lincoln represented not any personal preference of the President, but political or national requirements. The Secretary of State, Mr. Seward, had, as we know, been Lincoln's leading opponent for the Presidential nomination and had expressed with some freedom of criticism his disappointment that he, the natural leader of the party, should be put to one side for an uncultivated, inexperienced Westerner. Mr. Seward possessed both experience and culture; more than this, he was a scholar, and came of a long line of gentefolk. He had public spirit, courage, legitimate political ambition, and some of the qualities of leadership. His nature was, however, not quite large enough to stand the pressure of political disappointment nor quite elastic enough to develop rapidly under the tremendous urgency of absolutely new requirements. It is in evidence that more than once in the management of the complex and serious difficulties of the State Department during the years of war, Seward lost his head. It is also on record that the wise-minded and fair-minded President was able to supply certain serious gaps and deficiencies in the direction of the work of the Department, and further that his service was so rendered as to save the dignity and the repute of the Secretary. Seward's subjectivity, not to say vanity, was great, and it took some little time before he was able to realise that his was not the first mind or the strongest will-power in the new administration. On the first of April, 1861, less than thirty days after the organisation of the Cabinet, Seward writes to Lincoln complaining that the "government had as yet no policy; that its action seemed to be simply drifting"; that there was a lack of any clear-minded control in the direction of affairs within the Cabinet, in the presentation to the people of the purposes of the government, and in the shaping of the all-important relations with foreign states. "Who," said Seward, "is to control the national policy?" The letter goes on to suggest that Mr. Seward is willing to take the responsibility, leaving, if needs be, the credit to the nominal chief. The letter was a curious example of the weakness and of the bumptiousness of the man, while it gave evidence also, it is fair to say, of a real public-spirited desire that things should go right and that the nation should be saved. It was evident that he had as yet no adequate faith in the capacity of the President.

Lincoln's answer was characteristic of the man. There was no irritation with the bumptiousness, no annoyance at the lack of confidence on the part of his associate. He states simply: "There must, of course, be control and the responsibility for this control must rest with me." He points out further

that the general policy of the administration had been outlined in the inaugural, that no action since taken had been inconsistent with this. The necessary preparations for the defence of the government were in train and, as the President trusted, were being energetically pushed forward by the several department heads. "I have a right," said Lincoln, "to expect loyal co-operation from my associates in the Cabinet. I need their counsel and the nation needs the best service that can be secured from our united wisdom." The letter of Seward was put away and appears never to have been referred to between the two men. It saw the light only after the President's death. If he had lived it might possibly have been suppressed altogether. A month later, Seward said to a friend, "There is in the Cabinet but one vote and that is cast by the President."

The post next in importance under the existing war conditions was that of Secretary of War. The first man to hold this post was Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania. Cameron was very far from being a friend of Lincoln's. The two men had had no personal relations and what Lincoln knew of him he liked not at all. The appointment had been made under the pressure of the Republicans of Pennsylvania, a State whose support was, of course, all important for the administration. It was not the first nor the last time that the Republicans of this great State, whose Republicanism seems to be much safer than its judgment, have committed themselves to unworthy and undesirable representatives, men who were not fitted to stand for Pennsylvania and who were neither willing nor able to be of any service to the country. The appointment of Cameron had, as appears from the later history, been promised to Pennsylvania by Judge Davis in return for the support of the Pennsylvania delegation for the nomination of Lincoln. Lincoln knew nothing of the promise and was able to say with truth, and to prove, that he had authorised no promises and no engagements whatsoever. He had, in fact, absolutely prohibited Davis and the one or two other men who were supposed to have some right to speak for him in the convention, from the acceptance of any engagements or obligations whatsoever. Davis made the promise to Pennsylvania on his own responsibility and at his own risk; Lincoln felt under too much obligation to Davis for personal service and for friendly loyalty to be willing, when the claim was finally pressed, to put it to one side as unwarranted. The appointment of Cameron was made and proved to be expensive for the efficiency of the War Department and for the repute of the administration. It became necessary within a comparatively short period to secure his resignation. It was in evidence that he was trafficking in appointments and in contracts. He was replaced by Edwin M. Stanton, who was known later as "the Carnot of the War." Stanton's career as a lawyer had given him no direct experience of army affairs. He showed, however, exceptional ability, great will power, and an enormous capacity for work. He was ambitious, self-willed, and most arbitrary in deed and in speech. The difficulty with Stanton was that he was as likely to insult and to browbeat some loyal supporter of the government as to bring to book, and, when necessary, to crush, greedy speculators and disloyal tricksters. His judgment in regard to men was in fact very often at fault. He came into early and unnecessary conflict with his chief and he found there a will stronger than his own. The respect of the two men for each other grew into a cordial regard. Each recognised the loyalty of purpose and the patriotism by which the actions of both were influenced. Lincoln was able to some extent to soften and to modify the needless truculency of the great War Secretary, and notwithstanding a good deal of troublesome friction, armies were organised and the troops were sent to the front.

The management of the Treasury, a responsibility hardly less in importance under the war conditions than that of the organisation of the armies, was placed in the hands of Senator Chase. He received from his precursor an empty treasury while from the administration came demands for immediate and rapidly increasing weekly supplies of funds. The task came upon him first of establishing a national credit and secondly of utilising this credit for loans such as the civilised world had not before known. The expenditures extended by leaps and bounds until by the middle of 1864 they had reached the sum of \$2,000,000 a day. Blunders were made in large matters and in small, but, under the circumstances, blunders were not to be avoided and the chief purpose was carried out. A sufficient credit was established, first with the citizens at home and later with investors abroad, to

make a market for the millions of bonds in the two great issues, the so-called seven-thirties and five-twenties. The sales of these bonds, together with a wide-reaching and, in fact, unduly complex system of taxation, secured the funds necessary for the support of the army and the navy. At the close of the War, the government, after meeting this expenditure, had a national war debt of something over four thousand millions of dollars. The gross indebtedness resulting from the War was of course, however, much larger because each State had incurred war expenditures and counties as well as States had issued bonds for the payment of bounties, etc. The criticism was made at the time by the opponents of the financial system which was shaped by the Committee of Ways and Means in co-operation with the Secretary, a criticism that has often been repeated since, that the War expenditure would have been much less if the amounts needed beyond what could be secured by present taxation had been supplied entirely by the proceeds of bonds. In addition, however, to the issues of bonds, the government issued currency to a large amount, which was made legal tender and which on the face of it was not made subject to redemption.

In addition to the bills ranging in denomination from one dollar to one thousand, the government brought into distribution what was called "postal currency." I landed in New York in August, 1862, having returned from a University in Germany for the purpose of enlisting in the army. I was amused to see my father make payment in the restaurant for my first lunch in postage stamps. He picked the requisite number, or the number that he believed would be requisite, from a ball of stamps which had, under the influence of the summer heat, stuck together so closely as to be very difficult to handle. Many of the stamps were in fact practically destroyed and were unavailable. Some question arose between the restaurant keeper and my father as to the availability of one or two of the stamps that had been handed over. My father explained to me that immediately after the outbreak of the War, specie, including even the nickels and copper pennies, had disappeared from circulation, and the people had been utilising for the small change necessary for current operations the postage stamps, a use which, in connection with the large percentage of destruction, was profitable to the government, but extravagant for the community. A little later, the postal department was considerate enough to bring into print a series of postage stamps without any gum on the back. These could, of course, be handled more easily, but were still seriously perishable. Towards the close of the year, the Treasury department printed from artistically engraved plates a baby currency in notes of about two and a half inches long by one and a half inches wide. The denominations comprised ten cents, fifteen cents, twenty-five cents, fifty cents, and seventy-five cents. The fifteen cents and the seventy-five cents were not much called for, and were probably not printed more than once. They would now be scarce as curiosities. The postal currency was well printed on substantial paper, but in connection with the large requirement for handling that is always placed upon small currency, these little paper notes became very dirty and were easily used up. The government must have made a large profit from the percentage that was destroyed. The necessary effect of this distribution of government "I.O.U.'s," based not upon any redemption fund of gold but merely upon the general credit of the government, was to appreciate the value of gold. In June, 1863, just before the battle of Gettysburg, the depreciation of this paper currency, which represented of course the appreciation of gold, was in the ratio of 100 to 290. It happened that the number 290, which marked the highest price reached by gold during the War, was the number that had been given in Laird's ship-yard (on the Mersey) to the Confederate cruiser *Alabama*.

Chase was not only a hard-working Secretary of the Treasury but an ambitious, active-minded, and intriguing politician. He represented in the administration the more extreme anti-slavery group. He was one of those who favoured from the beginning immediate action on the part of the government in regard to the slaves in the territory that was still controlled by the government. It is doubtless the case that he held these anti-slavery views as a matter of honest conviction. It is in evidence also from his correspondence that he connected with these views the hope and the expectation of becoming President. His scheming for the nomination for 1864 was carried on with the machinery that he had at

his disposal as Secretary of the Treasury. The issues between Chase and Seward and between Chase and Stanton were many and bitter. The pressure on the part of the conservative Republicans to get Chase out of the Cabinet was considerable. Lincoln, believing that his service was valuable, refused to be influenced by any feeling of personal antagonism or personal rivalry. He held on to the Secretary until the last year of the War, when deciding that the Cabinet could then work more smoothly without him, he accepted his resignation. Even then, however, although he had placed in his hands a note indicating a measure of what might be called personal disloyalty on the part of Chase, Lincoln was unwilling to lose his service for the country and appointed him as Chief Justice.

Montgomery Blair was put into the Cabinet as Postmaster-General more particularly as the representative of the loyalists of the Border States. His father was a leader in politics in Missouri, in which the family had long been of importance. His brother, Frank P. Blair, served with credit in the army, reaching the rank of Major-General. The Blair family was quite ready to fight for the Union, but was very unwilling to do any fighting for the black man. They wanted the Union restored as it had been, Missouri Compromise and all. It was Blair who had occasion from time to time to point out, and with perfect truth, that if, through the influence of Chase and of the men back of Chase in Massachusetts and northern Ohio, immediate action should be taken to abolish slavery in the Border States, fifty thousand men who had marched out of those States to the support of the Union might be and probably would be recalled. "By a stroke of the pen," said Blair, "Missouri, eastern Tennessee, western Maryland, loyal Kentucky, now loyally supporting the cause of the nation, will be thrown into the arms of the Confederacy." During the first two years of the War, and in fact up to September, 1863, the views of Blair and his associates prevailed, and with the fuller history before us, we may conclude that it was best that they should have prevailed. This was, at least, the conclusion of Lincoln, the one man who knew no sectional prejudices, who had before him all the information and all the arguments, and who had upon him the pressure from all quarters. It was not easy under the circumstances to keep peace between Blair and Chase. Probably no man but Lincoln could have met the requirement.

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